

**Upcoming TIA Meeting for SATURDAY, February 21, 2009
At 10 AM in the 2020 building in the Oak Ridge Industrial Park.
Visitors are always welcome.**

Time to renew your TIA Dues for 2009.

Paul Blizzard, President of Diesel Head & Parts (DHP) is the February speaker. Paul's company, DHP, has extensive experience sourcing components from China. He will provide information on his experiences in finding and working with manufacturers in China.

Meeting Notes from December 20, 2008 Meeting, by Recording Secretary **Steve Yoder**

Joe Martin opened the meeting. Some visitors and new members were present. Some of our visitors expressed interest in patenting and/or marketing their inventions. **Ann Alexeff** announced that membership dues for 2009 were due this month. General membership dues are \$30/yr.

Tom Kulaga, a local patent attorney, presented "Patents 101" today. Tom began speaking about the value of patents. It is the value of the patent that guides one to determine why he should get a patent and how he should go about getting one.

There are three primary reasons to get a patent:

- 1) Protection of the invention
- 2) Creation of an business asset
- 3) Marketing a product

Tom introduced the two types of patents, Utility Patents and the Design Patents. The Utility Patent protects the functional aspect of the invention. The Design Patent protects the aesthetic appearance of the invention. Determining the type of patent to acquire really depends on who's going to copy the invention and how will they be stopped. Tom pointed out that some patents are obtained for the sole purpose of waiting for someone to infringe the patent so that a lawsuit can be threatened. Such is the behavior of patent trolls.

In order of a patent to be awarded, the invention must be new, never done before, and it must not be obvious to persons skilled in the related art. There are statutory bars to awarding patents. These bars are based on the timing of public disclosures or offers for sale. In order to obtain a patent, the inventor must file a patent application. A patent will be invalidated if there was a public disclosure or offer for sale more than twelve months before the patent application is submitted.

Tom pointed out that the inventor does not have to perform a search or make a determination himself of the patentability of his invention prior to filing a patent application. The search will help the inventor determine the likelihood of getting a strong patent in the field related to the invention.

Tom closed his presentation by discussing the decision pyramid associated with getting a patent. The three goals in the pyramid are strong protection, high speed, and low cost. You can only meet two of these goals for a given project. For example, if you get a strong patent at a high speed, it will likely cost you a lot to get it.

Tom Kulaga passed around information about a project by the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga. The museum is putting together an invention focused program for school children. They are seeking speakers and ideas. See a youth activation committee member if you are interested.

Joe Martin polled the attendees about our next seminar. It was strongly supported that we hold a seminar on an annual basis. The theme and duration of the seminars may vary from year to year. A marketing focused seminar as well as a half-day seminar was suggested for this year. We are seeking volunteers for the committee.

This is an interesting website regarding new changes to patent law and property rights. May be of interest to our membership. Regards, **Stephen Levy**. From: Mondaq Newsletters [mailto:newsletters@mondaq.com]

Alabama Conference for Inventors

Thursday, Feb. 26, 2009, Call (256) 782-5324. Web <http://www.jsu.edu/library/information/directions.html>. **This should be good.** Mr. John Calvert from the U. S. Patent and Trademark office will be speaking. The site is between Chattanooga and Birmingham off Interstate 59.

Speaker, Tom Kulaga