

"Inventors Helping Inventors"



# THE Tampa Bay INVENTOR NEWSLETTER

*The Official Publication of the Tampa Bay Inventor's Council*

7441 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Suite 607, Largo FL 33773-5124

JUNE 2004

*The Tampa Bay Inventor's Council is here to help you succeed, forge ahead, maintain your purpose, and achieve what you intend to. Everyone in this group is behind you.*

## This month's Events

Welcome to June, Let's hope that it is as great as May! We had a very exciting month. We showed products to two entities that we probably couldn't get near if we were on our own, and we have dates set to do it all over again!

Some of our inventors have heard back from Smart Inventions. They have been asked for their prototypes and other information, which implies that they have specific interest in their products. Since TBIC steps out of the picture once an inventor shows to a company, we don't get to know all the details, but we do know that this may be the opportunity that some of our inventors may have only dreamed of. We hope that if they are successful, they remember us little people!

### Breaking News (for June 9th) ! ! !

I was in the middle of writing another column, when Greg Carbonaro (one of our new Board members) called to say he has just landed us one of the biggest showings we could ask for -- Sharper Image !! If we haven't gotten in touch with you by the time you read this and you want to present, you need to get to a phone ASAP and call either Greg or myself (Jennifer at 727-548-5083) so we can figure something out quickly!

I hope you all realize that this is one of the major companies that we all thrive to get in front of. You might want to dress better than semi-casual and comb your hair twice for this one!!

P.S. When you see Greg you might want to tell him 'Thank You' !

P.S. I have spoken with the people at the *Jimmy Kimmel Live Show* and they would like to see this tape of presentations. So if you have no objections, you will basically be showing your product twice in one day, and either of them could set you on the road to riches!

### June 9th

Ladies and Gentlemen, you might want to bring a change of clothes and a lunch for this day because it will be packed full of good things!!!

Not only will we be showing to Sharper Image today, but we have long awaited the speaker for this evening. We have the honor of having the founder of Chuck-E-Cheese®, Mr. Gene Landrum as our guest speaker for this evening. You can read more about Mr. Landrum on Page 10 of this issue along with a story of how one of our very own inventors, David Norton, has a very special tie to him. We hope that you will try to arrange your schedules to be here for all the festivities. I would hate to see a good turnout for presentations and have only a few people around for our Guest Speaker, so please eat your Wheaties, muster up all your energy, and let's look forward to a momentous day in TBIC history!!

### June 23rd

One of our own, Mr. Chris Barrs, will be educating us on this night. Chris has a wealth of information that he is going to share with us as well as show us some valuable materials used in prototyping. I'm sure you will be as impressed as those who have met Chris as to how knowledgeable this young man is and how much of an asset he will be to the future of TBIC.

### June 25th

This is another BIG one! *Idea Village* is here on this day and we need to put on another great showing. They want to see it all. They say that even if we know it isn't an infomercial-type product, they want to see it anyway. So get your products ready and do it again!!

All Meetings Held At:  
7441 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
Suite 607  
Largo FL 33773  
on the  
Second & Fourth  
Wednesdays  
each month

**For More Information:**  
Call 727-548-5083  
8:30 am -- 5:00 pm  
Monday -- Friday

# A Message from Our President

**JUNE 2004**



Once more, I get the pleasure of reporting on the wonderful work and accomplishments of our members.

First of all, inventors presented more than 48 items to two separate direct TV entities in May. In the first case, Gretchen Erickson, of New Product Development at Smart Inventions, graced us with her presence and was given the full exposure of

all those primed and ready. Besides being polite and interested in each presentation after a long trip from California, she was also a good sport and let guys like John Blue get her to participate in actual demonstrations.

Gretchen has already contacted about five inventors directly asking for prototypes so that they could evaluate their inventions further. The real touch of class was her writing personal notes to about twenty members, in which she used their name, and wrote specifically about their product, and why it presently wasn't a fit for them. Some presenters have not yet heard, so we'll all keep our fingers crossed for them.

In addition, Jake Pereira of Reheater of Canada sandwiched our members in between sessions at HSN to demonstrate a client's English Garden flower mattress. He is also interested in many of the products, some for TV and some for catalog and credit card inserts. He is meeting with his partner and will be contacting at least some of you shortly. I am personally aware of one member who has already been contacted.

During an informal intermission, Jake gave some street-savvy advice on the world of intellectual property and infomercial business tactics and strategies that gave most of us something to come away with that we did not know before.

One of our new Board members, Greg Carbonaro, has not rested from his last coup of getting Smart Inventions and Reheater in here. He has SHARPER IMAGE coming to see presenters' offerings this coming Wednesday, June 9th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. They want to see everything! I've decided my next invention is going to figure out how to put this guy in a can and put him on the supermarket shelf!

Which brings me to my next to final point: We have an opening on the Board and, although we may not all be Greg, if you are motivated to contribute, we would love to have you throw your hat in the ring. Please submit a brief resume and a description of how you think you can contribute to the Council to Jennifer at your earliest opportunity.

Once again, TBIC is serving as a catalyst, allowing your idea to get a fair evaluation in the real world marketplace. You need to be involved for it to happen, but you are not alone unless you want to be. We are no longer tilting at windmills, waiting for things to happen. The best attitude I've heard was the following comment from an inventor after learning about the Sharper Image visit: "Besides my other inventions, I plan to have come up with another invention to present to them". Clearly he has learned not to put all his eggs in one basket.

Remember, you are a member of this Council -- not because you have an invention; you are here because you have an inventive mind. . . use it!  
Stay outside the circle !

George Mouzakis

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Mouzakis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Coming Soon !  
(June 9th)  
Special Announcement!**

We will have a terrific guest speaker on our regular meeting night June 9th, *Gene Landrum*. Gene is the founder of the national chain of *Chuck E. Cheese*<sup>®</sup> restaurants and is a proficient author and dynamic speaker. He makes regular appearances on television and is a professor of management and entrepreneurship at International College.

Some of his works include:

- Profiles of Genius:  
Thirteen Creative Men Who Changed the World
- Profiles of Power and Success:  
Fourteen Geniuses Who Broke the Rules
- Profiles of Female Genius:  
Thirteen Creative Women Who Changed the World
- Entrepreneurial Genius:  
The Power of Passion

I urge you to not miss this meeting! If you have ever wondered why you decided to become an inventor, Gene will make it absolutely clear! He will give a rousing 45-minute Power Point presentation and then take your questions. He will also bring a limited supply of his insightful books and will sign them if you care to make a purchase. This is a great opportunity to get fired up before the long hot summer, so make sure that you get to our June 9th meeting!

 --wr

Would you like to contribute an article or editorial message to this newsletter? Just write up your contribution and email it to [admin@tbic.us](mailto:admin@tbic.us) or fax it to 727-547-5490.

Material must be received no later than the last day of the month prior to the next publication.

**Our Last Meeting**

Our last meeting was AMAZING! We had the magical pleasure of watching Dan Meier and Greg Carbonaro show us some materials that we can all use in making our own homemade prototypes. They told us where to get them and demonstrated how they work. There were plenty of ooooh and ahhhhhh moments with lots of touching. Hey; you know what I mean! If you had to miss this meeting, you can still get a tape of it from Wayne for \$8.00. You can contact him at [goodharbinger@yahoo.com](mailto:goodharbinger@yahoo.com) Definitely worth the price. You will be astounded at how such simple materials can produce the very thing some of us would pay big money to have made and we can do it ourselves!

 --jk

**What are you doing?**

We want to use this column to update everyone on the progress of our inventors. If you have some news about yourself and the progress of your product, send it to us. If you've made a breakthrough and you have something to share, please don't be shy. We are all in this together -- your success is our success.

We would like to congratulate the people who have gotten calls back from Smart Inventions.

Once TBIC sets up a wonderful opportunity like this for you, we step out of the picture, so after you have shown to them, we have no way of knowing of your success unless you tell us.

This is what it's all about; when you succeed we all succeed, so provide us all with a little inspiration and let us know how good we're doing!

## Shotluge

One of our newest members, Kirk Collins made his Shotluge debut at an Ybor City Club. This was the first showing of this fun product. Hopefully there will be pictures posted soon in the meeting room of Doris Gundrum and Mark Knoepp trying out the Shotluge with a couple of Lemon drop Shooters.

From what I understand, Shotluge has been around for a while, but Kirk and his partner Mark have perfected the process. This product is described as a 300-pound block of ice on a stand with trails cut out from the top to the bottom, where the shot of choice runs down the Luge and into a tube which is in the waiting mouth of the drinker. This is a product that is going to go over big, especially with the Spring Break crowd!

## Lights, Camera, Action!

We want you to know that we tape most everything we do here and we need to give kudos to Wayne Rasenen for doing this for TBIC. He actually does this for a living and as he is one of the Board members. He has volunteered his extra time before meetings to come in, set up and tape not only our Board meetings, but our speakers and any presentations that we do, as well as the regular monthly meetings. Keep this in mind for those times when you can't make a meeting or want a copy of something like the last meeting where there was a showing of prototyping materials that can be used again. You may purchase a tape from Wayne for \$8.00 (for his tape and time) and all you will need to do is e-mail him with the request. His address is [goodharbinger@yahoo.com](mailto:goodharbinger@yahoo.com).

## Open Board Seat

We have an open Board seat. If you have an interest in filling it or have a nomination please let us know by either sending in a Bio or your nomination to . If we don't have a Badge picture of you then you will need to have one taken. See Gary.

 --jk

## May, I tell you !!

If you weren't around for the major activities that have sent TBIC into a complete frenzy this month, let me fill you in on what you've missed. Hopefully, you all know by now that we have a new Board member that is behind all the madness! His name is Greg Carbonaro, and he has been doing a phenomenal job of tracking down the people in high places that we would all have NO luck approaching. He's gotten them to come here to TBIC and see our products. We're not just talking about any old companies. We're talking about Smart Inventions, Idea Village and even Sharper Image!!! (*I think Greg has a silver tongue!!*)

If you have ever seen a gizmo or gadget on an infomercial, you can bet that one of these companies probably had something to do with it.

We impressed Smart Inventions. They contacted the inventors of interest and asked to come back in a few months to see more. Then, we had the gentleman from Canada (who happens to be a member of TBIC now) Jake Pereira who liked quite a few of our products. He wants to work with those inventors to market their products for them, or to act as their agent to bring them to market. Either way we are lucky to have him!

We had it all set to welcome Idea Village on the 25th, and we thought we could sit back and take a deep breath, but Greg's not having any of that!

He knew that since we had just shown to two in a row, we would be ready enough to go for another round. But this isn't just another showing though, folks. This is one of the big ones! We will really need to put on our best showing to entice them into returning.

By the time Idea Village does get here, we'll be pro's and some of us will hopefully have success stories to tell!

John Blue handed in a list of 147 other companies to contact and I believe we are going to be very busy doing presentations for quite some time. Let me ask you, can you think of something better to do?

 --jk

# DRAFTING !

WHERE DO YOU GO TO GET THE DRAWINGS DONE FOR YOUR PATENT OR TRADEMARK?

AND WHERE MIGHT YOU FIND SOMEONE TO MAKE THE DRAWINGS FOR THE MANUFACTURER'S PERUSAL?



*My advice is free and my drafting skills are only slightly more. (However my wife says that's too cheap.) We should negotiate.*

**RICHARD HUMPHREY  
(727) 938-2017**

**EMAIL: HUMPHREYRH@PNGUSA.NET**

## Just A Note

We would like to remind our members that our board meetings are open to you if you would like to sit in on them. We usually meet at 6:00 on regular meeting nights in the conference room of ICTT. If there are more people than chairs, we will move to the meeting room.

## GENERAL MEETINGS CALENDAR

### Monthly Meetings

June 9, 2004 .... 7:30 pm

June 23, 2004 .... 7:30 pm

### Invention Showcases

June 9, 2004 .... 10am-2pm

June 25, 2004 .... 2-5pm, 7pm-??

### Next Monthly Meetings

July 14, 2004 .... 7:30 pm

July 28, 2004 .... 7:30 pm

## Membership

Make your inventing process more effective and more fun !

A few benefits you will enjoy:

- **Monthly Newsletters**
- **Free Workshops**
- **Updates on Legislation affecting the industry**
- **Current Industry News**

Bring a Friend !

Membership Director:  
Jennifer Knoepp

## ATTENTION

I.D. Badges are to be worn on the TBIC premises during meetings to allow us to identify and learn the names of our fellow members. Badges should be deposited back in the designated area for use next time. If you have taken your badge home, please remember to bring it back so that you will have it to wear at our meetings.

Thanks.

We hope that those of you who have taken advantage of our Affiliate Program had a good experience. We hope that you will continue to make your purchases this way. For those who haven't tried the program or don't know how to use it can go to the TBIC web site, [www.tbic.us](http://www.tbic.us) and click on 'General Information'.

# WANTED

## MEMBERS WITHOUT PICTURES

**IF YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER,  
OR NEVER HAD YOUR PICTURE TAKEN  
FOR AN I.D. BADGE**

## REWARD

**YOU WILL BE ABLE TO KNOW THE NAME OF THE  
PERSONS YOU MEET AND CONVERSE WITH  
AT MEETINGS**

**ASK AT THE FRONT DESK FOR GARY**

**ANYONE ELSE WITHOUT AN I.D. BADGE  
WILL BE SHOT(digitally) ON SIGHT !!!**

### BY THE WAY . . .

If you have any business to be taken care of on the night of our meetings, please plan to arrive by 6:30 to give us plenty of time to take care of your needs before the meeting starts. We would like to start our meetings promptly at 7:30 as planned. So, if you need to renew or upgrade your membership, or if you have any other inquiries about your membership, newsletter, badges, etc., just plan to come in plenty of time to attend to it before meeting time.

#### NEED SOME HELP ?

Would you like to have help in doing some patent or trademark searches, or to get some advice from an expert? John Blue is making himself available here at TBIC before each meeting at 6:00 pm. He will help in any way he can to see if your idea, logo, trademark, etc. is already in use. Here is some further contact information for him:

**JOHN D. BLUE the INVENTORS MENTOR<sup>SM</sup>**

USF #30132

4202 E. Fowler Avenue

Tampa FL 33620

Phone/Fax: 813-972-3815

Email: [finjb@yahoo.com](mailto:finjb@yahoo.com)

Please email him or go to his Website for further details at:

[www.finjb.com](http://www.finjb.com)

#### BULLETIN BOARDS

All items to be placed on our bulletin boards should be given or sent to Jennifer Knoepp, our TBIC secretary. These items will be dated to stay on the Board for two months, after which they may be resubmitted, if there is room. Otherwise, that item will have a one-month waiting period.

TBIC reserves the right to determine the suitability of all items posted. TBIC neither investigates, promotes, endorses nor profits from the information provided and will govern themselves accordingly.

## A Note to Members New and Old !!!

We hold Focus Groups for our Sustaining Members' Products. And even if you have done one on your product, and you would like to do it again for any reason, you are more than welcome to do so.

This is an opportunity to show your product to the 'Public' in the best forum possible.

You will gain experience to show your product at presentations such as the one on May 14th.

This is a service to our Sustaining members that you would otherwise pay good money to have done so take advantage of it!

Information on upcoming Focus Groups will be posted on this page of the newsletter each month. Watch for it.

Sign up to be a presenter or a member of the panel. You will gain experience by participating, no matter what.

### FOCUS GROUP

**As yet, no one has signed up to be a presenter for our Focus Group sessions this month. We will be glad to have you present your product for comments and constructive criticism anytime you are ready.**

At each Focus Group meeting, we would like to have at least twenty TBIC members to stay after the regular meeting to listen to the presentations and fill out a questionnaire for each item presented. This should only take about 30 minutes.

If you would like to be a focus group presenter, for our next meeting or at a meeting next month, contact Jennifer at the TBIC office, 727-548-5083.

Please volunteer if at all possible. It is important to your fellow inventor.

A New Monthly Feature  
**Invention Trivia**

- An Englishman invented Scotland's national dress – the kilt. It was developed from the philamore, a massive piece of tartan worn with a belt and draped over the shoulder, by English industrialist Thomas Rawlinson. Rawlinson ran a foundry at Lochaber, Scotland in the early 1700s, and thought a detachable garment would make life more comfortable for his workers.
- Walter Hunt patented a bullet with its own explosive charge on August 10, 1848.
- When airplanes were still a novel invention, seat belts for pilots were installed only after the consequence of their absence was observed to be fatal – several pilots fell to their deaths while flying upside down.
- When commercial telephone service was introduced between New York and London in 1927, the first three minutes of a call cost \$75.00.
- When using the first pay telephone, a caller did not deposit coins in the machine. He or she gave them to an attendant who stood next to the telephone. Coin telephones did not appear until 1899.
- Arch supports were invented by Konrad Birkenstock in 1897. He designed shoes that followed the shape of the foot so that comfort would increase. The basic design revolutionized the footwear industry.
- Artist Xavier Roberts first designed his soon-to-be-famous Cabbage Patch® dolls in 1977 to help pay his way through school. They had soft faces and were made by hand, as opposed to the hard-faced mass-market dolls, and were originally called "Little People."
- As an advertising gimmick, Carl Mayer, nephew of lunchmeat mogul Oscar Mayer, invented the company's "Wienermobile." On July 18, 1936, the first Oscar Mayer® "Wienermobile" rolled out of General Body Company's factory in Chicago. Wienermobiles still tour the United States today.
- As of 1940, a total of 90 patents had been taken out on shaving mugs.
- As World War I raged through Europe in 1917, Ed Cox of San Francisco invented a pre-soaped pad with which to clean pots. His wife named it S.O.S.®, which, as the story goes, stood for "Save Our Saucepans."
- At the outset of the Manhattan Project, Albert Einstein was one of the scientists who forecast that an A-bomb would have to be so large and heavy that it would require a ship to deliver it to its target.
- At the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, Richard Blechyden, an Englishman, had a tea concession. On a very hot day, none of the fairgoers were interested in drinking hot tea. Blechyden served the tea cold – and invented iced tea.
- At the turn of the century, most lightbulbs were hand blown, and the cost of one was equivalent to half a day's pay for the average U.S. worker.
- BAND-AID® Brand Adhesive Bandages first appeared on the market in 1921. However, the little red string that is used to open the package was not added until 1940.
- Barbie® and Ken® Dolls are named after Mattel founders Ruth and Elliot Handler's son and daughter, Barbara and Ken. Barbie's® full name is Barbie Millicent Roberts, and she is from Willows, Wisconsin. First sold in 1959, Barbie® wasn't given bendable legs until 1965.
- Bavarian immigrant Charles August Fey invented the first three-reel automatic payout slot machine, the Liberty Bell, in San Francisco in 1899.
- Before bath tissue was introduced in the United States in perforated form in 1884, a number of outhouses in America were stocked with dried leaves.
- Before the invention of mass-marketed hair care products, households were pretty much on their own concocting family shampoos and conditioners. This suggestion was published in The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book in 1847: "Perhaps the best of all shampoos is the yolk of an egg beaten up with a pint of soft warm water. Apply at once and rinse off with castille or other hard white soap."
- Belgian driver Jenatzy was the first to reach a speed of over 100 km/h in his electrically powered car "La Jamais Contente" in 1899.
- Boxing was the first sport to be filmed. Thomas A. Edison filmed a boxing match between Jack Cushing and Mike Leonard in 1894.
- Britain built a fleet of steam submarines in 1915, dubbed the K-Boat, it proved to be a disaster and never went into action. It took 5 minutes at best to perform a crash dive, and once underwater it was unstable resulting in a number of accidents.
- Britain developed the first Tanks for use during World War I. The word "Tank" was used because it didn't mean anything, and didn't give the Germans a clue as to its possible use.
- Camel's-hair brushes are not made of camel's hair. They were invented by a man named Mr. Camel.
- Canned food was invented for the British Navy in 1813, but the first practical can opener wasn't invented until 1870.

Information contained herein was obtained from general public information found at  
<http://www.coolquiz.com/trivia/directory/directory.asp?dir=Inventions>

# Wacky Patent of the Month

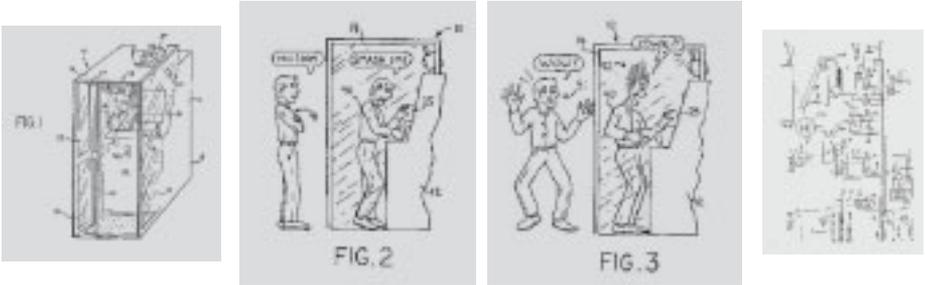
(brought to you by [www.colitz.com](http://www.colitz.com))

## Electrostatically Enhanced Game

**Inventor:**

Allen, et al

Patented Nov. 19, 1985



### ABSTRACT

An electrostatic enhancement apparatus for a video arcade or other game, including an electrostatic generator for generating a high voltage low current electrostatic charge, an electrode coupled to the generator for providing the electrostatic charge to a player, and control circuitry responsive to a control signal from the game for actuating the electrostatic generator to provide the electrostatic charge to the player upon the occurrence of a predetermined event in the game. The preferred embodiment includes an isolation booth for surrounding and electrically isolating the player during the electrostatic charging and preventing accidental discharge. Also included is a discharge arm mounted for electrical engagement with the electrode for removing charge from the electrode and the player under certain circumstances.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention seeks to overcome the disadvantages of prior art electrically shocking arcade games by providing a unique and exciting high voltage low current electrostatic charging of the player in response to a predetermined event. Briefly described, the present invention provides in or for a game such as a video or pinball arcade game, an electrostatic enhancement apparatus which safely and comfortably yet excitingly causes the player's hair to stand on end. The enhancement apparatus comprises an electrostatic generator operative to generate a high voltage low current electrical charge, an electrode coupled to the generator which is contacted by the player and which imparts the electrical charge from the generator to the player, and control circuitry responsive to a control signal from the game for causing the generator to provide the high voltage electrostatic charge to the player. Typically, the control signal from the game will be provided on the occurrence of a predetermined event such as the achievement of a particular score.

Uniquely and thrillingly, the player contacting the electrode will experience a safe high voltage low current static electrical charging, causing the hair to stand on end and providing a unique visual experience for the player and for persons observing the player. Advantageously, no current flows through the body of the player, so that no unpleasant electrical shock is received.

The preferred embodiment includes an electrical isolation booth made of a clear insulating material such as "plexiglas" or the like which surrounds and electrically isolates the player from the surrounding environment so as to prevent accidental discharge of the electrostatic charge. Consequently, the player within the booth remains safe from the passage of electrical current through the body, and the provision of the electrostatic charge merely causes his hair to stand up on end. Advantageously, the isolation booth also prevents the potentially painful discharge of electricity into the bodies of persons observing the player, who can view the hair-raising effect through the clear walls of the isolation booth with safety. Also provided in the preferred embodiment is a safety interlock on the door of the booth, which removes electrostatic charge from the electrode and powers down the electrostatic generator if the door should be opened during operation of the game, preventing exposing the player or observers to electrical shock.

In the preferred embodiment, a discharge arm is mounted for electrical engagement with the electrode so as to safely and quickly remove charge from the electrode, and consequently from the player. The discharge arm is operative to contact with and discharge the electrode upon the occurrence of a second control signal, which in the preferred embodiment can be provided by the game, by the operation of the safety door interlock, or by the player's attempt to remove his hand from the electrode. Accordingly, there is also provided a player sensor for detecting whether the player's person is physically contacting the electrode. If the sensor detects that the player has removed his hand from the electrode during the game, evidencing fear of charging, the player sensor causes the discharge arm to force the electrode to ground potential, preventing the build-up of charge.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a new and exciting enhancement for arcade games.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an electrostatic enhancement apparatus for video arcade and other games which creates a safe but exciting hair-raising effect.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an electrostatic enhancement apparatus for games which generates a safe high voltage low current electrostatic charge to a player upon the occurrence of a predetermined event during the play of the game.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide for an arcade game a safe high voltage low current electrostatic charge to a player upon the occurrence of a predetermined event, which charge cannot be accidentally discharged through the body of the player.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a means for preventing accidental painful and dangerous discharges of electricity through the body of the player or observers by electrically isolating the player from the surrounding environment during the play of the game and during the application of an electrostatic charge.

Not only are we looking forward to hearing Mr. Landrum's success story, but we are also honored to have a direct tie to him through one of our long time members, David Norton, who had a little bit to do with his success.

Here's the story in some of David's own words. About 25 years ago, David started supplying bowling machines to the Chuck-E-Cheese® stores opening up here in Florida. It was decided that they needed a custom designed score screen. The 'Cheese Roll' design is the result of the efforts by David and the Chuck-E Cheese® Art department. Before production ended, he had built over 3000 of these machines. David says, "when I think back to the start of it all, I realized that in the beginning of any venture, some things just have to go your way. I was lucky enough to meet a man that was open-minded enough to deal with an up-start company such as mine.

David has had this panel (see picture below) in his warehouse all these years, and when he heard that Mr. Landrum was coming, he asked if he could have TBIC present it to him to remind him of his visit to TBIC. I thought it was a great idea and asked the Board if we could have it framed. They said 'yes', but David decided that he could do the framing himself. He did a great job! The plaque is framed and beautiful and it's going to make this a very special occasion.

David said to me "I wonder if he'll even remember me after all these years?" I have a feeling he will.



Tonight's quorum was made up of Dan, George, Earl, Greg and Jennifer.

We announced an open seat to the Board and to those in attendance at this open meeting and also asked for the bio's of those who might want to fill the open seat.

Paula gave the Treasurers Report.

We discussed a water dispenser being purchased for TBIC. We decided to check on pricing and proceed. All approved.

George asked that we set a budget for refreshments.

Paula asked that we try once again to set up a library for TBIC. There were no volunteers to man it at this time.

Dale Hoskins was given a budget of \$50.00 to find or build library shelves or bookcases. All approved.

Greg suggested that we look into advertising in *Popular Science* to bring in more long distance members. He will look into pricing on this and it will be considered at the next meeting. All approved.

George asked that we consider reimbursing Greg for the dinner to which he took Gretchen from Smart Inventions. A motion was made and this was unanimously approved.

There were no other items to discuss and this meeting was adjourned.

## A Special Pat On The Back

The Thank-You nod goes to a few volunteers who helped us put on a prettier face for our future visitors. Robert Aiken, Dale Hoskins, Oscar Fournier, Peter Lefferson, Irene Petree, Cindy Harrison and myself (Jennifer) all put on our painting duds and made the display booths look a little nicer. We had a great time getting to know each other aside from TBIC stuff and I don't know about the rest of them, but I look forward to more times like that!

Here are a couple of pics of the "Hunter Green Painting Crew".



### Display Areas

Now that the paint is dry, we're ready to fill the display booths with your products. Jennifer will put back most of the items that were there before, but it will be up to the inventors to come in and spruce up their booth. We know that because of such short notice, the booths won't be filled and spruced up when Sharper Image gets here, but we hope that won't be the case when Idea Village comes on the 25th. It's *first-come first-display*, so get here and get your booth.

Note: Please be sure that your product is patent protected before displaying or showing to anyone.

 --jk

## Are You a CRACKPOT Inventor?

by Robert Platt Bell, Patent Attorney

Submitted by Robert Aiken, TBIC Member

A simple test to save us all a lot of time . . .

I get a lot of phone calls from inventors who want further information about the Patent Business. Unfortunately, most of them do not take the time to read the materials on my website first (as I request they do) before calling. As a result, I end up wasting a lot of valuable time answering the same question over and over again. This wasted time makes it hard to keep my fees low and my prices reasonable.

In addition, I inevitably get phone calls and letters from individuals who are crackpots. I'm not pulling any punches here. The invention business unfortunately attracts a lot of "unique" individuals. While these people are interesting characters, I cannot take them on as clients.

Are you a crackpot inventor? If you are not sure, take this simple test. Answer the following questions and total up your score. At the end is a scale of cracked pottery.

Note that EACH of the answers give below is based upon an actual conversation or letter I have received from a potential "client". Welcome to my world . . .

### QUESTION #1:

**Are you living in your Mother's Basement?**

- 0 = NO, I have my own apartment or house.
- 5 = YES (Please note: garages count, too!).
- 5 = NO, I am presently incarcerated.
- 5 = NO, I am in a mental institution.
- 5 = NO, homeless.

### QUESTION #2 :

**The Government is suppressing information about Aliens in "Area 51".**

- 0 = Be Serious
- 1 = You never know, the universe is infinite after all.
- 2 = Its probably likely, given all the sightings.
- 3 = Well, the government has covered up so much else.
- 4 = Yes, I've seen them.
- 5 = I've been probed.

### QUESTION #3 :

**The "100 MPG Carburetor" . . .**

- 0 = doesn't exist. Get real.
- 1 = was bought up by the oil companies.
- 2 = was suppressed by the Government.
- 3 = was bought up by the oil companies and suppressed by the Government.
- 4 = was invented by aliens in Area 51.
- 5 = I've been probed.

### QUESTION #4 :

**Once you get a Patent . . .**

- 0 = you have a Patent.
- 1 = you can sell it to industry and make millions.
- 2 = people will beat a path to your door
- 3 = an invention broker will "market it to industry" for only \$10,000 and make you millions.
- 4 = you will become a Captain of Industry.
- 5 = you'll be richer than Bill Gates.

### QUESTION #5 :

**The CIA has planted computer chips in your head to monitor your thoughts.**

- 0 = NO
- 5 = YES
- 5 = NO, they planted them in my head to steal my inventions
- 5 = NO, it was another government agency, not the CIA.

### QUESTION #6 :

**To protect your invention rights, you have taken the following steps:**

- 0 = You documented your invention, signed and dated the disclosure, and had it witnessed by a 3rd party with the notation "reviewed and understood by me".
- 1 = You filed a "Document Disclosure" with the U.S. Patent Office.
- 2 = You mail a copy of your invention disclosure to yourself.
- 3 = You refuse to tell your friends about your invention.
- 4 = You refuse to tell your Attorney about your invention.
- 5 = You refuse to tell the Patent Office about your invention.

### QUESTION #7 :

**Perpetual Motion . . .**

- 0 = violates the first and third laws of thermodynamics
- 1 = could exist, you never know.
- 2 = was suppressed by the oil companies
- 3 = was suppressed by the Government
- 4 = was invented by the Aliens in Area 57
- 5 = is the subject of my top-secret invention! (How did YOU know?)

### QUESTION #8 :

**Nikolai Tesla . . .**

- 0 = was a famous Electrical Engineer with some pretty far out ideas.
- 1 = Nikolai WHO?
- 2 = was suppressed by the government.
- 3 = invented perpetual motion.
- 4 = was suppressed by the oil companies.
- 5 = was my real name in a "past life".

### QUESTION #9 :

**Give yourself 5 points if you can answer "YES" to any of the following:**

- I see angels.
- I see dead people.
- I am a reincarnation of \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).
- I sense auras.
- I belong to a religious cult, but you know, it's not REALLY a cult.
- I have been abducted and/or probed by aliens.

### QUESTION #10 :

**How Gullible Are You?**

- 0 = I take everything with a gain of salt, even skeptics.
- 1 = I always use my intuition and "gut" feeling to keep me out of trouble.
- 2 = I always check with the Better Business Bureau.
- 3 = If its advertised on television or sold by a big company, it must be legit, right?
- 4 = MLM is a good way to make money.
- 5 = Pyramid schemes will work, if you just give them enough time.

### YOUR CRACKPOT SCORE:

0-10 (SOMEWHAT NORMAL)

You are a largely rational person with reasonable expectations.

10-20 (SCREWBALL)

You have some annoying habits and are a bit naive.

20-30 (LOOSE CANNON)

You will seriously annoy your Patent Attorney and the Patent Office.

40-50 (CRACKPOT)

Don't bother to call me - I'm part of the conspiracy too!

Robert Bell is a Patent Attorney in private practice in Alexandria, Virginia. More information about the author can be found on his web site at [www.robertplattbell.com](http://www.robertplattbell.com)

## VOLUNTEERS

We could use some help here!! We are asking that those of you who could spare a little time before the meetings, please come in and help welcome people. Tell them what you know about TBIC. Help them with filling out a new visitor form so that we can all welcome them to the meeting and introduce them to the membership. We could also use help with running the popcorn machine and serving the bags of popcorn.

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### Membership Report June 2004

These are members who have joined, renewed or upgraded since 05/06/04

*Membership as of  
Membership Report June 4, 2004  
158 Members*

#### **New Members - Active**

Dean Michael

#### **New Members - Sustaining**

John Frazee  
Charles Bost  
Kostas Karabekos  
Steven Pagan  
Cindy Harrison  
John Lackey  
Wilfred Baker

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Gary Simmons  
Jack Goss  
Mark Knoepp

#### **Renewed - Sustaining**

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Jennifer Knoepp  
George Mouzakis  
Paul Simmons

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TBIC publishes a monthly newsletter for both existing and prospective members including copies to 61 Inventors Councils and Associations around the world. The newsletter will be accessible on the website, where members and other interested parties can find both current and archived issues.

THE SCHEDULE OF ADVERTISING RATES:  
(note there is a discounted rate for an annual prepaid subscription):

Full page	\$100.00/issue	\$1000.00/yr.
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Submit copy in any text format, such as \*.doc, \*.wpd, \*.txt, \*.rtf, or in \*.PDF format. Limited graphic arts assistance will be provided by TBIC.

Payment is to be submitted with your copy. Copy must be approved in writing prior to issue deadline.

All ads for selling products must include price and phone number.

Classified space will be available in four categories for 60 cents per word, 20-word minimum.

Categories are:

- 001 Articles for sale
- 002 Articles wanted
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Proof approval Deadlines are 3 weeks prior to publishing date.

- Dec issue Nov 15, 2003
- Jan issue Dec 10, 2004
- Feb issue Jan 10, 2004
- Mar issue Feb 10, 2004
- Apr issue Mar 10, 2004
- May issue Apr 10, 2004
- June issue May 10, 2004
- July issue June 10, 2004
- Aug issue July 10, 2004
- Sept issue Aug 10, 2004
- Oct issue Sept 10, 2004
- Nov issue Oct 10, 2004

TBIC has the option to refuse ads if the Board considers them inappropriate for the furthering of TBIC's overall goals. Council members may bring small for sale items which are advertised to TBIC Headquarters where the article may be viewed for one week following the publication of said ad.

**2003-2004  
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Articles and other items must be received by the first Tuesday of each month.

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A **Student Member** at the \$25.00 rate must be a student. They may attend meetings and receive the Newsletter.

An **Active Member** (\$45.00) enjoys the benefit of attending meetings, workshops and seminars, socializing and networking with the other members, receiving the Newsletter and participating as a reviewer in our Focus Groups.

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These members have the privilege of using the Delphion Software to do an in-depth patent search on their products, also the Patent Pro Software is available to do full or provisional patents. The new Sustaining members will receive a science book to record their invention progress.

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