

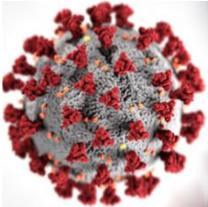
APRIL 2020

## The Newsletter of the Institute of Inventors and Innovators

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

III – South Africa Business Award Winner – MEA Markets 2018

<https://www.mea-markets.com/2019-the-institute-of-inventors-and-innovators>



Corona Virus

### For your diary ...

- ❖ **Our Eureka!MEET and PITTP – Pitch it to the Panel sessions have been put on hold and no meetings will be held until further notice.**
- ❖ Be on the lookout for some sloof lirpa writing, after all, it is April!



**More about the CORONA VIRUS?** Yes, because the more informed we are the easier it will be to deal with what's happening.

The III supports the Government's efforts to curb.

the spread of this dreadful disease Let's follow the regulations and guidelines together especially during this lockdown period. ● WASH your hands often and properly; ● KEEP your distance when communicating with others; ● STAY at home; ● BE informed; ● THINK 'safe' at all times ● BE vigilant.

**Go here to the S A Resource Portal for constantly updated information:** <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

**As you can guess we are sorry to note that** our Eureka!MEET and PITTP schedules have been put on hold which has effectively put an end to face-to-face networking or getting valuable invention advice **for the time being.** As soon as we know you'll know!

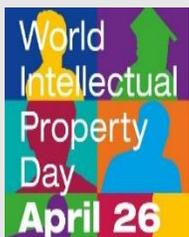
Even as the Institute makes this announcement, we will continue to accept membership applications and bookings for PITTP. These can still be made for a new 'Pitch it' date to be confirmed.

### TWO NUMBERS TO KEEP NEAR YOU ...

**0600 123456** Corona – the WhatsApp, number.

**0800 029999** CALL if you think you display any of the symptoms and someone will come to you.

**The Institute sends you best regards and wishes you all good health.**



It's ironic that this day should be celebrated at this time! Nobody could have seen the impact of the Corona Virus pandemic on the world – there are just too many stories out there. **BUT ONE VERY IMPORTANT STORY** is that of the time-bound and time-sensitive rules connected to protecting your Intellectual Property, especially Provisional Patents/Patent Pending and full patents. The Institute has spoken to IFIA who, together with other world bodies, has come to the aid of all inventors in a quest to relax these deadlines. Look out for a full report on this in the May Eureka!NEWS when so much more will be revealed.

THE INSTITUTE OF INVENTORS AND INNOVATORS  
A Home for Inventors. Run by Inventors. Supporting Inventors

## Eureka!MEET March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020

### Report back – Ken Hawksworth: An Inventor's Tale from Idea to Market ... Twice!

Ken is a problem solver. He has an imagination. He is practical and technically minded – all characteristics that suit an inventor. He realised he had an inventive streak way back in the late 90s when he learnt his first lessons in invention with a couple of inventions which were unsuccessful. For one, he learnt that a 'good idea' is not enough for success, and that there has to be a market for your idea. Besides this he learnt that timing and price must be right too.



**Pool Pilot™** After listening to Ken tell us how he invented and brought to market his POOL PILOT, (and subsequently his about-to-be-launched Random-MaX™), he showed that you need to be patient, persevering, open-minded and adaptable to get your invention into the customers' hands.

Inventing is all about solving problems and finding workable solutions and this is just what he did; and it all started when he bought a house with a pool!

Cleaning this pool to his satisfaction was the problem, and the solution lay in finding a way to make sure the whole pool was well covered by the available pool cleaners. This got him thinking. South Africa is swimming pool country and the figure of 8 patterns and stuck-in-the-corner cleaners just didn't do the job properly.

Over a period of three years he tried a variety of ways to sort out this figure of 8 problem which was found in machines with a straight line connection of the hose to the cleaner. By trial and error, he created a compound angle steering bend for connection between the cleaner and the hose which, by random rotation, created random cleaning patterns which in turn cleaned the pool better; but then he realised he also had to design a way to rotate the hose and steering bend automatically.

He tried a mechanism similar to a retractable ball pen and discovered, by accident, that his design rotated in the wrong direction by opposing the natural helix in the hose. This led him to his Eureka! moment of harnessing that helix twist action to drive his simple hose rotator with each pump cycle. Having solved this meant he had a marketable product.

Many will know about the rich history of the Institute and that its founder, in 1974, Don Pilkington helped many an inventor to success. And Ken was one of them.

Via the Ill and with Pilkington's help he applied for a provisional patent on both parts of his kit. Don further challenged him to think about how else this invention could be used or made – in fact, to think outside the box. This was one of Don's valuable lessons for any inventor, especially one who may have tunnel vision or who can't see the wood for the trees.

To illustrate the hard work involved in making an invention idea a reality, examples of the different stages of development of the Pool Pilot were passed around the audience, each showing the additions and improvements on the different iterations, all of which lead to the final product. Inventing workable things is sure hard work!



Pause here a moment to reflect. It has been said that not all inventors are business people who want to run an invention business and this can be true, but Ken is not one of them.

Challenged by his Pool Pilot and a market demand, he found himself manufacturing kits in his garage workshop overnight for sale the next day at a Sandton show, and it was at this same show that he met the owner/partner of 6 pool shops ... and the rest as they say was history. He was no longer only the inventor but a manufacturer, salesman, marketer and businessman too, skills he did not possess at the time but that he had to learn. He opened a business bank account with R100, the only money he ever put into the business because the product paid its way from day one.

By cold calling on shops the sales grew and eventually he had to sub-contract the manufacture of the components. Realising that he must invest in tooling to mould the parts, he redesigned them to suit and began small-scale, cost-effective, mass production.

At the same time, he incorporated and protected by patent a ratchet mechanism into the rotator design, mainly in response to competitive products. This was a product that could be patented and by doing so he prevented others copying him. However, he chose not to market this version.

He still packed Pool Pilot at home and delivered as orders came in, carefully controlling stock levels, but eventually things just got too busy and he had to outsource the packing too. By this time his distribution and sales via wholesalers exceeded the trade with individual shops, so wholesalers proved to be a more economical distribution chain for Pool Pilot.

Over the years pool cleaner and hose designs have changed, presenting new challenges and forcing Ken to respond with product changes, something he's done to keep pace with market demands.

The original patents will be expiring in a few years and two years ago he began work on redesigning Pool Pilot. He has a provisional patent on a new universal fit steering bend and a new rotator unit which incorporates both the original design and an improved ratchet and seal design. These form the basis of Random-MaX™. The Random-MaX™ drive continuously changes patterns during operation giving improved pool cleaning coverage.

Regardless of the ever popular brands of 'old school' pool cleaners used, (i.e. those that do not have a built-in steering mechanism) Random-MaX™ produces maximum random movement, and it does this without any fast moving turbines or gears that wear out. When the filter pump switches off, the drive disengages allowing the hose to fully relax. Random-MaX,™ like Pool Pilot, went through several iterations. Many of these, which he showed an engaged and participative audience, have been protected in his broader IP. The final product is simple to make and simple use, it doesn't wear out and it doesn't need replacement parts. It represents a life philosophy of simplicity for Ken.

Questions and comments from the room included a number of helpful suggestions about marketing and distribution of the new product, particularly using the internet for the export market.

**Thank you very much Ken for showing us how a good idea that solves problems gets to market. Clean pool anyone?**



For **James Veitch**, a British writer and comedian with a mischievous side, spam emails proved the perfect opening to have some fun, playing the scammers at their own game

[https://www.ted.com/talks/james\\_veitch\\_this\\_is\\_what\\_happens\\_when\\_you\\_reply\\_to\\_spam\\_email?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/james_veitch_this_is_what_happens_when_you_reply_to_spam_email?language=en)

## In case you missed it ...

We tend to think that plastic is always the worst option for the environment, we've read and seen and heard about how our world is damaged by the waste plastic that clogs waterways and the oceans. But when it comes to wrapping your go-to-work sandwiches, **aluminium foil** - even though it is recyclable - **is worse**.



Aluminium mining is energy-intensive and polluting: per square metre, aluminium foil contributes three times as much water pollution and six times as many greenhouse gas emissions. So unless you use the same piece of foil six times, cling wrap is better. For an even better option, try a waxed cotton wrap which can be reused for months.

Source: Very Interesting Magazine Issue 50

**As you see above Pitch it to the Panel 9th May 2020 has been cancelled BUT there's no reason not to book. We will keep your place for you and you'll be ready to go when the new date is announced.**

There are so many good ideas out there – is yours one of them? We're sure you know it is but why not come and get expert advice about it from a panel of professionals specifically put together for members of the III

Book now via the website [www.iii.org.za](http://www.iii.org.za) – don't wait until it's too late and you have to wait with an idea burning a hole in your head! Rest assured, we will let you know soonest about the new date.

## Was the PET ROCK an Invention?



Not all inventions need a lot of brain power or a professional qualification. They just need a sense of humour, an idea with legs and some daring. Take the Pet Rock for instance.

In the history of fads and crazes, there has been nothing to rival its, some would say, inexplicable popularity. In the early 1970's it was a smooth, unadorned rock, sold in a cardboard box and it made advertising copywriter and 'inventor' **Gary Dahl a millionaire.**

Apparently the idea was born in the pub when Gary was listening to his mates complain about the hassle of owning pets. He said he owned a pet rock and there it was. He quickly got to work creating a 'home' for the Pet Rock to live in, complete with air holes and an owner's manual full of ridiculous instructions.

"Your Pet Rock will be a devoted friend and companion for many years to come," read Dahl's original booklet. "Rocks enjoy a rather long life span so the two of you will never have to part -- at least not on your Pet Rock's account."

"Once you have transcended the awkward training stage your rock will mature into a faithful, obedient, loving pet with but one purpose in life—to be at your side when you want it to, and to go lie down when you don't. Your pet rock will outlive you; she (or it could be a he) will outlive everything breathing on God's green Earth; s/he is eternal, everlasting, unable-to-die and all-surviving ..."



Dahl started selling the product for \$3.95 each around Christmas of 1975, and his two-man operation quickly grew into a 300-person workforce. In a matter of months, he had sold over a million Pet Rocks, and though the fad died down early 1976, his ingenious marketing savvy will always be legendary.

Perhaps the problem this 'invention' solved was a lack of a national sense of humour? Anyway, the jury is still out on trying to explain the success of it all. Was it an invention? What do you think?

**By the way since 2012** Rosebud Entertainment has held the United States trademark rights to the Pet Rock, and guess what? You can buy a **Pet Rock**, with all its finery, from Amazon for \$19.95 Go figure!

**INVENTORS  
AT WORK**

### **WE ARE COLLECTING INVENTOR'S STORIES!**

**If you have one and you want to be featured in some way via III services – please contact us and we'll send you more information and a 'to do' list. It will not be an onerous task – so, please talk to us ... we're waiting to**

**hear from you: email us on [info@iii.co.za](mailto:info@iii.co.za)**

## Garden Gnome anyone?

Did you know that Garden Gnomes were **banned by the RHS** (Royal Horticultural Society) and were not allowed to be used at the Chelsea flower show? But in April 2013 this ban was lifted, though there were not many examples to be found in gardens that year. It seems however that things have changed and the word is spreading.



There are several 'new' Gnomes on the block (and yet others still under development). These '**artificially intelligent (AI) Gno'mennials are here to stay and proliferate**' it says on company literature, '**as new designs replace old.**' All racial groups are represented and with minimal programming can be used to manage a small to medium-sized garden. '**No longer are Gnomes in the garden only for the not-so-rich and unfamous, they have found a new upper-class market.**'

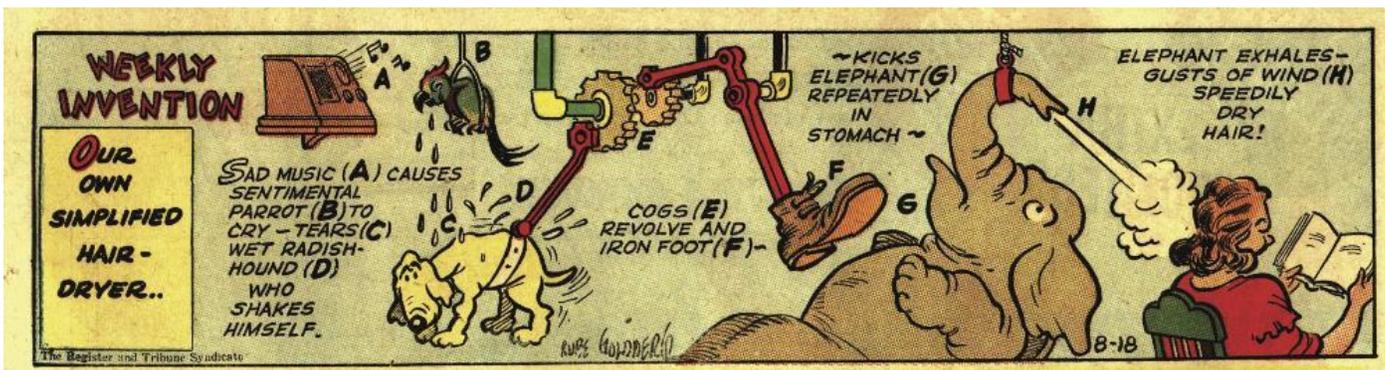


What's more, orders are picking up, especially in the UK, Germany and, surprisingly, in closed estates and complexes in South Africa where gardening services are becoming expensive. When asked to comment, Keith Kirsten reported brisk sales but warned that some of the units seem to have glitches that still needed to be ironed out. 'But,' he said, 'our customers are aware of the nursery's 100-day return policy which matches the manufacturer's warranty given for each Gno'mennial.'

Currently at WIPO there is a **furious debate about who owns the patent** since the origins of these bearded creatures goes back a long, long way; but perhaps more pressing problems include operational 'misdemeanours'. The AI component sometimes sends mixed messages, and **the inventors don't know why**. Some Gnomes (the drip managers) water at the wrong time of day, and others (the pruning ones) are confused about the programmed definition of topiary or the word **STOP**, so, in some instances, all the trees in a garden are being pruned and cut back severely.

According to 'Gardener Today,' a spokesman from the firm Go'Gardens (responsible for importing these Gno'mennials into South Africa from the UK) noted that his company was not taking any more orders presently as the **demand has been unprecedented and has outstripped supply**. "We simply cannot meet our obligations at this stage," he said. "However, we expect things to settle down soon and look forward to a brisk winter sales season here in South Africa when gardening rests."

## Some Rube Goldberg to give you a smile break in these serious times!





## Inventor Jarek Duda says Google is patenting work he put in the public domain

Creator of a breakthrough compression algorithm fights to keep it patent-free.

When he invented an important new compression technique called asymmetric numeral systems (ANS) a few years ago, he wanted to make sure it would be available for anyone to use. So instead of seeking patents on the technique, he dedicated it to the public domain. Since 2014, Facebook, Apple, and Google have all created software based on Duda's breakthrough.

But now Google is seeking a patent that would give it broad rights over the use of ANS for video compression. And Duda, a computer scientist at Jagiellonian University in Poland, isn't happy about it.

Google denies that it's trying to patent Duda's work. A Google spokesperson told **Ars** that Duda came up with a theoretical concept that isn't directly patentable, while Google's lawyers are seeking to patent a specific application of that theory that reflects additional work by Google's engineers. But Duda says he suggested the exact technique Google is trying to patent in a 2014 email exchange with Google engineers—a view largely endorsed by a preliminary ruling in February by European patent authorities.

The European case isn't over, though, and Google is also seeking a patent in the United States.

**GO HERE** to read the rest of this important story:

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2018/06/inventor-says-google-is-patenting-work-he-put-in-the-public-domain/>



### Advice for Successful Inventors ....

Adapted from an article by **Mr Ron Jackson**, a long-time member of the Indiana Inventors Association (USA) and founder of Jackson Systems. He holds fifteen patents; and to help

inventors everywhere he offers the following ideas and reminders for successful innovators.

He suggests that:

The role of Marketing is 80% of any profitable innovation. Under-marketed but very useful inventions can fail in the marketplace while heavily marketed, but useless inventions, can be quite profitable. Helpful elements of marketing can include:

Creating a good looking prototype of your invention is key. Whether you want to show prospective buyers a working prototype or a sell sheet/brochure that includes a high quality picture of a non-working prototype, everyone knows that 'we see with our fingers' and an image is worth a thousand words. An image makes people feel that you and your invention are real and credible.

Creating good quality videos of your invention on YouTube is a smart marketing tool if you can manage this. Social media rules OK. Videos can help both to establish your credibility in your technical field and to show the consumer benefits that your invention provides. There are many good 'marketing' examples on YouTube – find a style that suits your product and try to get a video made along the same creative lines.

Finding a good fit for your invention in the marketplace is a must.

A company may want to partner with you if an embodiment of your invention contains parts made by that company or if the embodiment supplements, complements or enhances one of the company's products.

Growing your business network makes good business sense. If you want to sell or assign or rent or license your idea or patent if you can, try visiting trade shows relevant to your invention and then when there, identify stands of medium-sized companies that sell products similar to yours. Visit the stand when only the company representative is there and ask whether or not they work with independent inventors. If so, exchange business cards and send information about your product later. Just leave your card at the time – anything more is likely to get lost. Follow up on all leads with focus and intent.

Selecting your business partners carefully, then trusting them is important. Don't allow the fear of intellectual property theft prevent you from profiting from you invention. Most people are honest, but nondisclosure agreements can keep them honest.

Of course not everyone has the funds to invest in making YouTube videos or visiting faraway Tradeshows – but with the internet at your fingertips, reading, planning, networking and then reading some more will help get you to where you want to be.



**RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP**

**Please support the III and renew your membership.**

Sometimes you may think this appeal does not apply to you because you've been coming for so long – so what? It's so a lot if you haven't renewed since March 2019. Just go to the website and fill out a new member form or send an email to [info@iii.org.za](mailto:info@iii.org.za).

**You can be part of the solution!**



**The Next Eureka!NEWS will be out by 5 May ... look out for it.**

**Greetings for the Easter holidays to you all...**

**even though these days fall within the South African LOCKDOWN PERIOD**

DISCLAIMER: The Institute of Inventors and Innovators makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of the EUREKA! newsletter and expressly disclaims liability for any errors and omissions or use in or of the contents of this newsletter.

The tri-crescent and suns device; Institute of Inventors and Innovators; III; Pitch it to the Panel; PITTP and EUREKA! are all trademarks of The Institute of Inventors and Innovators.

**The Institute of Inventors and Innovators ... Inventors working on behalf of Inventors**

[info@iii.org.za](mailto:info@iii.org.za) 072 6643749 [www.iii.org.za](http://www.iii.org.za)

**As you know the III are members of IFIA - the International Federation of Inventors Associations.**



The international community is vibrant and very active when it comes to events and expos with the twin themes of Invention and Innovation.

If you go to <https://www.ifia.com/ifia-event-schedule/#> you will be able to see what events are scheduled for 2020 ... **HOWEVER, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED!**

**On the 14<sup>th</sup> March and according to a warning from government agencies and due to the spread of the Coronavirus, IFIA has temporarily closed their offices, but as their colleagues work online, members can stay in touch with IFIA by email.**

**IFIA WISHES EVERYONE GOOD HEALTH.**

**Got something on your mind? Contact us on [info@iii.org.za](mailto:info@iii.org.za)**