

Inventors' Network Volume 9

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INVENTION WITHIN POWER DEVELOPMENT

At our March meeting, Dr. William Jackson shared pictures and oral history of a Federally-funded experiment in enhancing efficiency of electric power-generator systems.

A MHD (magnetohydrodynamic) invention revealed a means to convert movement of high-temperature (4000-5000 degree F.), high-velocity combustion gases directly into electric energy when "seeded" with potassium and passed between very high - strength magnets. Up to 75 megawatts (mw) of direct-current electric power could be harvested from an input of 250 mw of thermal energy. At lower temperatures, electrical conductivity drops.

Conventional electric power generators were limited in thermal efficiency by maximum turbine-blade temperature limits of approximately 2500 F. This lower temperature system can generate up to 60 mw of alternating current electricity from 250 mw of thermal energy.

During the US energy crisis of the late 1970s, Senators Howard Baker (Tennessee) and Mike Mansfield (Montana) sponsored demonstrations of prototype power co-generation subsystems. Their strategy was to feed the output of a MHD generator as input into a turbine-blade generator to use the thermal energy across a wide range of temperature.

Data from a prototype's a very high temperature cryogenic machine in Tennessee was shown to be compatible as a thermal energy feed to a lower-temperature, more conventional coal-fired power turbine system developed and demonstrated in Montana. If combined, the two subsystems offered to more than double the typical fuel efficiency of conventional US coal-fired electric power plants.

Dr Jackson 301 946 1586 noted that development of power plants tends to require 20 to 30 years, while focus-of-attention among a coalition of elected officials is particularly difficult to sustain for more than 8 - 12 years. Thus, this MHD innovation has not passed beyond its prototype demonstrations.

During our INCA post-meeting conversations, Dr Jackson shared experiences of working within the Small Business Innovative Technology (SBIR) culture and of challenges from both Government and industry in bringing effective closure to projects of Technology research, Development and Demonstration.

MEDICAL INVENTION CONVERTED TO INDUSTRIAL USE

MEETING: 3rd Monday,

21 May

5:30 Network w Pizza

6:30 Mr Rodger Flagg
**Perspectives of Intellectual
Property as seen from a
professional inventor, patent
agent and research executive.**

7:30 Member & Guest Issues

Michael Raphael, 410-455-5599, of “Direct Dimensions, Inc. in Baltimore, brought a sample of the hardware he uses in generating 3D data bases for real items. His website, www.dirdim.com, provides an on-going reference to the technologies and development possibilities that his service offers.

Michael demonstrated how the FARO Arm and its attendant software is used in a manufacturing setting to check or take dimensions. This system is also basic to making computer aided design viable. Even in its portable mode, dimensional accuracy can approach plus or minus 0.001 inch in small items and plus or minus 0.003 inch in working volumes as great as 4 ft radius.

He told about how the an aerospace company discovered FARO arm in the Medical industry and adapted it to factory and development laboratory environments. For six years his firm has offered portable coordinate measuring machine (CMM) services to industrial, academic and governmental organizations. His services include “Turnkey” operations to include acquisition and use of the FARO arm, software, training and accessories.

Rapid solutions to 3D problems is often needed in reducing “as built” things into data from which strength and elasticity can be calculated. In three days his team completely measured a sculptured shape so that it could be analyzed and “grown” to be the Olympic statue utilized in Atlanta Ga.

Direct Dimensions, Inc cooperates with organizations having specialty “rapid prototyping” capabilities. One example of these capabilities was the generation of a human ear shape that was dimensionally equivalent to an available, but opposite ear shape for a plastic surgery patient.

Mr Raphael’s company is small and extremely flexible. He has expressed keen interest in assisting inventors toward building prototypes and data-sources that help bring their products closer to significant markets.

On **May 21**, **Mr. Rodger Flagg** will share his experience and intellectual property perspectives. He is an inventor, a practicing patent agent and president of a local patent research firm, EXPRESS SEARCH. His website, www.expresssearch.com focuses on assisting intellectual property people with information needed to make informed decisions.

Our scheduled speaker for **June 18** is **Mr Jerome Jackson** 703 684 4840, patent lawyer and former computer programmer. His topic is “U.S. Patent Law - Fundamentals and Recent Trends” Mr Jackson’s BS degree is from MIT dept of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. He had 10 years of engineering experience before receiving a J.D. cum laude from Suffolk University Law School. His role in preparing Patent validity opinions has made him particularly aware of pitfalls in Patent preparation and prosecution.

Our **July 16** meeting will host **Mr Neil Milgram** who will speak on “How to find a good injection molder”. Several INCA members visited Mr. Milgram’s presentation during a Baltimore trade show, and Bill has invited him to share expectations and costs that are realistic within the injection molding business.

WWW.USPTO.GOV has a new face and system for finding things. *As many will remember, their representatives were at INCA to get a feedback on what users like us might like to see.* This editor thinks they did a lot of things right. I found it easy to find what I needed.

Inventors sought NY Times article April 22, 2001

Relayed through meliusstudio@erols.com (John Melius)
Adapted from NYT story of DEBORAH KONG

Michael Smithson read about a Coca-Cola contest to define an entertaining and healthy drink for children. His 9-year-old grandson had trouble losing things on a fishing trip last summer.

Mr. Smithson suggested a frozen drink in a container that children can wear on their wrists, as they would a bracelet, and sip as it thaws. His proposal to Coca-Cola won that \$5,000 prize.

Albert Muller, a retired Boeing engineer, perfected a better nozzle for heavy-duty vacuum cleaners over a period of 28 years. He dreaded the process of selling his invention to appliance makers. When he saw that Sears, Roebuck was offering \$5,000 for the best idea for "the next hot tool," he pitched the nozzle. Sears bought it.

Both men connected with the companies through Ideas.com, a Mountain View, Calif. company that went online in November, 2000. Its Web site helps people send their ideas directly to corporate decision makers.

Sanjay Goel, the site's founder and chief executive believed the Internet to be a natural place for people who are technologically knowledgeable and naturally curious. Tom LaForge, director of innovations at Coca-Cola says: "Now we're getting consumers to come up with ideas."

Mr. Goel's idea was a site where large corporations could collect ideas from people around the world, saving individuals the headache and expense of patenting and developing ideas on their own and sparing companies the bother and potential legal liability of sifting through a flood of unsolicited ideas.

One tradeoff is that would-be inventors must accept an agreement intended to protect companies from lawsuits accusing them of stealing inventions. A risk cited by Steven L. Smith, a Sacramento patent lawyer is: Inventors might be relinquishing rights to their ideas simply by submitting them. He advises inventors to require companies to sign nondisclosure and noncompetition agreements.

Mr Goel's organization secured funding from private sources and backing of Coca-Cola, Sears, Roebuck, S. C. Johnson & Son and International Paper, which agreed to pay an undisclosed membership fee.

As you might expect, contest entries were evaluated as cost-effective, technically sound, easy to make and use, and meet safety, health and environmental standards. Coke's judges included employees from Coke's legal, marketing, technical engineering and new product development departments. Coke plans to post all 889 contest ideas on its internal Web site.

Other sites solicit consumer ideas, like www.ideadollar.com and www.brainhead.com. Some are developing a selected ideas into products, offering inventors a stake if the idea turns into a new company or a share of royalties or sales. In all such purchase offerings, make sure to invest sufficient time in understanding the "Agreement" portion of the deal. Some attorney help may be very appropriate!

Business-oriented sites include www.yet2.com and www.pl-x.com. Some also function as marketplaces where companies buy and sell intellectual property. Honeywell International, for example, lists almost 100 technologies on yet2.com, hoping to attract new licensing revenue.

Mr. Goel asks companies to use his site to contract out some of their innovation, just as they might rely on outsiders for public relations or market research.

TOOL INVENTIONS SOUGHT

From: geopierce@earthlink.net (George D. Pierce, Jr.) 937-321-6580.

Reply-to: inventflash@listbot.com (Invent Flash) Invent Flash - <http://www.xec.com/invent/>

The Inventors Council of Dayton Ohio conducted a Patent Licensing Workshop by Ray Steck, president of Steck Manufacturing Co. Inc. in Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. Steck 800-227-8325, discussed the process his company has in place to review new inventions. Outside inventors are currently encouraged to bring ideas to Steck Manufacturing Co. They even advertise this fact on their catalog: "Steck pays for ideas. Have you developed a unique tool for auto body repair? If your idea is original and Steck decides to use it, Steck will pay you a royalty on the tools sold."

The Steck company grossed \$3 million in sales in 1998; of that amount, typically 25% of the revenue comes from products that are only 2 to 3 years old. Mr Steck concludes: "The need for good new tools in this market is strong and profitable".

Joanne Hayes-Rines, publisher of Inventors' Digest (ID) www.inventorsdigest.com is preparing an article and needs your input. She has been getting more and more queries asking, **"How do I find an honest marketing company?"**

How do YOU, based on your years of experience as a professional in the business, answer this question? What should a person look for in a "marketing company"? How do you define a "marketing company"?

She is asking this question of inventors, leaders of inventor organizations, marketing folks and other trusted acquaintances. Please include your full name, title, company name (if applicable) and e-mail address or other contact information (if you want it printed in ID).

FREE Newsletter offered to INVENTORS

Niemann invites inventors to subscribe to a free monthly newsletter for inventors, "THE ONLINE INVENTOR". Each issue is to contain 3 articles on topics such as: patents, prototypes, licensing and marketing. Niemann (800) 337-5758 website is <http://www.marketlaunchers.com/> Send an e-mail to Niemann7@marketlaunchers.com with the words, "Web Site Tips" to receive "Eight Things to Look for When Building a Web Site."

PATENT CAFÉ is another web site where Inventors, attorneys, kids find help on Patents, Intellectual Property, Innovation.

<http://www.patentcafe.com/free.html>

TOTALLY FREE STUFF:

Links.

The Patent Cafe has more than 4,000 invention-related links arranged in a 'catalog' listing format that makes it fast and easy to zero in on the information needed by inventors, entrepreneurs, kids, teachers, educators and innovators.

Message Board / Forum

Post questions - post answers. The Patent Cafe Message Board (Forum) is an interactive place where inventors can trade ideas with each other, or ask the Patent Cafe experts questions that will be answered back in the forum. The forum is fertile ground for spreading knowledge, getting answers and networking.

Live Expert Chat

Every Tuesday nite at 9:00 PM Eastern Time inventors can join the Patent Cafe's guest experts who will discuss a high-interest topic related to invention development or commercialization. A one-on-one session with many of these experts would cost \$200 or more -- or you'd have to travel to a major inventor trade show to get the kind of advice and tips you can get for free every Tuesday.

Patent Cafe Magazine

Articles written by some of the most knowledgeable and most respected professionals and authors in the invention industry. Patent law, prototypes, invention marketing, success stories, and invention development advice are just a few of the article topics covered every month.

'Inventions Available For License' Listings

The Patent Cafe has more inventions listed in the "Inventions Available" section than almost any other invention listing site on the Internet - and they are all listed for free. Invention exposure and high visibility doesn't get much better than this.

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How good is your idea? The Patent Cafe has free downloadable invention assessment forms, an inventor self-assessment and product assessment forms, as well as a variety of Non Disclosure Forms (NDAs) for use by all inventors.

Inventor Classified Ads

Buy it, Sell it, Place a WANT Ad and more - for free at the Patent Cafe's free classified advertising section. Whether you are looking for prototype material, parts or even a licensee, need to post an inventor organization or school invention event, or want to advertise surplus materials, this is the place to advertise. [No commercial or non-inventor-related advertising please.]

Inventor's Book is now available Online

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. R.A. Rietsema, the UIA is releasing the unpublished manuscripts of "HOW THE SMART INVENTOR DOES IT" also known as "A PRIMER FOR INVENTORS." This is a 10 part series that can be found at <http://www.uiausa.org/Primer.htm> . This [diamond in the rough](#) was highly recommended by Dr. Ronald Versic of the Ronald T. Dodge Company.

Academic IP Workshop Transcript & Meeting Announcements

From: cschultz@nas.edu (Craig Schultz)

The transcript for the April 17, 2001 Workshop on Academic IP is posted at <http://nationalacademies.org/ipr>.

“The Effects of University Patenting and Licensing on Commercialization and Research,”

On October 22 is scheduled “2001 Conference on New Research on the Operation and Effects of the Patent System” - a description of the sponsored research can be found at the link cited above.

On June 14-15, 2001, STEP, along with the Institute of Medicine's Board on Health Care Services are holding a conference on **“Medical Innovations in the Changing Healthcare Marketplace.”**

This conference aims to examine the drivers of medical innovation with a view to highlighting possible public policy levers to stimulate the development and diffusion of new medical technology. It will also address: (1) whether new medical technology is driving up health care costs and (2) whether new medical technology is bringing more benefits.

Sessions will consider these issues in the context of cardiovascular disease, and metastatic melanoma.

This event will be webcast <http://www.nationalacademies.org/> Register online at http://nationalacademies.org/med_innovations Contact: Craig Schultz at eschultz@nas.edu

PLACES and TIMES

***** THE place to be June 8 - 9 - 10 is Redwood Falls, Minn., for the 44th Annual Minnesota Inventors Congress -- workshops, trade show, professional evaluations. It's all there! Go to www.invent1.org or call 1-800-INVENT-1. (If you have a service for inventors, you can exhibit your services.)

***** Inventors' Digest is looking for technology-related products to feature in our September/October issue. If it's on the market, tell us your story. Send information and great looking photos to: Kristina Provencher, Ass't Editor, ID, 30-31 Union Wharf, Boston, MA 02109. Questions? Write to her at kristinaID@aol.com

***** National Inventors' Library program . . . thanks to all who have sent donations to help us reach our goal of distributing great looking displays to 8,000 libraries across the US during August! We've gotten quite a few \$12.25 donations (that will cover 1 library). To join the effort to put inventors "on the map," send your tax deductible check to: ID, 30-31 Union Wharf, Boston, MA 02109. Make the check payable to the Academy of Applied Science. For more info, go to www.inventorsdigest.com

Dick Apley 703 305 9248 and Cathie Kirik 703 306 5568 of the USPTO Independent Inventors Office will be

“Celebrating the American Dream”. This is the theme for our **6th annual Inventor’s Conference on Aug 3 & 4 at the Doubletree at Chrystal City. Speakers include J Davis, inventor of the Eggsercizer and Docie, author of the new Inventors’ Bible. These USPTO-sponsored events bring an excellent value toward meeting needs of independent inventors. Plan to be there!!!!!!**

Get more specifics and sign-up at www.uspto.gov/go/iic2001 .

from Steve Frank From: sjfrank@clark.net (Steve Frank) steve@interpreter-mirror.com
<http://www.interpreter-mirror.com>

The INTERPRETER MIRROR is now available. The introductory prices are:

BASIC Package (mirror w/tripod and case) --> \$249 (\$299 retail)

FULL Package (mirror w/tripod, base, clamp and bag) --> \$349 (\$425 retail)

The introductory prices are good at least until June 15 for delivery of the product by July 1. We are offering further discounts for orders PRE-PAID by May 15, 2001.

- \$15 off BASIC package (\$249-15= \$234 per unit)
- \$25 off FULL package (\$349-25= \$324 per unit)

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The May 2001 issue of Engineering Times (ET) tells of a **current reexamination of engineering undergraduate curriculum**. ET is a voice from the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) www.nspe.org Industry feedback continues to focus on more ethics, **business, communications, teamwork and practical design skills**. This set of skills is very similar to the working characteristics of successful inventors. Your editor estimates that more than half of the regular attendees of INCA have engineering degrees. He would welcome written comment that might be relayed through this newsletter.

All in your HEAD: Intellectual Property - and its Protection

Judith Sears writes about the current state of patent protection in the April 9 2001 issue of Washington TECHWAY p60 www.washtech.com. Pamela Banner of Banner & Whitcoff Ltd. considers patent protection to be the highest priority among valuable intellectual property that includes trademarks, Internet domain names, rights of invention and licensing agreements.

Ms Banner forecasts that appropriate patent protection will demand more care, in part, because recent court decisions has put the burden of patent protection on the patentee. She notes that "Patents aren't harder to get, but more care is required on the front end (good patent applications) because the law is saying, 'do the job right in the first place.'"

Gregory Glover of Ropes & Gray, LLP reflects that in boom times patents may be considered only as "pluses". Now, investors are examining the competitive merit to a patent. Venture Capitalists want assurance that the patent keeps competitors "far enough away" from their investment. Having a rich number of patents in a contested area may give a firm extra bargaining power in a lawsuit.

Independent inventors need to continually appreciate that under common law "shop rules", invention rights are usually owned by the employer of the inventor.

Where the value of new properties becomes great, both inventors and property developers must be forthright and amicable in their agreements, including actual rate schedules for royalties.

See one thoughtful Royalty agreement basis that was generated by Duke University.

WWW.DUKE.EDU