

# **INVENTORS COUNCIL**

**OF MID-MICHIGAN**

**PO Box 232, Lennon Michigan 48449**

**Web Site: INVENTORSCOUNCIL.ORG**

The Inventors Council is an independent, non-profit 501 C-3 corporation formed to help inventors pursue their dreams of bringing new and innovative products to market. Our goal is to help fellow inventors succeed in the most efficient and least costly manner possible by providing education and business networking.

**Founded by Robert (Bob) Ross in 1995**

We meet monthly at Walli's Restaurant, 1341 South Center Road Burton, Michigan. Just Two blocks south of I-69, Exit 139

VOLUME FIFTEEN

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY, February 10, 2011, 7:00PM

NUMBER TWO

## **Game Calls**

### **February 10, 2011 Meeting**

Rick Kagerer will be our speaker this month. He operates the Art Beauchamp gallery and manufactures game calls for many kinds of animals. Rick has competed in many calling events and learned the business from his father-in-law.

Rick designs and manufactures his own products. He is a small company and pays close attention to costs and packaging.

Rick will be sharing the challenges and successes his company has achieved.

Meeting begins at 7:00pm. Come share a night of fun with our inventors.

### **Process Champions Wanted**

Our ICMM club needs volunteers to be Process Champions. A Process Champion will handle questions from members of our club and visitors about how to get information on specific items related to inventing.

Examples will be filing for patents and trademarks, finding sources for parts, designing, machining parts, packaging, market research, etc.

You will be trained in the specific area of expertise. You will then be provided with the support documentation so you can help people find the information they require to move forward on their idea.

We want to give people a helping hand, not do the work for them. If they are willing to work, they will succeed with some help and guidance from you, the Process Champion. Come help us and get involved. Contact Mike Ball or Marty Sovis to sign up.

## **2011 Training Plans and Making a Product**

It was suggested by one of our members that we teach the invention process by creating a real invention in the actual order so our members can see every step in the real world. We like the idea and are going to take it on in 2011.

We will be creating a real product and will actually do all the steps of inventing each month until the product is actually sold. This will be a total membership effort with input and work being actually completed by our members.

ICMM has a great many talented people and we need to use that talent in an actual way. We will be working on our product each month and track the whole invention process every meeting. We will be documenting the process and using the "white board" to generate the memberships ideas.

We will create the type and direction of the product at the first meeting in February. Everything will be tracked via an excel spreadsheet for every task the club does. This will be used to assign areas of responsibility and target and completion dates.

Everything we do will be reported in a project book and costs will be accounted for. Mike Ball will be the project leader and Marty Sovis will be documenting the process. Everyone will be involved.

This sounds like a huge project, but it is what inventors must do if they want to create their own product and take it to the marketplace. We will actually create, evaluate, budget, design, engineer, mock-up, make a prototype and production unit, packaging, shipping plan, advertise, sell, ship, invoice, and receive payment, etc. for this product.

It will be the ICMM members product with all the failures and rewards an inventor will actually face. We will create a DBA to handle funds.

This is a huge task with lots of risks, but we are going to try with our real goal of educating our inventors with real experience. It should be a wild and fun ride in 2011. Come join us.



## MARKETING

Hints from the Fog  
by Mike Ball, President



### Where Ideas Start and Go to Market

There are different methods where ideas are born. The most common is the inventor's mind and the quest to provide a solution to a specific problem. This is the most pure form of inventing.

You try to buy something to solve your problem, only to discover that no satisfactory product exists. Or you are using a common product but are frustrated with the manner in which it performs. The thought, "I can make a better product than this" is born and the inventor is off and working on the quest to "build a better mousetrap".

The next method with the invention is the factory method. A company may have a research and development department, usually part of the Engineering operation. These employ engineers, designers, model makers, artists, sculptors, scientists, chefs, and any other number of talented people to take an idea and turn it into a product the company can sell and people will buy. Apple, Proctor and Gamble, 3M, Ford, Deere, Monsanto, and many other great firms do this successfully worldwide.

No matter how big or small the company is, it all starts with the idea and the vision the creator has for it.

Genius and inspiration are not enough without organization and discipline to make the idea (product) work and be produced in an efficient, attractive, and quality manner. All inventors must face these facts.

It is not the first great idea that makes money, but the first great idea with the plan and organization to take the idea to market that is successful. There are many great dreamers in the world, but very few disciplined inventors who see their ideas to market.

The individual inventor does not have a market research department putting out ideas that the market hopefully needs. They must rely on themselves and their own research or experience. This limits their ideas, but also concentrates their resources on single products.

The ICMM will be working on a single invention for 2011. The invention and industry will be selected by the ICMM members. Will it be food stuffs, tools, lawn and garden, hardware, home style, clothing, toys, games, chemicals, fashion, or any other product the world needs?

From February to December 2011 the ICMM members will work and document the inventing process as it relates to our new "invention." This is a hands-on educational project performed by real inventors and some wantabes. Come join us in this great journey and get a Phd in product development inventing. You can work and learn as much as you can stand. We will start with the selection of the idea we will produce and form teams every month to do the actual work. We are a 501C-3 educational charity and it is now time to educate our members by making a real product.

No one can do it any better than we can.

Join the project "Invent ICMM 2011". You will have the opportunity to learn every step of the process. You will get out of it what you put into it just like any education effort.

This will be a great journey in learning inventing through the product development process. Come join us and learn the process to do your own invention.

### We are inventors helping inventors through the disciplined use of the product development process

*The Events on the following page(s) are listed to try to help our inventors and friends of ICMM club to network and learn from other organizations and resources. Share these with your friends and attend an event that will help you take your product to market or start your business.*

### Invention Review Panel

For objective evaluation and priceless feedback, share your invention ideas with an educated group of inventors, business owners, engineers and authors!

Our Panel will sign a non-disclosure agreement to guarantee your ideas are kept secret while we provide you with the input needed to make decisions, no matter what stage of the invention process you're at!

There is a \$25.00 donation for a review. ThePanel meets at 6:00 pm before each meeting. Call Panel Chairman Marty Sovis at 810-659-6741 for an appointment.

Review Panel Members  
Marty Sovis Rick Mason  
Jim White Mike Wiley

### Bob Ross 1919 - 2004 Inventors Education Column

### Club Events Coming Up

Inventhelp's INPEX

June 14-17

Monroeville Convention Center

Pittsburgh, PA

WWW.INPEX.COM

1-888-54-INPEX

Minnesota Invention Congress  
Invention & Idea Show

June 10 and 11

Redwood Falls, MN

1-800-468-3681

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## Move Events for our Inventors (Opportunity to educate and network)

**MCC Live Morning Networking.** Join the business professionals of Motor City Connect for an effective and fun alternative to the traditional networking meeting. MCC Live meetings are relaxed, casual and usually good for a few laughs. It's never something you have to attend, it's an event you want to attend. No sixty second commercials. No ten minute speakers. Just a chance to drink a cup of coffee, meet new people, seek to understand their needs and connect on a new level. Details: Thursday, **February 3**, 8-9 a.m., The Friendship House, West Bloomfield- <http://motorcityconnect.groupsites.com/calendar/2011/2> (See calendar for more dates and times.)

**FastTrac® New Venture™ - Information Session.** Participants in this no-cost session will acquire an overview of the FastTrac NewVenture program's key objectives, benefits and features. Learn how this program assists entrepreneurs to develop a business concept through each step of the business planning process. The ten-week program will run on Thursdays from February 10 through April 14. 2-5 p.m. To register, please call the MI-SBTDC West Michigan office at (616) 331-7370. You must have a business idea and the desire to start a business. Details: Thursday, **February 3**, 2-4 p.m., GVSU Bicycle Factory, Grand Rapids - <http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>

**Michigan Energy Forum.** This session is part of a monthly panel discussion and networking event series hosted by the Michigan Energy Forum, and sponsored by Ann Arbor SPARK. The mission of the forum is to facilitate collaboration and networking among practitioners, policy makers, investors, and professionals in the Michigan region. This month's topics: the various types of small scale renewable energy systems; the financial ins and outs of renewables; laws and regulations covering them; opportunities for entrepreneurs; and more. Details: Thursday, **February 3**, 5-7 p.m., SPARK Central, 330 E. Liberty, Lower Level, Ann Arbor - <http://www.annarborusa.org/events>

**Growth Capital.** Learn how growth capital is an essential ingredient for mid-Michigan's future. Details: Thursday, **February 3**, 4-5 p.m., Saginaw Club Ballroom, Saginaw - [www.midmichiganinnovationcenter.org](http://www.midmichiganinnovationcenter.org)

**Marketing Plan Boot Camp.** Four-week course designed to assist in the building of a small business marketing plan. The course covers management issues, marketing strategies, market research and finance basics. This class is taught by GROW staff and designed to give an overview of building a marketing plan for either new or existing businesses. Prerequisite: Intro to GROW. Details: Thursday, **February 3**, 6-9 p.m., GROW, Grand Rapids - <https://growbusiness.org/default.aspx>

**Innovation RainMakers®.** Breakfast event held every two months. The presentation, Ideal Visioning: Keeping Ahead of Your Peer and Competitors, is followed by breakfast, and a networking event for professionals involved and interested in structured approaches to innovation. Space is limited, RSVP promptly to participate. Details: Friday, **February 4**, 6:45-9 a.m., Kerby's Coney Island, 5407 Crooks Rd., Troy - <http://www.innovationrainmakers.com/>

**TechTown First Friday.** Learn about Wayne State University resources available to start ups. Learn about the **Front Door**, the entry point for the general community seeking access to the university. It connects talent to assets and can facilitate mutually beneficial introductions to faculty. Judy Johncox, associate vice president of WSU's Technology Commercialization department, will discuss licensing technology, accessing university researchers and sponsored research. Details: Friday, **January 4**, 4-6 pm., TechTown, TechTwo building, corner of Woodward and Amsterdam, Detroit - <http://techtownwsu.org/category/events/>

**Ann Arbor OpenCoffee.** This is a networking event for entrepreneurs, investors and those who work with technology & innovation businesses, particularly in IT, cleantech and life sciences. Details: Tuesday, **February 8**, 8-9:30 a.m., SPARK Central, 330 E. Liberty, Lower Level, Ann Arbor- <http://www.annarborusa.org/events>

**Pre-Business Research.** Are you thinking of starting your own business and want to research your business idea? Are you a new business owner who wants to understand which research sources to use for your business plan or loan proposal, and where to find the information you need? Then plan to attend this business pre-planning workshop. Speaker: Oakland County Business Center, The Entrepreneur's Source, Oakland County Research Department and Oakland County Public Library. Details: Tuesday, **February 8**, 6-9:30 p.m., Oakland County Business Center MI-SBTDC, Executive Office Building, Waterford - <http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>

**CEED Microloan Orientation.** The need for working capital for existing businesses, start-up or expansion, equipment purchases, and job creation is growing. If you need alternative financing consider the MicroLoan Program. Discover the requirements and process necessary to apply and obtain a microloan. Details: Wednesday, **February 9**, 9-11 a.m., Oakland County Business Center MI-SBTDC, Executive Office Building, Waterford - <http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>

**Ann Arbor New Tech Meetup.** Five presenters this month take the stage for ten minutes each, five minutes to demo and five minutes to answer questions, followed by open announcements and community networking. E-mail organizers at [a2newtech.org](http://a2newtech.org) if you'd like to present! Details: Tuesday, **February 15**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., University of Michigan, Blau Auditorium, Ann Arbor - <http://www.a2newtech.org/calendar/>

**SBA Roundtable on Small Business Lending.** Before you apply for a business loan, attend a Financing Roundtable. The roundtables are a free loan orientation conducted by a business banker, a business consultant from the SBAs network of Small Business Development Centers, and an SBA representative. We'll debunk the myths and demystify the process of small business financing. Learn how the lending process works and what is expected of you and you'll understand how the SBA can assist with our SBA Guaranteed Loan Program. This session is best suited to those who have good credit, a solid business idea, and some money to invest in their business. Because the SBA does not provide loan guarantees to real estate investment firms, including purchasing and rehabbing houses for sale, this type of financing is not discussed at the roundtables. Details: Wednesday, **February 16**, 9 a.m.-noon, Oakland County Business Center MI-SBTDC, Executive Office Building, Waterford- <http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>

**China: Asia's Powerhouse.** Are you looking to increase your global competitiveness? If so, join Automation Alley for a conference on doing business in China. The presentation will include trade specialists via Skype from Beijing (Tianjin), Shanghai (Nanjing) and Taiwan from U.S. Commercial Services. Learn more about Automation Alley's next trade mission to China, May 13-20. The mission's participants will be traveling to Tianjin (Beijing area) and Nanjing (Shanghai area). Optional trip to Taipei, Taiwan extending the return date to May 24. Details: Wednesday, **February 23**, 7:30-11 a.m., Automation Alley, 2675 Bellingham, Troy - [http://www.automationalley.com/a2\\_nws\\_eventcal?m=2&y=2011](http://www.automationalley.com/a2_nws_eventcal?m=2&y=2011)

**TEAM SBA - SBA Forum on Commercial Lending.** If you are serious about seeking financing for your business, attend a Forum on Commercial Lending presented by TEAM SBA. This free loan orientation is conducted by a business banker, a business consultant from the SBAs network of Small Business Development Centers, and an SBA representative. We'll debunk the myths and demystify the process of small business financing. Learn how the lending process works and what is expected of you and you'll understand how the SBA can assist with our SBA Guaranteed Loan Program. This session is best suited to those who have good credit, a solid business idea, and some money to invest in their business. Because the SBA does not provide loan guarantees to real estate investment firms, including purchasing and rehabbing houses for sale, this type of financing is not discussed. Speaker: Cathy Gase, SBA; Nancy Grose, SBA. Details: Wednesday, **February 23**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., ThumbWorks! A Michigan Works! Agency, Marlette - <http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>