

Providence Mini Maker Faire at PVD Fest

For nine years an event has happened in downtown Providence that has brought delight, lit imaginations and sparked curiosity in many attendees: the Providence Mini Maker Faire. It will be happening again this year on June 9 as part of PVD Fest. I had the pleasure of catching up with one of the creators of this event, Brian Jepson, and asked him a few questions.

Chris Meringolo: What is the Providence Mini Maker Faire?

Brian Jepson: The first Maker Faire was started by *MAKE: magazine* in 2006 in the Bay Area, and has spread all over. It's a little bit science fair, art festival and show-and-tell. The Providence Mini Maker Faire is one of hundreds of Maker Faires that take place all over the world.

CM: Why did you start doing the Mini Maker Faire in RI?

BJ: I started the RI Maker Faire with my friend Kipp Bradford back in 2009 (Kipp is no longer directly involved with the RI event, but he's still an advisor). We had both been part of the bigger Maker Faires that *MAKE: magazine* puts on, and we really wanted something like that for our home state. Over time, the name evolved: first to the RI Mini Maker Faire so we could align with the naming of other independent events, and this year we are changing our name to the Providence Mini Maker Faire so as to not swallow up the whole state with a single event. We'd like other folks around RI to feel that there's no barrier to them putting on one of these in their own town.

CM: There have been a number of locations for Mini Maker Faire RI over the years; which was your favorite and why?

BJ: My favorite was our first year in 2009, when we were in Financial Plaza. It was a great location; very central to the WaterFire that was going on that night, and a really interesting space to work in as well. Large sidewalks, lots of open space to work with.

CM: From all the previous years, what was your favorite exhibit?

BJ: I never pick a favorite exhibit. I've seen too many, and I don't want anyone to feel left out!

CM: What exhibit is definitely a must-see this year?

BJ: I'd say they are all must-sees, and I really encourage attendees to take everything in. That said, Ocean State Maker Mill always manages to outdo themselves with each passing year. They haven't told me what they are doing, but you won't want to miss it!

CM: Why should the reader drop by Mini Maker Faire?

BJ: To get inspired, and to inspire anyone who you are exploring PVD Fest with on Saturday, June 9!