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## The Newsletter of the Institute of Inventors and Innovators

III – The home for inventors. A non-profit organization controlled by inventors, supporting inventors.

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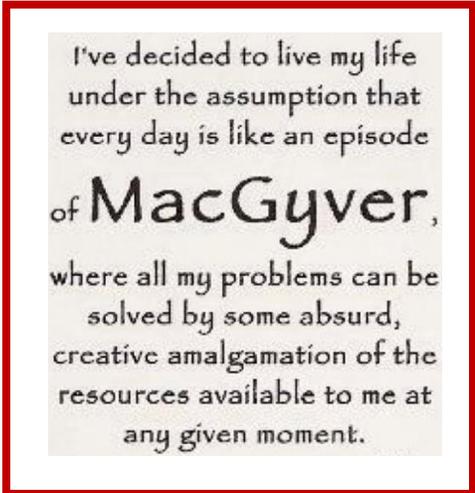
As you remember there was no **Eureka! Meet** in May so there is no report back ...  
But there's other chewing gum for the brain in this issue ... so read on.

### For your diary ...

- ❖ **Dates for our monthly Eureka! Meet** for the rest of the year ... set them aside, attendance is always worthwhile. Details of interesting speakers or events will be confirmed month by month: June 12; July 10; August 14; September 11; October 9 and November 13. We take a break in December then start again January 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.
- ❖ **PITP Pitch it to the Panel.** The next date is Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July – so get your inventive ducks in a row (does anyone have another saying for this idea?) and as a member of the Institute, you should go to the website to book your place. The advice you will get from this panel of professionals and experts will be precious indeed.

### The Diffusion of Ideas

It seems that MacGyver is a verb in daily use amongst inventors because most innovation is the result of joining forces with previous thinkers and creating something new. Essentially this is what MacGyver does ... makes something else with what he finds and always gets out of his fix! If you accept this sentiment then you could *macgyver* until you get your idea to market.



I've decided to live my life  
under the assumption that  
every day is like an episode  
of **MacGyver**,  
where all my problems can be  
solved by some absurd,  
creative amalgamation of the  
resources available to me at  
any given moment.

If you replace the words 'problems' with 'ideas' and 'absurd' with 'innovative' in this quote alongside you get an interesting hook to hang your hat on. Many think invention and innovation are just that ... 'a creative amalgam of available resources, a diffusion of ideas, an osmosis of thinking', and it is this amalgamation and diffusion that advances useful knowledge.

Innovative thinkers and doers don't 'create or do' in a bubble, they connect and ideas morph.

### So. Where do your ideas come from?

All sorts of places and with the ingenuity of mankind, there is no full stop to this sentence.

For instance, when someone starts with a common problem that needs fixing, actions taken may lead to trial and error, new thinking, problem-solving, perseverance and sometimes just plain obduracy – along with a will not to let go until satisfied to get the 'job done'.. Ideas are spontaneous and are generated by an opportunity to fill a need or perhaps answer a question, offer a solution, provide comfort or simplify. Ideas may appear from wanting to make life more enjoyable or for many, less 'painful', and of course there are others.

Take for instance **Braille**. A Frenchman Valentin Hany devised a raised letter system for the blind in 1786 but it was another Frenchman Louis Braille, who most likely used some of this thinking when he invented his embossed alphabet in 1824, some 38 years later. Braille as we know it today is still among the most widely used systems of reading and communication for the blind.

The history of **flight** is a fascinating one. Pre-1903 when the Wright brothers put Flyer 1 into the sky for a controlled flight of one minute, there had been others before him working with principles of aerodynamics. Sir George Cayley converted a kite into a glider in 1804 ... William Henson designed a 'aerial steam carriage' in 1842 ...and between 1891 to 1896 Otto Lillenthal conducted daring experiments with his gliders losing his life in a glider crash. But it was when the Wright brothers' invented their 'flying machine' in 1903 that flight really took off (!) ... from kites via gliders and biplanes to Concorde and the moon!

And then there are those inventions that happened by **mistake** such as post-it notes or cornflakes or potato crisps or scotchguard. Pursuing and researching one idea, happenstance and new thinking brought about the invention of others. These 'by mistake' inventions lend something to the definition of DIFFUSION. It was by using parts of some idea/action with added deliberation that made them possible.

**Diffusion of ideas**, by default, means too that innovation happens incrementally. Most innovation is the result of researchers and independent inventors checking, analysing, researching and re-purposing previous devices and processes, and this takes time. Things have to mature. Life has to happen. The timing for the innovation has to be right.

Invention does not occur in a vacuum and many say this is a really good thing. Ideas intermingle and bounce off each other, collaboration of ideas is at hand but still, you need to be clear about what you want to bring to market. If you have got an idea and you are not sure what to do with it or where it is going why not test it using the **5FLT**?

### The 5-factor Lens Test (5-FLT)

Do you have an idea, Invention or Innovation (or anything in between) exercising your mind right now?

There are many ways to refine your thinking or testing its intrinsic value and one of these is by running it over the **5-FLT**. It will be a tough exercise but well worth the while to keep yourself on track.



**ORIGINALITY:** Is your invention original, unique? If not, is your innovation or improvement one of a kind? Can you define your idea clearly?



**VIABILITY:** Is there a current need for your invention? Will it be sustainable? Is it feasible? Realistic? Is it upgradeable? Does it have a future?



**CREATIVITY:** What problems with your invention have you encountered thus far? What have you done to solve them? Design? Materials? Science? Electronics?



**PRACTICALITY:** Can it be manufactured – is it doable? Is it useful? Helpful? Functional? Will it really work? Will it be user-friendly?



**MARKETABILITY:** Is there a market? Is your idea desirable? Commercial? Is there further growth potential? Will it improve life for South Africans?

There may be other factors that would suit your invention more closely, and those you can add, but each of the criteria above will make you think further if you keep focusing on them.

Further, you can discard or overcome niggles along the way and **clarify** your thinking. It's likely too that you will find solutions (or at least a 'to do' list) to what may be holding you back from realising your intentions in the short-term.

## MAY WAS AFRICA MONTH

All over the continent celebrations of heritage, culture and history were to be found covering key brands, finance, investors, organisations, industries and personalities who are making a difference in Africa. When she was the Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor said "creativity, innovation and invention are an integral part of our South African technological heritage. South Africans are a proudly inventive nation."



We intend to cover South African Inventors and Innovators in future issues of Eureka! but because May was Africa Month, we've elected to tell you briefly about **William Kamkwamba**.

This Malawian inventor became famous after building a windmill that he uses to power domestic electrical appliances in his home. He didn't invent the windmill, but was enterprising enough to use blue-gum poles, bicycle parts and bits of cast off machinery from a local shipyard to put together a working model. Necessity is the mother of invention! Since then he has also made a solar-powered water pump that supplies drinking water to his village, yet two more examples of the **diffusion** of ideas.



## EUREKA! MEET

Our next monthly meeting is on **12<sup>th</sup> June** for a presentation by inventor **Toli Altounis** of the



### 'PUT IT OUT' Mini Fire Extinguisher

An affordable tool that can be used as a first response to small fires.  
Easy and safe to use...everyone will want one!

Some lucky person will win one of these cuties!

The venue is 'Made in Workshop',  
65 Maria Street, Fontainebleau –Tel: 083 269 2195.  
Park in front of the building. Take Republic Road towards Randburg; Maria Street crosses Republic Road just south of the Rabie Road junction or click

[Google maps](#)

### Members and visitors are welcome!

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings, feel free to bring a guest.

## Letter sent to an Australian Newspaper



It's about time the authorities did something about older drivers. For too long they have caused havoc by hogging the left hand lane, sticking to the speed limits and halting at 'Stop' signs causing great inconvenience and preventing others from doing what they like on the roads. Another concern is that, by avoiding fines, they're not doing their bit for state revenue and therefore placing a further burden on younger drivers. Until older drivers can prove they're proficient at weaving in and out of traffic, driving whilst texting or talking on their mobile phones, tailgating, using drugs or doing wheelies they must be banned from holding a licence.

## 10 SUCCESS PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

1. You are **the only person responsible** for your success.
2. You don't have to invent **the wheel**.
3. There is no progress without **action**.
4. **Persistence** always wins.
5. **Focus** is everything.
6. Failure is **necessary**.
7. Positivity fuels **productivity**.
8. You must believe you can.
9. Helping others is a big part of being **successful**.
10. Success is a journey of countless **baby steps**.

Sometimes it's not such a bad thing to be reminded of some basics ... especially when it comes to getting your invention invented!

### ADVERTISE WITH US

Would you like to advertise your service or product on the III website [www.iii.org.za](http://www.iii.org.za) or in EUREKA! our monthly newsletter?

Different ad sizes, positions, time periods and styles are available. Our current click rate is around 2000 a month (and counting!) so the exposure is good for a selective audience interested in what you have to offer.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPEAL

Please go to the website and click on the links to update and/or confirm your Membership details. There are several projects in hand for *members only* coming soon to a theatre near you, so please make sure we know how to contact you!

### Have you invented something? Brought it to Market?

Please tell us about it. Opportunities exist for you to sell your invention/s through 'OUR SHOP' on the [www.iii.org.za](http://www.iii.org.za) website. It is a service available to members at no charge. Talk to us, let us send you information on how to get your product in front of interested eyes, we would be pleased to support you. Email [info@iii.org.za](mailto:info@iii.org.za)

**THE NEXT EUREKA! Newsletter will be out by 5 July ... look out for it! Greetings to you all.**

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#### The Institute of Inventors and Innovators

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