

# INVENTORS COUNCIL

OF MID-MICHIGAN

PO Box 232, Lennon Michigan 48449

Web Site: [INVENTORSCOUNCIL.ORG](http://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, December, 2011, 6:00PM

NUMBER TWELVE

## Thursday December 8, 2011 Meeting

The meeting will begin at 6:00pm at The Town Office at 103 E. Main St., Flushing, Michigan. We will be sending the Directions via email with the meeting notice.

Aaron Hamann will be our host and give us a tour of the facilities. He operates an incubator and marketing office to help new inventors and businesses to get started. It is a great collaboration center with other start-ups and let's you have a common group to bounce ideas off. Successful entrepreneurs are their passion. Come learn about this great center. Chris Moultrup, Associate Director of the Mid Michigan Innovation Center in Midland will be the speaker. They are a development and investment center who work with Blue Water Angels.

Heather Fortin the Program Director of Northern Michigan will also be presenting.

They loan money to startup companies that qualify and are able to design, engineer, and manufacture products in Mid Michigan. They are located in Midland, Michigan.

## Thursday November 10, 2011 Meeting

Our speaker came to us via Skype on the Web from Columbus, Ohio.

**Chris Hawker**, a professional inventor & the owner of Trident Design, LLC ([www.trident-design.com](http://www.trident-design.com)). He is also a Board Member of the United Inventors Association

As our first Skype presentation ever, we did well. We thank Chris and his team for a great presentation.

## Happy Holidays To Inventors and Friends of ICMM!!!!

### New Time and Place for December 8th Meeting to start at 6:00pm in Flushing

The Town Office  
103 East Main Street  
Flushing, Michigan 48433

Pizza, soft drinks, and desert will be provided for ICMM members and our guests.

**2012 Dues paid in December 2011 will be discounted to \$50.00 for members. Dues paid in January will still be \$55.00 per year for everyone.**

### 2011 Highlights Review

Cubicle Cop—"ICCM Invention 2011" This is our invention project and we are at the manufacturing stage. We are refining some issues and will continue to work on the product development of the "Cubicle Cop" in 2012 and continue to train our inventors how to invent.

We want to thank our Speakers for 2011 at ICMM Meetings for a job well done.  
Rick Kagerer—Inventor and Entrepreneur Hardware & Duck Calls  
Tom Crampton Executive Dean Mott Technology Center  
Orville Crain—CEO of Klever Kutter LLC and President of MIC  
William Stolpin—Stolpin Arts  
Harry Blecker—Michigan Small Business and Technology Center  
Tracy Joeseeph—Metro Community Development Group  
Bill McHenry—President of Entrepreneur Sales and Marketing  
Aaron Hamann—Entrepreneur, The Town Office of Flushing  
Dave Allen—WOW Products USA  
Chris Hawker—Inventor and President Trident Design (via Skype)  
Chris Moultrup—Director Mid Michigan Innovation Center

Enhanced Invention Review process—We have added information to our review to better help the inventor to move forward after the review.

Skype Presentations—We can now use UIA speakers around the country to present more information to our club

E-Team Membership and Networking Improved—We are working with many other organization to help new inventors and business start ups around the County and State.

Thumb Works—members attended and participated the Thumb Works event in Marlette

New PC Laptop with web cam and speakers for presentations and CAD Reviews at meetings

ICMM  
Home of the Happy Inventors



## MARKETING

Hints from the Fog  
by Mike Ball, President



### Inventions Created that became Christmas Traditions

#### Cabbage Patch Kids (Introduced in 1976)

People camped out in front of stores rumored to have shipments coming in, people fought over dolls that had characteristics they wanted, and some entrepreneurs bought and resold them. No price was too high for some that had to have one of these unique little dolls.

Xavier Roberts was the brain behind the Cabbage Patch Kids phenomenon. Initially called Little People®, they were all hand made unique originals. Roberts sold the soft sculpture dolls at arts and crafts shows in the South-east, where he developed the gimmick of providing adoption papers for each doll. In 1978, he and some friends established Original Appalachian Artworks and opened BabyLand General® Hospital where the public could come into a mock maternity ward and select the baby they wanted to adopt.

In 1982, Coleco Toy Company licensed the Little People® line and adoption process, renaming them Cabbage Patch Kids. The mass production of the dolls along with the adoption gimmick made them an overnight sensation. It seemed there were only two kinds of people in 1982-83, those who owned a Cabbage Patch Kid or those that wanted one.

"All I know is that I wanted one," said Nicole Hait, InventHelp® Communications Manager. "So I cried until I got one!"

According to a Cabbage Patch Kids history site, "One of the features that made the Cabbage Patch kids so popular was that each doll seemed to be unique. With variations in head mold, eyes, hair color and style, and clothing, it is extremely difficult to find two dolls who look exactly alike. Add in the fact that each doll was given a first and middle name, and it's easy to see why the dolls were considered to be unique individuals."

While the frenzy for Cabbage Patch Kids waned long ago, real kids today can still get them. Mattel, which acquired the license to manufacture them in 1994, and Original Appalachian Artworks still create them.

#### Barbie® (Introduced in 1959)

When asked what was her favorite toy, Operations Supervisor Amy Nussbaum's answer was simple and automatic, "My Barbie, of course!"

Toy sales often seem to be driven by fads. Witness the recent rise and fall of Furby, Pogs and Beanie Babies. There are those that adjust to the era and just keep getting better. Barbie dolls are one of those few toys that never seem to be out of style.

Ruth Handler, who founded Mattel toys with her husband, Elliot, introduced Barbie® in 1959. While on a trip to Europe, Handler's daughter, Barbara, inspired Barbie's creation by playing with a doll depicting an adult woman instead of a baby doll. Handler felt that this was a good way for girls to dream of what they could be. Thus, Barbie® has maintained her pop-culture popularity by being the canvass for girls to dream of being everything from a fantasy princess to a rock star.

But it almost didn't happen. The all-male board of directors at Mattel failed to see the demand for a doll fashioned as an adult. How could they know Barbie® would set record sales for the company in its first year? They originally believed manufacturing would be cost prohibitive and no one would want it. But Handler persevered and now Barbie® is pushing fifty years old.

#### The Easy Bake Oven® (Introduced in 1963)

Many a woman can recall The Easy Bake Oven® being an item at one time on her Holiday Wish List. "I can't tell you how many times I burned my tongue - usually because I couldn't wait long enough for the food to finish cooking!" said Jennifer Lawlor, Director of Communications for InventHelp® and INPEX®.

The Easy Bake Oven® has outlasted most other trends and fads in the toy industry. At 41 years old, the toy has only grown in popularity since its invention in 1963. Designers at Kenner Products (now a division of Hasbro) brought it to the market. The Easy Bake Oven® was originally designed for little girls to be able to bake their own pastries alongside their mothers in the kitchen. The toy included packets of powdered, processed foods that mostly just needed water before baking in the small oven.

Driven by only a light bulb, one might think that this toy would fade in popularity as video games and DVDs become the newest trend. However, with 11 different Easy Bake Oven® revisions since its conception, it has evolved in both color (from avocado green to white to pink) and technology (from oven-style to microwave to toaster oven) as real appliances have changed.

In 2003, Hasbro introduced The Easy Bake Real Meal Oven®, which allows kids to make an entire meal - from appetizers to dessert - without a light bulb. This ever-changing toy has spanned the decades, and it appears that it will be on little girls' lists for many years to come.

#### Adhesive Tape and Wrapping Paper

In 1923, while working at 3M, inventor Richard Drew developed one of the most practical items for the office, home and holiday season: adhesive tape. According to MIT's [Inventor of the Week](#) archive, the first prototype had adhesive on the sides but not down the middle, and when it fell off a car in a trial run, a frustrated worker told Drew, "Take this tape back to those Scotch bosses of yours and tell them to put more adhesive on it!" The name stuck, and Scotch Tape - the world's first transparent tape, made with resins, rubber and oil - was born.

According to entrepreneurial blog [Biz in a Boxx](#), people have been wrapping gifts since paper was first invented circa 105 A.D., but the practice didn't become popular until around the 1920s. Before then, gifts were typically wrapped in tissue paper or plain brown paper until printing technology improved and paper could be colored, decorated and folded in mass volumes. Hy-Sill Manufacturing Inc. was the first U.S. gift-wrapping company. Hallmark entered the market in 1917, selling large pieces of wrapping paper for \$0.10 a sheet.

#### The Story of Tinsel

Tinsel, the thin sparkling strands we drape over Christmas trees, first appeared in Germany around 1610 and were originally thin strips of material extruded from real silver. According to [WiseGeek.com](#), silver looked good but tarnished quickly and was soon replaced by other sparkly metals. Tinsel was first placed on Christmas trees to accentuate the glow of lit candles, and only the wealthiest people could afford entire garlands.

See pages 3 and 4 for other holiday inventions

### 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's a \$25.00 Donation for a Review. The Panel meets at 6:15pm before each meeting. Call Panel Chairman Marty Sovis at 810-659-6741 for an appointment.

Review Panel Members  
Marty Sovis Rick Mason  
Jim White

Bob Ross 1919 - 2004  
Inventors Education Column

### Inventors Resources

Michigan Inventors Clubs  
Inventors Council of Mid-Michigan  
[Inventorscouncil.org](http://Inventorscouncil.org)

Muskegon Inventors Network  
[Muskegoninventorsnetwork.org](http://Muskegoninventorsnetwork.org)

Grand Rapids Inventors Network  
[GRinventorsnetwork.org](http://GRinventorsnetwork.org)

Jackson Inventors Network  
[Jacksoninventors.org](http://Jacksoninventors.org)

MidMichigan Innovation Center  
[www.mmic.us](http://www.mmic.us)

#### Officers and Directors

Mike Ball <i>President</i> 810-245-5599 michaelball@turbousa.com	Rick Mason <i>Vice-President</i> 810-659-7935 xyzmason@aol.com
Marty Sovis <i>Secretary/Treasurer</i> (810) 659-6741 Msovis@comcast.net	Mike Wiley <i>Director</i> 810-691-4451 mwiley1111@aol.com
Ron Kilponen <i>Legal</i> 248-344-7132 kilponen@bignet.net	Roger Stolpin <i>Director</i> 248-634-2129 Finite-007.att.net
Jim Harris <i>Member-ship</i> 810-621-	Mary Kordyban <i>Director</i> mkordyban1@gmail.com
Bill Brabenc <i>Director</i> 810-724-2722 brab@tir.com	A 501-C-3 All-Volunteer Corporation

# Links for ICMM Inventors to Review to find networking opportunities

## [History of Christmas](#)

On December 25, Christians traditionally celebrate the birth of Christ. The origins of the holiday are uncertain, however by the year 336, the Christian church in Rome observed the Feast of the Nativity (birth) on December 25. Christmas also coincided with the winter solstice and the Roman Festival of Saturnalia.

## **Artificial Christmas Trees**

Towards the end of the 1800's, another variation of the traditional Christmas tree appeared: the artificial Christmas tree. Artificial trees originated in Germany. Metal wire trees were covered with goose, turkey, ostrich or swan feathers. The feathers were often dyed green to imitate pine needles. In the 1930's, the Addis Brush Company created the first artificial-brush trees, using the same machinery that made their toilet brushes! The Addis 'Silver Pine' tree was patented in 1950. The Christmas tree was designed to have a revolving light source under it, colored gels allowed the light to shine in different shades as it revolved under the tree.

## **Christmas Cards**

Englishman, John Calcott Horsley popularized the tradition of sending Christmas greeting cards, in the 1830s.

## [Christmas Snowman](#)

Yes, the snowman was invented, many times over. Enjoy these whimsical pictures of snowman inventions. They are from actual patents and trademarks. Or view the delightful design patents related to [Christmas trees and ornaments](#).

## **Where Christmas Lights Come From**

People first began putting lights on their Christmas trees in the 17th century by attaching small candles to the branches using wax or pins, according to the [Great Idea Finder](#). As a result, most people didn't put up their lights until Christmas Eve due to the risk of fire. The first electric Christmas lights were developed by Edward Johnson, an associate of Thomas Edison's, in 1882. Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white and blue lights and wrapped them around a rotating evergreen.

In the 1900s, department stores began using elaborate Christmas tree light displays to attract customers, but the practice wasn't popularized domestically until 15-year-old Albert Sadacca, whose family produced novelty illuminated birds, started selling multicolored lights that were already strung together in response to a tragic fire in 1917 caused by lit candles. Sadacca's business, the NOMA Electric Company, went on to become the world's largest Christmas lighting company until 1965.

## **The Delicious Origins of the Candy Cane**

Although there are numerous legends about the origins of the candy cane as a religious symbol, the first historical mention of this holiday treat came from Germany in 1670, when a choirmaster bent sugar sticks into the shape of a shepherd's cane to hand out to children, according to the [Great Idea Finder](#). The first reference to candy canes in America was in 1847, when a German-Swedish immigrant in Ohio used them to decorate a spruce.

The original canes were entirely white, and it wasn't until the 20th century that the colorful red stripes were added. In the 1920s, cracker businessman Bob McCormack began making candy canes as Christmas treats for the community in Albany, Georgia, pulling, twisting, cutting and bending them by hand. In the 1950s, McCormack's brother-in-law invented a machine to automate the process. Later, McCormack's descendants developed packaging advances that enabled them to ship the fragile canes around the world and turned their company, [Bobs Candies Inc.](#), into the world's largest candy cane producer.

## **The Truth Behind Rudolph**

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer wasn't part of Santa's original sleigh-driving team. In fact, he isn't mentioned in Christmas folklore at all. Rudolph was actually invented in 1939 by a Montgomery Ward copywriter named Robert May who was tasked with creating a Christmas story the department store chain could give away to customers as a promotion, according to [Snopes.com](#). Drawing on elements from the "Ugly Ducking" fable and his own experiences as a child, May crafted a story about a misfit with a glowing red nose who manages to prove himself to his peers. After considering names like Rollo and Reginald, May finally settled on Rudolph. Millions of copies of the Rudolph story sold in the 1940s, and May eventually secured the character's copyright for himself, producing a Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer cartoon, a bestselling song and a television special that remains a perennial favorite. However, the story familiar to us today is slightly different from May's original version, in which Rudolph grew up in a reindeer village rather than the North Pole, had a loving family and was discovered when Santa Claus came to drop off gifts at his home.

## History of the BB Gun

The 1983 film classic *A Christmas Story* revolves around Ralphie Parker's mission to obtain the elusive [Daisy Red Ryder BB Gun](#). The BB gun, or air rifle, has remained a rite of passage for generations of kids, but its history is somewhat surprising: it originated at a windmill. In 1886, the Plymouth Iron Wind Mill Company in Michigan was struggling to convince farmers to switch from wooden windmills to an iron alternative. According to [InventHelp.com](#), inventor Clarence Hamilton created the first air-powered rifle for the company to distribute as an incentive to purchase their windmills.

An odd thing happened — the giveaway, a gun known as the Daisy Rifle, proved more popular than the windmill. As windmill sales declined, demand for BB guns skyrocketed. By 1889, the Plymouth Iron Wind Mill Company changed its name to Daisy Manufacturing Company and began manufacturing and selling BB guns full time. Decades later, children like Ralphie Parker were still pining for their very first air rifle.

## Where Christmas Lights Come From

People first began putting lights on their Christmas trees in the 17th century by attaching small candles to the branches using wax or pins, according to the [Great Idea Finder](#). As a result, most people didn't put up their lights until Christmas Eve due to the risk of fire. The first electric Christmas lights were developed by Edward Johnson, an associate of Thomas Edison's, in 1882. Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white and blue lights and wrapped them around a rotating evergreen.

In the 1900s, department stores began using elaborate Christmas tree light displays to attract customers, but the practice wasn't popularized domestically until 15-year-old Albert Sadacca, whose family produced novelty illuminated birds, started selling multicolored lights that were already strung together in response to a tragic fire in 1917 caused by lit candles. Sadacca's business, the NOMA Electric Company, went on to become the world's largest Christmas lighting company until 1965.