

# Inventors Society of South Florida

## Inventors News

March 2007

Inventors Society of South Florida, PO Box 244306, Boynton Beach, FL 33424-4306

### Eva Thomas Receives ISSF Founders Award

At the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Inventors Society of South Florida, **Eva Thomas** received the Robert and Betty White Award for outstanding contribution to the society. Eva conveyed her gratitude to the ISSF in an email:

"I would like to thank the Board for presenting me with the Robert and Betty White Award. Little did I know when I attended my first meeting about six years ago the knowledge and support I would receive from such a great bunch of people. When Robert and Betty White started the Palm Beach Society of American Inventors (now Inventors Society of South Florida) over 20 years ago, they had a vision to foster creativity, freethinking and education for their members. I can only hope that their vision will continue for at least another 20 years. I encourage all members both old and new to become more active and to give suggestions on how we can grow and improve and keep the vision alive." ❖

### Inventors Alliance

Inventors Alliance was formed in 1993 solely for educational purposes. Inventors Alliance supports independent inventors, product developers and innovative companies through educational and networking opportunities.

Visit [www.inventorsalliance.org](http://www.inventorsalliance.org) and click *Resources* in the left side bar. The Resource List includes links to a few web pages they have found to contain information useful to inventors and entrepreneurs. It only includes information likely to be of use regardless of your particular product or service field. Since the range of possible fields is limitless, it would not be feasible to address product specific fields in this list.

Links are grouped under business process headings based on the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system. Each heading begins with the corresponding DDC code. Links to information of general interest or which could be applied to a number of processes are classified under "General." Links applicable to several processes are grouped under the process having the greatest application. ❖

### American Inventor Offers March Auditions

The competition is open to individuals or teams of inventors. The product must be something that can be sold in a retail outlet. You can come with a sketch, a prototype or even just an idea. All ages welcome! Inventors who are under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The Auditions are scheduled to take place starting March 2007, in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Orlando and Houston. Visit [www.americaninventor.tv](http://www.americaninventor.tv) for more information.

The invention must be a new and useful consumer product that can be marketed and sold to consumers through the retail outlets. It must be able to be, in the Producer's discretion, feasibly developed, manufactured and distributed in high volume to the public. As of the date of the audition, the invention cannot have been manufactured, by the inventor or anyone else, in mass quantity, as determined by the producer in its sole discretion. Read all requirements at [www.americaninventor.tv/eligibility.html](http://www.americaninventor.tv/eligibility.html).

ISSF Board Member **Eva Thomas** is interested in having group of ISSF inventors drive to Orlando for the audition. Persons would have to stay for two nights. Anyone who is interested, please email [etboca@hotmail.com](mailto:etboca@hotmail.com) about car pooling and staying in the same hotel. American Inventor will likely not announce the place or date until a few days before the event so expect short notice. ❖



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*Inventors Society  
of South Florida*

meets

***the first Saturday  
of each month***

Join Us On

March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:30pm

**The Inventors Society of South Florida, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization.**

### Mission Statement

To provide a forum that fosters creativity, freethinking and education that will help further our members' innovations.



### Officers & Board Members

President: Howard Silken

Vice President: Albert Newman

Secretary: Joanna Zaremba

Treasurer: Lucy Pettersen

Founding President: Robert White

Director: Alvin Blum and Richard Loughlin

Membership, Education and Goodwill Ambassadors:  
Howard and Paula Silken

Member Liaison: Joanna Zaremba

Publicity: Tommy Jenkins and Eva Thomas

Public Relations: Eva Thomas

### Contacts

Richard Loughlin in Stuart:  
772-287-2224

Howard and Paula Silken in Delray Beach:  
561-496-1140

Joanna Zaremba in Broward Co:  
954-486-2426



## Defining Your Target Market

Defining your target market can dramatically increase your product's chances for success in the marketplace. Your target market, of course, is the unique group of customers who can benefit from buying and using your product.

Your first step in defining your target market is to figure out if your product is designed for a niche market or a mass market. While it's tempting to say, "everyone will want one of these," that's rarely true of any product. Example: the market for the average, everyday photo frame is a mass audience; the market for a photo frame painted with sailboats and ducks might be parents, grandparents or teachers.

Next, identify which stores sell similar products and familiarize yourself with competing products. Then, to further define exactly who your customers are, answer the following questions:

- How old are they?
- Are they male or female?
- What is their income range?
- What is their level of education?
- Are they married or single?
- Do they have children?
- Do they have specific ethnic or other considerations?
- What are their lifestyle priorities?
- Where do they live?
- Where do they shop?

Once you answer these questions, you'll have a more in-depth understanding of your market and its motivations and behaviors. This can help you better focus your sales efforts. Let's stick with our photo frame example – if you've developed, for instance, a line of novelty, handcrafted photo frames at a relatively high price point, you won't want to focus your efforts on mass-market retail stores. Instead, you'd probably focus on higher-end gift shops, specialty and gift catalogs, and similar sales outlets.

Knowing exactly who your target market is can also help you position your product in the most effective way. Positioning your product will help you communicate your product's most important benefits, and knowing what's important to your customer is the first step in this process. ❖

## Big Idea Group Road Show

Do you have an idea for an interesting consumer product, food/beverage item, or technology device? Register now for an event at one of these locations:

- Las Vegas—March 17-18, 2007
- NY/NJ—April 14-15, 2007
- Chicago—May 19-20, 2007
- Atlanta—September 2007 (exact date to be determined)
- San Francisco—October 2007 (exact date to be determined)

You can register online at [www.bigideagroup.net/Roadshow\\_REGFORM.htm](http://www.bigideagroup.net/Roadshow_REGFORM.htm) or call 603-641-5955 to set up an appointment. They are also accepting pre-registration for the Atlanta and San Francisco Road Shows. Just email [InfoBIG@BigIdeaGroup.net](mailto:InfoBIG@BigIdeaGroup.net). They also stage monthly Road Shows at their Manchester, NH headquarters.

Road Shows are your opportunity to meet with BIG for an honest, no-charge, confidential review of your invention. During your scheduled appointment, they will evaluate your idea and offer helpful advice. If they like your idea and it's in their area

Continued from page 2

of interest, they might ask to represent it to potential licensing companies. Check out their areas of interest at [www.bigideagroup.net/areasofinterest.html](http://www.bigideagroup.net/areasofinterest.html).

Note that if you can't attend a Road Show in person, they can review your ideas by phone or mail. Please check their website [www.BigIdeaGroup.net](http://www.BigIdeaGroup.net) for more information. ❖

## Patentability Q/A

**What is a preliminary patentability Search?** A preliminary patentability search involves a search of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's (USPTO's) records to find the most pertinent prior art relating to an invention. "Prior art" is the existing body of technological information against which an invention is judged to determine if it is novel and non-obvious and can thus be patented. An inventor initially discusses the invention with his or her patent attorney, who then works with a professional search agent to locate the most pertinent references from the USPTO records. The patent attorney can then evaluate whether patent protection is likely to be available based upon the located references, as well as the potential scope of the patent protection. Knowing the potential scope of patent protection allows the inventor to make an informed business decision about whether seeking patent protection is worth the investment of time and money. Moreover, the results of the preliminary patentability search are invaluable to the patent attorney in crafting claims for the patent application that can withstand the USPTO's scrutiny during the examination process.

**Does a favorable preliminary patentability search guarantee a patent?** Not at all. While the USPTO is an excellent source for determining what technical information is in the public domain, prior art is not limited to patent documents. Prior art may also include publications (articles, papers, etc.), sales of an invention, or even uses of the invention in public, none of which are covered in a typical preliminary patentability search. Moreover, patent applications currently are maintained in secrecy by the USPTO until they are published, which occurs sometime after the application has been pending for eighteen months. For these and other reasons, a preliminary patentability search is not a perfect representation of all of the art that may be applicable to a given invention. Even so, the publicly available repository of patents and published applications at the USPTO is one of the best single sources of prior art documents available. Moreover, this is the primary source of prior art the Examiner will use when he or she performs a search of a patent application. As such, the preliminary patentability search is a relatively inexpensive way to gain a great deal of information about the current state of the art.

**What are the next steps when the preliminary patentability search is favorable?** If the preliminary patentability search results are favorable, this is when the patent attorney prepares the utility patent application. When the initial draft of the application is complete, the draft is provided to the inventor for his or her review to make sure the application is technically accurate and complete. The inventor's comments are carefully considered in the preparation of the final draft, which is presented to the inventor for review prior to filing. The USPTO requires that each inventor sign a Declaration when the application is filed in the USPTO acknowledging a duty to disclose information of which he is aware and which may be considered to be material to the examination of the application. Such information may possibly include devices, products, publications, etc. which are similar to the invention and which were publicly known before the invention, and it may also include any public disclosure, commercial use, or offer of sale of the invention more than one year prior to the filing date of the application.

A utility patent application typically includes the following parts: background of the invention, summary of the invention, brief description of the drawings, and detailed description of the preferred embodiments, the claims, and an abstract of the disclosure.

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## Membership

The Inventors Society of South Florida (ISSF) membership application form is available online at [www.inventorssociety.net/appform.pdf](http://www.inventorssociety.net/appform.pdf). Annual individual membership dues are \$60.

Members are entitled to all that is offered by the ISSF: events, meetings, contests, prizes, awards, nominations, and networking. Members also benefit from a monthly newsletter full of important information, tips, publications, Internet sites and expositions.

Membership is the primary source of funds to the ISSF, without which, it is difficult if not impossible to hold meetings, send newsletters, hold special events, and maintain an Internet presence. ❖

## Newsletter Submissions

If you have something you'd like to see in the newsletter, please discuss with or send it to [cever@earthlink.net](mailto:cever@earthlink.net). If it is something that has to be copied, please send the original or a high quality copy. If you need the original document returned, please note this in the submission package.

Please remember that the newsletter is black print only. Submissions that have color (especially over text, i.e. words in a colored box) may not be usable. Try to keep submissions simple and basic. ❖

## Idea Café Grant

Enter the Idea Café Small Business Grant competition. One winner receives a check for \$1,000 and recognition on [www.IdeaCafe.com](http://www.IdeaCafe.com). Applicants must be an established small business or start-up ready to get going. **The deadline is April 15, 2007.** ❖

## Tax Laws By State

Entrepreneur.com helps your business stay current on your state's tax laws. Visit [www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com) and click *Money – Tax Center* in the left side bar. Under *Tax Tools & Resources*, click *Find Your State's Tax Site*. ❖

## ISSF Meetings

ISSF meets at 1:30 pm on the first Saturday of each month at:

**Ligi Tool & Engineering, Inc.**  
3220 SW 15<sup>th</sup> St.  
Deerfield Beach, Florida 33442  
877-523-6693  
[www.ligotool.com](http://www.ligotool.com)

**From the Florida Turnpike:** Exit at Sample Rd, Exit 69; turn right on Sample Rd (East); left on Powerline Rd; and right on SW 15<sup>th</sup> St (past the first stoplight on Powerline Rd, look for two cement towers and the *ModComp* sign).

**From I-95 Southbound:** Exit at SW 10<sup>th</sup> St, Exit 40; turn right SW 10<sup>th</sup> St (West); left on Powerline Rd; left on SW 15<sup>th</sup> St (look for two cement towers and the *ModComp* sign).

**From I-95 Northbound:** Exit at Sample Rd; turn left on Sample Rd (West); right on Powerline Rd; and right on SW 15<sup>th</sup> St (past the first stoplight on Powerline Rd, look for two cement towers and the *ModComp* sign).

**From I-75:** Exit at the Sawgrass Expressway (Route 869); go to the end of the expressway and continue east on SW 10<sup>th</sup> St; turn right on Powerline Rd and left on SW 15<sup>th</sup> St (look for two cement towers and the *ModComp* sign).

### Contact:

Howard Silken at 561-496-1140  
[silkhandp@aol.com](mailto:silkhandp@aol.com)



## President's Corner

The February meeting was well attended and I was glad to see many new prospective members who were listening to every word and taking notes. Our speaker, **Michael Docherty**, was on line with his advice about contacting large manufacturers. He is well qualified on this subject due to his past involvement with The Sunbeam Company.

The most important point he made was: *Large companies are not interested in your idea for an invention; they are only interested in the invention itself.* This is nothing new to our society members. However, the first question a novice inventor asks is, "Where can I find someone I can trust who will sell my idea to a big company for a small percentage of the money I'll make?" Unfortunately, they are putting the cart before the horse. An idea for an invention is not an invention. It is only the first step of many steps that will, hopefully, lead to that final contract.

The road you will take is long, expensive, time consuming and laced with many disappointments. We at the ISSF know this and will guide you to make the trip easier, quicker, less expensive and safer as you go through the invent-to-market process.

I used the word 'safe' for a good lesson. Unfortunately, it seems that independent inventors are surrounded by assassins. They range from Scam Promotion companies, poor attorneys, and unscrupulous prototype makers to problems with the patent office itself (being over charged for their services)! We have been through it by experience and mistakes. It is quite a learning experience and we are only too glad to share our knowledge with you.

The ISSF is your safe house. Let us help you over the bumps and pitfalls ahead. Getting a U.S. patent is not easy but it is a rewarding accomplishment, even if you never make a cent from it. The money is the icing on the cake.

Regards,

*Howard Silken*

## Virgin Earth Challenge

Former U.S. Vice President **Al Gore** and British billionaire **Richard Branson** announced a \$25 million prize for scientists who can devise a way to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and help combat global warming.

Branson, founder of Virgin Group Ltd., will award the Virgin Earth Challenge prize money to anyone who develops technology capable of removing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases at the rate of one billion tons a year. Gore will be a member of a panel of judges that makes the award. The two made the announcement at a press conference in London.

The initiative comes a week after the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said global warming is more than 90 percent likely to have been caused by humans, and predicted temperatures are likely to rise by 1.1 to 6.4 degrees Celsius by the end of this century, with sea levels increasing by 18 to 59 centimeters (7 to 23 inches).

The winner must be able to demonstrate a commercially viable design which will result in the net removal of anthropogenic, atmospheric, greenhouse gases each year for at least ten years without countervailing harmful effects," the written rules of the prize say. ❖

## News From Cathy's Desk

Congratulations to **Eva Thomas** for getting the word out about the Inventors Society of South Florida. Now she is volunteering to print, address and mail copies of the monthly newsletter to members. Her energy is rewarded with the Robert and Betty White Award. The board appreciates contributions of inventors, be it time, information, resources or an email of encouragement. Each of us is in a hurry doing whatever is important to us. The people around us may not see the importance of our agenda. So, let's not forget to take a moment to help or say thanks, as the case may be. *Thank you, Eva!*

I want to thank our guest speaker, **Mike Docherty** of [www.venture2.net](http://www.venture2.net) for his enlightening discussion of open innovation where big business *partners with* independent inventors. Money is the driver in business relationships. The burden is on the independent inventor to demonstrate that the consumer durable product will make \$50M. Key questions for the inventor to answer are:

- Is there an unmet consumer need?
- Is it a differentiated, unique solution?
- Is there a business model to make money?

ISSF President **Howard Silken** decided at the last meeting to bring a copying printer to the next meeting for attendees to use to make copies of information available at the meeting. *Anyone wanting copies will please use the copier after the meeting.* Typically, board members and attendees bring articles, forms and other information to the meeting for dissemination. The board wants to give attendees the opportunity to take away information of value to them, as opposed to making lots of copies beforehand that are not used. With this in mind, I will bring several articles that I have printed as a result of the research for this newsletter. These articles will be available on one of the tables for your review, and to make a copy. ❖

## Oprah's™ Search for the Next Big Idea

Do you have an original product or invention you want the world to know about? You could be sitting on a gold mine! *The Oprah Winfrey Show* is teaming up with QVC for Oprah's Search for the Next Big Idea. Visit [www.qvc.com](http://www.qvc.com) and click *Oprah's™ search for the next big idea*. Near the bottom of the page you will find links to the rules and entry information.

You could be one of up to 10 finalists selected to present your product on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. If the studio audience votes you the winner, you will get the opportunity to sell your product on QVC!

You can pre-register now for the chance to have your product reviewed at one of three national trade shows sponsored by QVC. Upon registration you'll be scheduled for a 10- to 15-minute appointment within a one-hour block, during which your product will be evaluated by a QVC representative.

To be eligible, you must meet certain criteria as specified in the Official Rules, including having a product sample or finished prototype of a product of your own original design which does not currently have broad national distribution, is manufacturable, and can be legally sold in the U.S. Each product will be judged based on its ability to be demonstrated, its level of broad appeal, and its creative and unique nature, as well as its meeting certain QVC legal requirements.

Entries may only be received at one of the three (3) QVC Regional Trade Shows (the "Trade Shows") which will be held from 9:00 AM (local time) to 6:00 PM (local time) on March 23, 2007, March 26, 2007 and March 29, 2007 in Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia, respectively. ❖

### Reinventing the Inventor

Being a successful inventor doesn't stop at thinking up your big idea--you need to learn to be a smart businessperson, too. To be successful, inventors have to look at their inventions as marketable products and have a clear sales strategy. Use a search engine to find **Tamara Monosoff's** article *Reinventing the Inventor*. She offers great advice, including:

- Hang onto your cash and research your product's marketability.
- Understand the value of a patent.
- Use smart business practices.
- Educate yourself. ❖

### IBM's Inventors' Forum

IBM announces the "Inventors' Forum" to collaborate with small and mid-size enterprises. Use a search engine to find the press release, *IBM Sets Record for Most U.S. Patents Earned in One Year*. ❖

### 7 Secrets to Success

There are seven essential principles that you must practice as an entrepreneur throughout your business life if you are to achieve maximum success: clarity, competence, constraints, creativity, concentration, courage and continuous action. Use a search engine to find **Brian Tracy's 7 Secrets to Success** and read the details of his seven secrets. ❖ ❖

### Common Sense Inventing

**Ed Zimmer** wrote this article in 1991. You can find it at <http://tenonline.org/art/9105.html>.

Following are four areas in which we see many inventors trying to do things "backwards".

- Skills: First develop them... then invent.
- Ideas: First sell them... then develop them.
- Patents: First learn the law... then use – occasionally.
- Opportunities: First prepare for... then deal. ❖

**Shoot Your Own Video**

Everyone can now be a video producer. **Walter S. Mossberg** tells you how in the article, *Anyone Can Produce, And Star, in a Video*. Use a search engine to find the article by title and author.

Video has become a staple of the Internet in recent years, and there are many simple, low-cost ways for entrepreneurs to hop on the bandwagon. Use a search engine to find *Tips for Adding Video To a Business Website* by **Sarah E. Needleman**. ❖

**Recent Patent Rulings**

FedCirc.us is a platform for several informational products that will allow patent professionals to incorporate the latest caselaw into their daily practice. Timely, accurate and insightful case reviews are the foundation...and those are all free. Professionals can easily read the latest case reviews (try the **GimmeTen!**<sup>TM</sup> feature, for example) to quickly gain an understanding of current developments. Focused legal research on a particular topic is just as easy...browse by keyword or simply conduct a search.

And, that's just the beginning!

FedCirc.us announces the availability of the *The Resolution*, the free preview issue of their quarterly magazine, *The FedCirc.us Reader*. Find it at [www.fedcirc.us/index.php](http://www.fedcirc.us/index.php).

*The Resolution* will give you a sneak-peak at the features of the magazine. It's jam-packed with all sorts of patent caselaw goodness, including a 'Trend Spotting' article, a featured case review, prosecution- and litigation-focused digests, chronological and alphabetical listings of cases from last quarter (including summaries), and a fun "Quotables" section that includes favorite quotes from cases issued during last quarter. ❖

**USPTO Hiring Examiners**

Got a degree in engineering, chemistry or physics and looking for work? The USPTO is hiring. The patent office plans to hire 1,200 examiners for each of the next five years. The average starting salary is about \$62,000, and electrical engineers and computer engineers may qualify for an \$8,800 signing bonus because the PTO has a hard time recruiting in those fields. ❖

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**Alvin Blum**  
Registered Patent Agent  
**954-462-5006**

*Inventor's Survival Guide*  
by Catherine VerSchneider  
*A great resource on the  
invent-to-market process!*  
For more info and pricing visit  
[www.inventorssurvivalguide.com](http://www.inventorssurvivalguide.com)

**"I Have An Idea... "**  
by Howard and Paula Silken  
*Answers a lot of questions  
for first-time inventors*  
For more info and pricing call 561-496-1140 or e-mail [silkhandp@aol.com](mailto:silkhandp@aol.com)

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info or email [Sales@tarpklip.com](mailto:Sales@tarpklip.com).

**Useful Websites**

- The Federal Consumer Information Center offers consumer protection tips of an array of fraud-related topics: [www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm).
- The Federal Trade Commission helps you recognize and cope with identity fraud: [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft).
- The Fraud Bureau ([www.fraudbureau.com](http://www.fraudbureau.com)) alerts online consumers and businesses about internet companies and individuals who have previously engaged in fraudulent or deceptive business practices or with whom others have experienced difficulties in the course of internet interaction.
- The National Fraud Information Center site offers information on telemarketing, Internet, elderly and business fraud: [www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org).
- The National Business Association ([www.nationalbusiness.org](http://www.nationalbusiness.org)) is a non-profit group that assists home-business and small business owners.
- The National Federation of Independent Business ([www.nfib.com](http://www.nfib.com)) is a lobbying group that caters to small business and offers business products and services at discounted costs.
- The National Small Business Association ([www.nsbaadvocate.com](http://www.nsbaadvocate.com)) advocates for state and federal policies beneficial to small business.
- The Small Business Advancement National Center ([www.sbaer.uca.edu](http://www.sbaer.uca.edu)) at the University of Central Arkansas, offers entrepreneurial and small business counseling. ❖

Continued from page 3

Of these, *the claims are the heart of the application* in that they define in words the scope of the invention for which the applicant seeks a limited monopoly from the government.

- The background sets forth the state of the relevant technical art and defines the need that the claimed invention fulfills.
- The abstract is a very brief summary of the claimed invention, and the summary section summarizes the claimed invention in further detail.
- The drawings illustrate the various elements of the invention recited in the claims, while the brief description of the drawings quickly orients the reader of the patent to what each drawing illustrates.
- The detailed description of the preferred embodiments is where the elements of the drawings are described in further detail and various examples and embodiments of the invention are fully elaborated. ❖

## Nine Questions for Those Who Want to Invent Something As Yet Unknown

If you can answer yes to all of these questions, then you have a solid base for a successful invention.

1. Do you know the field of your future invention?
2. Do you know the technical literature in the field of your future invention?
3. Do you know the patents in the field of your future invention?
4. Do you know the technical problems, asking for a solution, in the field of your future invention?
5. Do you have the technical and other specific knowledge (special techniques, mathematics, physics, aerodynamics, electronics, etc.) for solving the problems of question 4?
6. Can you *financially afford* to develop and exploit your invention?
7. Do you have enough time, technical means and knowledge to *develop* your invention?
8. Are you reasonably familiar with the national and international patent laws?
9. Do you have enough time and knowledge to *exploit* your invention? Or, can you have this done by others while supervised by you? ❖

## Ideas for Toy Inventors

Unsafe toys may present any of the following hazards: choking, cutting, poisoning, hearing or digestive blockage. For information about toy safety, read [www.uspirg.org/home/reports/report-archives/toy-safety/toy-safety-reports/trouble-in-toyland-21<sup>st</sup>-annual-toy-safety-survey](http://www.uspirg.org/home/reports/report-archives/toy-safety/toy-safety-reports/trouble-in-toyland-21st-annual-toy-safety-survey). Another helpful link is the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at [www.cpsc.gov/toysafety.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/toysafety.html).

The Child Care Connection publishes a free quarterly newsletter that regularly includes information about recalled toys, found online at [www.childcareconnection.org](http://www.childcareconnection.org).

See *Tips for Toy Safety* brochure at [www.uspirg.org/html/TipsforToySafety2006.pdf](http://www.uspirg.org/html/TipsforToySafety2006.pdf).

See *2006 Summary of Toy Hazards and Examples of Potentially Dangerous Toys* at [www.uspirg.org/html/2006DangerousToyList.pdf](http://www.uspirg.org/html/2006DangerousToyList.pdf).

See *Toy-Related Deaths (Children Under 15): 1990-2005* at [www.uspirg.org/html/Toy-RelatedDeaths1990-2005.pdf](http://www.uspirg.org/html/Toy-RelatedDeaths1990-2005.pdf). ❖

### Venture Investing Trend

Venture investors interested in clean technology are finding a home for their money in environmentally sustainable construction materials and processes. Use a search engine to find the article, *Venture Investors Back Green-Building Start-Ups*, written by **Jonathan Shieber**. ❖

### North American Patent Office

Use a search engine to find the article, *The Pros and Cons of a North American Patent Office*, written by **Luis C. Schmidt**. ❖

### Provisional Patent

The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has made it clear that a provisional patent application must be treated with the same seriousness as a non-provisional. Use a search engine to find the article, *Provisional Patent Application: The Dangers Emerge*, written by **Inna Shtivelband Landsman, P.C.** ❖

### PatentMonkey.com

Patent information is growing at a rapid pace and, with it, comes the growing challenges of reviewing larger search results on existing inventions. PatentMonkey.com enters the market to meet the needs of the professional patent searcher as well as the technically savvy innovator, providing unique searching tools and document download features in an open, free search system that includes up to date USPTO information.

PatentMonkey.com was designed with four main benefits:

1. Efficient search using patent front pages and text on one view
2. Save interesting patents to a folder for sharing and downloading
3. Patent list uploading and bulk PDF downloads
4. Dynamically displaying patent status on every patent detail page.

Read more about the website at [www.prweb.com/releases/2007/2/prweb501846.htm](http://www.prweb.com/releases/2007/2/prweb501846.htm). ❖

*Inventor Facts*

Master watchmaker **Breguet** (1747-1823) of France created an alarm clock small enough to be worn as a ring.

A Christmas tree stand patented in the US in 1877 by **Joannes Eckardt**, when wound up, rotated the tree and played a yule tune.

In 1954, **John La Marr** of Torrance, CA invented a strap-on mechanical doll, set on a pole attached to a rolling ball, for practicing dance steps.

*Inventors Society  
of South Florida*

meets

*the first Saturday  
of each month*

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## What is a Provisional Patent Application?

A provisional patent application is an invention disclosure document that is filed with the USPTO that affords the inventor a priority date without meeting all of the formal requirements of a utility patent application. For example, a provisional patent application need not include claims, nor do the drawings have to comply with the formal drawing requirements. To receive the benefit of the provisional priority date, an applicant must file a utility application within one year of filing the provisional application and claim the benefit of the provisional application.

While a provisional application is an informal disclosure document that provides a relatively inexpensive way to quickly get a priority date for an invention, care should be taken in deciding whether its use is appropriate and, if so, in how the document is prepared. Even though the provisional application need not meet all of the formal utility application filing requirements, it still has to enable one of ordinary skill in the relevant art how to practice the invention ultimately claimed in the later filed utility application for those claims to receive the benefit of the provisional priority date. Moreover, the provisional application becomes a permanent part of the record or "file history" of the final patent. As such, a provisional application disclosure should be carefully reviewed or prepared by a patent attorney to make sure it does not include statements or terms that could later be problematic when attempting to enforce the resulting patent in court. ❖

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