

Inventors Council

OF MID-MICHIGAN

PO Box 311, Flushing, Michigan 48433

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 EIGHTEEN

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015 7:00PM

NUMBER TWELVE

Thursday December 10 2015 Meeting

ICMM Dues for 2016

We will discount the yearly 2016 membership fee of \$55.00 to only \$50.00 for all members that pay in December 2015.

January Elections be held on January 14, 2016 at our regular membership meeting.

We will be sending out nomination instructions in early January 2016.

Remember that we need members to join the Board of Directors and help determine the direction of the Club. More to follow.

Dues and Elections for 2016

ICMM has maintained the dues at \$55.00 per year for full membership. If you pay before January 1, 2016 the fee will be only \$50.00 for the year.

Daily monthly meetings for visitors will still be \$ 5.00 at the door to help pay the rent.

2016 Board of Directors election will be held in January 2016 first membership meeting. All members are able to run for office. You must apply to run and we will be sending out the info in December.

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

December 10th Meeting to start at 7:00pm at Walli's Restaurant

1341 South Center Road
Burton, Michigan

A Salad Bar, meal, soft drink, and dessert will be provided for all paid up 2015 ICMM members in attendance at no charge.

Visitors will be charged \$ 5.00 at the door plus \$5.00 for the meal to help defer the costs to the club. All are welcomed to network with the membership. We will have some door prizes available.

Some Top Strange and Weird Inventions that made Millions

1. What is arguably the weirdest invention of all time to make millions of dollars wasn't really an invention at all:

The Pet Rock.

In case you don't recall this rocky fiasco, Gary Dahl, an advertising executive from California, figured out a way to decorate and market rocks as pets. It might not sound like much, but it spawned a fad that swept the U.S. like a runaway [rockslide](#).

Dahl purchased ordinary gray pebbles from a construction supplier and sold them as pets. Some models sported painted faces, while others bore glued-on googly eyes on their stony countenances.

In a testament to marketing, and to [P.T. Barnum](#), Dahl billed the pet rock as the perfect pet, one that never needed to be fed or cleaned up after. As outlined in a humorous manual included with the "pet," owners could talk to it, name it or teach it to do simple tricks. Many owners painted them or found other ways to personalize their rocks.

ICMM
Home of the Happy Inventors



MARKETING

Hints from the Fog
by Mike Ball, President



The Pet Rock debuted in 1975 at \$3.95 -- about \$16 in the current economy. In just six months, Dahl sold more than 5 million pet rocks, raking in a profit equivalent to \$56 million in 2011 dollars, in large part because of his lack of overhead: Buying the rocks and delivering them probably cost only 95 cents apiece [source: [PetsDo](#)].

Pet Rocks have staged a comeback on the Internet in recent years. You can still buy them online, though many are fancier than Dahl's originals.

Does that qualify as progress?

2. Like the Furby, this '90s relic simulated owning a pet -- a pet more prone to dying than a carnival goldfish during Rush Week.

If you've ever dreamed of cleaning up the virtual excrement of a chirping, [battery](#)-powered, egg-shaped key chain, then rejoice: You're clearly not alone, because these electronic "virtual pets" sold like hotcakes.

Japanese toymaker Bandai first unveiled "**Tamagotchi**" -- a portmanteau of the Japanese word for "egg" and the English word "watch" -- in 1996. It worked like this: You turned the Tamagotchi on, gave it a name and then used the buttons on the device to feed it, play games with it, put it to bed or, yes, clean up its waste. Over time, the creature on the black-and-white [LCD screen](#) would grow and change into different versions -- if you took good enough care of it, that is.

The earliest Tamagotchi required near-constant attention or they would "die," mandating a reset of the device so the process could start over. This made them unpopular with parents and teachers, who noticed their kids sometimes cared for the toys at the expense of chores and homework.

At one time, Bandai estimated it was selling a Tamagotchi per second. More than 70 million have been sold since then, spawning a slew of imitators [source: [Takahashi](#)]. The virtual varmints are still available, and elementary school kids can still be seen toting them on their backpacks, though not in the numbers they once did.

Now, for the final item on our list of the ludicrous and lucrative: It's not electronic, but it's probably the original virtual pet -- and it made its inventor a millionaire almost overnight.

3. Quick! What has fur, corgi ears and a bird beak, and can supposedly learn English? If you didn't guess the **Furby**, well, no one would hold it against you. The hottest toy on the market in the late 1990s is today little more than a faded memory, the subject of Internet snark and Urban Dictionary entries.

Released in 1998 by Tiger Electronics, Furby stood 6 inches (15.2 centimeters) tall, was covered in colorful fur, and could play games and wiggle its body. Tiger marketed the computerized critter as one of the first widely available "artificial intelligence" toys.

One of Furby's tricks was to "learn" English (thereby easing relations with those few owners not fluent in Furbish); actually, it was simply programmed to speak less of its gibberish language over time, replacing it with English. When one Furby was brought together with another, the two would engage in gibberish conversations, much the way some humans do. The hideous, hirsute critters debuted with a \$40 price tag, but in the proud tradition of holiday fad toys, soon saw demand drive their prices into the hundreds. In just three years, more than 40 million freakish furballs flew off the shelves, in a menagerie of shapes, sizes and themes, including a [Christmas](#) Furby, [Halloween](#) Furby and even a 2000 Presidential Election Furby [source: [AdoptAFurby.com](#)].

What is your crazy idea? Can you make millions like these people?

You never know when one of your strange ideas will make it big.

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 Rick Mason at 810-659-7935 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

Muskegon Inventors Network
Muskegoninventorsnetwork.org

Grand Rapids Inventors Network
GRinventorsnetwork.org

Jackson Inventors Network
Jacksoninventors.org

MidMichigan Innovation Center
www.mmic.us

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