

ARTS & CULTURE

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Innovate and infiltrate Inaugural Lansing Maker Week showcases the local creative spirit

By CASEY BYE

This week a dinosaur was removed from downtown Lansing. On the rooftop of 619 E. Michigan Ave., home of Jerry Jodloski's entertainment company, Jammin' DJs., a red inflatable T-Rex stood frozen in mid-roar for the month of September, its tiny clawed arms spread in a display of terror. Or was that a giant smile and an open-arms welcome? It's hard to say, but given that the mega-carnivore was the unofficial mascot of the first-time event Lansing Maker Week, it's probably the latter. (It violated city ordinance for rooftop inflatables, so it was bye-bye dino.)

Jodloski and Steve Sneed are the creators (or "co-mad scientists," as they prefer to be called) of How-To Halloween, a first-time event Oct. 12 at the Lansing Center. How-To Halloween will serve as the Saturday anchor for the inaugural Lansing Maker Week, a weeklong ode to innovation sponsored by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, with support from the City of Lansing and the City of East Lansing. The event's organizers hope to appeal to the area's creative class, which has a rich history of ingenuity.

"For Lansing, making is a pillar of our community," said Tony Willis, manager of business acceleration at LEAP. "Manufacturing is a Michigan thing. Michigan makes. Lansing makes. We really want to open people's eyes to what encompasses a maker."

Lansing Maker Week will consist of a series of events around the capital area appealing to the so-called makers — hobbyist builders, tinkerers and inventors.

A maker could be a fashionista, a foodie, a bike fixer, a Halloween display creator or someone who just want to get his hands on a 3-D printer.

The week's events will comprise demonstrations, hands-on projects, keynote lectures and tours of the area's maker spaces, including the Old Town home of the Lansing Makers Network. Jodloski said he was struck by the power of making when he was just a kid, inspired by the homemade Batman cos-



Courtesy photos
(Right) Maker Todd Wilson grinds a support arm for a Halloween device. (Left) How-To Halloween co-creators Jerry Jodloski (left) and Steve Sneed.

tume his mother made for him. "I was the envy of all the other caped crusaders with their cheap plastic, store-bought masks," he said. For him, Lansing Maker Week is the result of four years of work — and maybe a little play.

"When Steve and I lived across the street from each other, we'd have a friendly competition every year with our Halloween displays," Jodloski said. "Hundreds of people would show up and traffic would be backed up for blocks as our attractions became more and more elaborate."

But as serious makers, they weren't content settling for simple

robotics, pneumatics, video production and hacking into Wii gaming devices to build new exhibits each year," Sneed said.

After four years of planning, Jodloski and Sneed, along with other local Halloween display and costume innovators, will present a trick-or-treat grab-bag full of attractions, from the Lansing Makers Network's life-size MegaOperation board game to Impression 5's demonstrations on how to make your own glow-in-the-dark slime.

"I'm excited to see our fashion incubator," Willis said, referring to the Runway, a collaborative workspace in the recently renovated Knapp Centre catering to fashion students, designers, models, bloggers and photographers. "It's the first in the state of Michigan. There are under 10 in the country."

An exhibition at the Broad Art Museum will include a Tandoor oven and cooking demonstration. Friday, at the StartUp Weekend: Maker Edition reception, keynote speaker Joe Carr will describe starting one of the first 3-D printing retail spaces. The East Lansing Public Library's new 2.0 Makers

LANSING MAKER WEEK

Various locations throughout Lansing and East Lansing
Oct. 6-12
Tours, demonstrations, and open houses: 2-6 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 6; noon-6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7 - Sunday, Oct. 12
Keynote presentations: 6-7 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 6-Friday, Oct. 10
Reception 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 6-Thursday, Oct. 9
FREE
Startup Weekend: Maker Edition: 7 p.m. Friday-5 p.m. Sunday (registration required)
How-To Halloween: Noon-8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11
Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
\$5
how-tohalloween.com, lansingmaker.com (full schedule of events)

adoration. "I learned different technologies such as



A 'Heart' n

Jeffrey Scott Handley Jr., who goes by the name of the organizers of Lansing's Got Hear Thursday at the Loft in downtown Lansing. a mess of ordered chaos — chairs everywh empty, some stacked sideways and upside works perched, some used for body paintin

"There was a lot of art sold at the event," enthusiastic market for good, original art in La However, most of the attention was focu musicians and spoken-word artists perform energetic rock act the Heat Pipes and hip-h closed his set with a song about the Civil W (bottom left), a jazz saxophonist who worke to the film "Labyrinth." Between songs, Gay helped build the pyramids.

Now that's heart.

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Studio, featuring 3-D printing, sewing and fabric design, and bike repair facilities will also be open to the public.

“(It’s) a cooperative, open-source philosophy that helps empower individuals for the greater benefit of the community,” Jodlowski said. This goal perhaps best defines what makes a maker. Now take it one step further — imagine what kind of products some of those individuals might develop if they banded together and you’ll have a pretty good idea of what the 48-hour StartUp Weekend: Maker Edition strives to achieve.

“Friday anyone can pitch as many ideas as they want,” Parkinson explained. “Then everyone votes on the projects and people form teams to develop those projects. Someone comes in and says ‘I could do marketing and communications for you guys,’ and they join a team. It’s however you see yourself getting to Sunday to get your idea completed, that’s how you do it.”

StartUp Weekend has been held across the globe, but this is the first one in the Midwest, and it’s a testament to the capital area’s inventive spirit that it’s being held here, not in Detroit or Chicago. So whether choosing to participate in developing their own project during StartUp Weekend or heading over to How-To Halloween to get their hands on luminescent slime, it’s doubtful attendees will leave Maker Week without at least some spark of that maker mentality igniting in them.

“Originally, it was our hope that families would walk away thinking, ‘yeah, we can do something even cooler,’” Sneed said.

The event will allow the community to get a better idea of what it means to be a maker. Following Lansing Maker Week, it’s likely many more will be tempted to join that community.

“The ability to make something cool out of nothing can be magical,” Jodloski said.

As long as it’s not inflatable.