

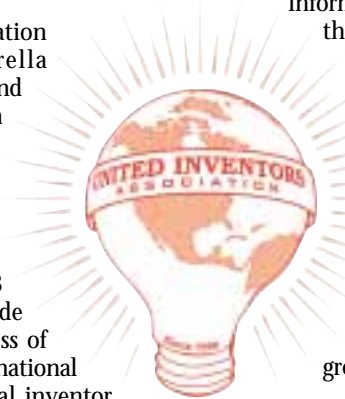
Homegrown Ingenuity: Finding Inventors In Your Own Backyard

By Carol A. Oldenburg

THE LIGHT BULB, THE AIRPLANE, THE TELEPHONE, and the computer are well recognized symbols of American ingenuity and innovation. All are creations of independent inventors! Whole corporations have been built on these ideas, but they all began in the minds of one person, an inventor!

The United Inventors Association (U.I.A.) is a national umbrella organization of inventor groups and independent inventors from around the country. Established in 1990 as an outgrowth of a conference for independent inventors sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.I.A. is an educational 501(c)3 organization which seeks to guide creative individuals in the process of new product development. As a national organization for local and regional inventor groups, we are able to act as a forum for coordinating efforts to address such global issues as intellectual property and patent reform, counteracting the damaging effects of fraudulent invention promotion companies, and, most importantly, enhancing and promoting the national image of contemporary inventors. In legislative hearings regarding patent reform, the U.I.A. has facilitated the voice of the independent inventor by keeping the community informed of developments and encouraging inven-

tors to express their interests through their representatives. By collecting and sharing information about the invention marketing scams, the U.I.A. has identified and publicized the fraudulent dynamics of such companies and has also shared this information with the media as well as with the appropriate law enforcement agencies.



In 1995, U.I.A. published the first edition of the Inventor's Resource Guide, a compact collection of articles and resource information designed to help those seeking guidance in the process of developing and marketing a new product idea. This year, the 5th Edition of the Guide will be published as three separate publications, outlining this process in greater detail and in successive stages.

Ask the Experts

Two years ago, with the explosion of the internet and web-based information resources, the U.I.A. created an online consumer education web site, www.uiausa.org, which offers a wealth of information about all aspects of the invention and new product development process. Of particular help is an interactive section which provides an Ask The Experts Q. and A. service.

In 1997, the U.I.A. became a non-profit affiliate of the Academy of Applied Science, whose purpose is to provide a forum where inventors can meet and network with legal, business, and academic professionals concerned with invention. In partnership with the Academy and with Inventors' Digest Magazine, the U.I.A. collaborated on the launch of the first National Inventors' Month (N.I.M.) in August 1998. N.I.M. is a national media

campaign dedicated to educating the public and enhancing the image of the independent inventor. This year, the fourth N.I.M. will be focused on a promotional program for public libraries around the country which will feature insightful, eye-catching, and thought provoking displays about inventors and the process of invention. Part of this project will encourage the kids toward further explorations by use of an interactive web site. Another effective way to promote creative thinking is to connect students with real live inventors in their own community. Having recognized and successful inventors available to visit the schools and teach children the fundamental skills of problem solving and innovation is the primary goal for the inventor mentoring program which the U.I.A. is now developing. While the National Inventor Month seeks to present an enhanced image of inventors by putting a face behind the products we're all familiar with, the inventor mentor program will do the same by putting a face behind the concepts and skills involved in learning the art of invention. As a centralized organization for inventor groups around the country, the U.I.A. is perfectly positioned to be able to provide the networking and contacts

required for such a program. Access will occur through schools and other related children's inventor programs, usually offered through local libraries and museums. To date, many of our inventor groups have reached out to the schools in their communities by offering inventors to present to classes as well as to act as consultants and judges for school-based invention and technology shows.

Inventors near you

Parents and teachers interested in finding out more about these and other resources for the young inventors in their lives can contact our offices by phone at (716) 359-9310 or by Email at UUAUSA@aol.com, or by visiting our web site at www.uiausa.org.

Of particular note, all of the local inventor groups are listed according to state of location under the section or our web site titled Inventor Organizations.

So, the next time a child asks such questions as "Who invented the...?", "How does somebody invent something?", or "Can I call my invention a...?", think about the U.I.A. and find your nearest real live inventor in the flesh! ●

Carol Oldenburg is the Administrator for the United Inventors Association

ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*
ROBOTICS*

Hands On!

TEAM CHALLENGE SETS

The Team Challenge Set enables groups of four or five kids to simulate real-life robotics and robotic systems. Each group member assumes a role and works with others to solve each challenge. One of many standards based solutions from your "Hands-on, Minds-on" partners in education.

*Request a complete catalog.

PITSCO **LEGO** **dacta**
PARTNERS IN INNOVATIVE EDUCATION
www.pitsco-legodacta.com • 800-362-4308

Circle No. 2 on Reader Service Card

Robot Kits,
Educational Resources,
and More ...

MR.-LINE HEXAPOD

1-866-209-5324
www.microrobotna.com

Circle No. 3 on Reader Service Card

Aerodynamics Curriculum

The Techno Aerodynamics Curriculum I is a complete 7-10 day Technology Education Module. Ideal for pre-engineering, physics, CAD/CAM, CNC, etc. Kids have fun learning about aerodynamics, physics and how to use the DaVinci CNC router and Mastercam 3-D Software to build award winning aircraft!

Pro/DESKTOP Compatible!

Techno isel

Call: 800-948-3246
or fax: 1-800-737-7436
WEB: www.techno-isel.com

Circle No. 4 on Reader Service Card

Curriculum that Towers!

Synergistic Systems brings the real world to your classroom with proven hands-on curriculum for science, math, and technology education.

Engineering Towers

SYNERGISTIC SYSTEMS
A DIVISION OF PITSCO, INC.
www.synergistic-systems.com

Circle No. 5 on Reader Service Card