

# Maker Movement Comes to Benzie

An ode to entrepreneurs

By Jimmy McLaren  
Current Contributor

From the basic wheel to the automobile, from Ayurveda to penicillin, from the telegram to the World Wide Web, new inventions and concepts have changed the way that we look at the world. Throughout history, inventors have not always been praised for their work during their own lifetime—Tesla and DaVinci underappreciated, Van Gogh and Melville unknown and penniless—but the world is changing. Now, we try harder than ever to celebrate the creators, the architects, the designers,

community center offering classes and workshops that are consistent with the maker ideals, and the nonprofit is always looking for more ways to provide educational opportunities to the public. For instance, their after-school program, Hive Minded, offers safe learning spaces for kids at Benzie Central High School to work with their hands and explore their individual creativity—including woodworking, gardening, and culinary projects.

In addition to the August 8 meet-and-greet event at Grow Benzie, the library is just wrapping up its hugely popular "Building Up S.T.E.A.M." Summer Reading Program and is gearing up for a three-day

find out more information. This is just the first step that we're taking to organize the vast amount of maker talent we have here. In Benzie County, the opportunities are endless."

### What Is The Maker Movement?

Making is a source of innovation. New technologies present new opportunities to makers, inspiring them to push the boundaries of the intended purposes that were set out by the product manufacturers.

But the Maker Movement is not only about high-tech gadgetry; traditional handicrafts, basic construction, artistic endeavors, agricultural and culinary sciences, and sewing all play a part in the Maker Space. Even the most ancient skills offer a source of awe and discovery with new application. Out of the whole process, new ideas emerge, which may lead to real-world applications or new business ventures. The possibilities are endless.

"This seems a perfect fit for Benzie County," says Amanda McLaren, director of the Benzonia Public Library. "We are known throughout the region and the state for our large population of artists and artisans. We have always had amazing engineers and contractors who are building our industry and our homes. Not to mention that we have this grand history of pioneers, and their do-it-yourself spirit is still felt everywhere."

This maker programming is meant to help people who are interested in S.T.E.A.M. to focus that creativity. Most people find a great deal of pride and self-worth in the ability to create something with their own two hands. Sometimes people just need a little encouragement to kindle that creative spark, and so many young people are growing up without real hands-on experiences. Just the opportunity to take something apart and build something new out of it can develop so many positive things—a new hobby or maybe a career path.

Who will be the next Marie Curie, the next Thomas Edison, the next Georgia O'Keefe? Will it be you?

*Jimmy McLaren is married to Amanda McLaren, BPL director, who also contributed to this reporting. For more information about the meet-and-greet event on August 8 at 6 p.m. or about the free three-day Maker Space training program, contact the Benzonia Public Library at 231-882-4111 or benzonia.library@gmail.com. Local makers and other interested people may also register online for the free workshop at: MakingLibraries.SI.UMich.Edu/Road-Trip.*



The Benzonia Public Library is just wrapping up its hugely popular "Building Up S.T.E.A.M. Summer Reading Program, which allowed kids of all ages to play with gizmos like Makey Makey. Photo by Michete Leines.

the makers; to encourage both the young and the old to begin making, for it is never too late to create.

The Maker Movement is gaining momentum worldwide. Its focus is to bring like-minded people together in experimental play and tinkering with science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.). At the hub of the movement are Maker Spaces: local places where makers can meet, work together, and share ideas. Additionally, these spaces allow makers to share resources, tools, and technology that might be too expensive to own individually.

That is why two of Benzie County's popular institutions, Grow Benzie and the Benzonia Public Library (BPL), are teaming up to pique the community's interest in the Maker Movement at an informal meet-and-greet and brainstorming session at Grow Benzie on Monday, August 8. The shared vision of the two organizations is to bring all of the area makers—artists, builders, engineers, scientists, hobbyists of all ages—together to share their skills and to explore new ideas.

Grow Benzie is a Benzonia-based com-

professional learning opportunity for the maker culture. From Tuesday, August 16, to Thursday, August 18, BPL will host trainers from the University of Michigan's School of Information—as well as local librarians, educators, civic leaders, daycare providers, employees at cultural institutions, makers, artists, and more—to explore how maker culture can support our community's personal and economic needs. (Continuing Education credits will be available to educators that attend.) On Wednesday, August 17, there will be a family-friendly, hands-on event that is open to the community from 6-8 p.m. featuring fashion hacking, glass etching, 3D printing, LEGO, circuit building, and Makey Makey. (You do not need to register for this evening event.)

"Our goal is to assemble the makers of Benzie County under one roof where they can discuss their interests and ideas around a local Maker Movement," says Josh Stoltz, executive director of Grow Benzie. "Maybe they only want to volunteer at the [August 8] event, or they have tools to donate, or maybe they're interested in leading workshops or starting a club. Everyone is welcome—even folks who just want to

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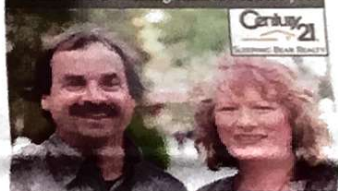
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# The Betsie Current

P.O. Box 90 • Frankfort, MI 49635 Editors: Jordan Bates, Aubrey Ann Parker,  
Phone: (612) 804-5975 Jacob Wheeler  
editor@BetsieCurrent.com Contributors: Nicole Bates, Susan Koenig,  
ads@BetsieCurrent.com Jimmy McLaren, Kelly Ottinger

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## BENZIE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB

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- Benzie Rendezvous Aug 26th thru 28th
- Black Powder Bench Rest Last Sat of the month thru Sept.
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