



# Shifting Gears

Quarterly Newsletter from the Imaginarium of South Texas

January • February • March 2010

## 2010 Exhibit Schedule

from the Sciencenter  
in Ithaca, New York!

# AIR PLAY



“Forces of the Invisible”

Thanks to the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust for its sponsorship of “Air Play”, a science-based exhibit that explores the nature of air and wind. Children and adults alike are fascinated by the power of air, a force that is unseen yet its effects can be strongly felt

“Air Play” is the second of three national exhibits sponsored by the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust. “Air Play” is available to families and school groups alike, and this exhibit is an excellent example of how to engage people in the study of science through interactive play. “Air Play” was developed through a grant from the National Science Foundation to the Montshire Museum and the TEAMS (Traveling Exhibits at Museums of Science) collaborative. “Air Play” provides visitors with the tools to explore the nature of air--how it moves and how it influences our environment.

“Air Play” joins “Thinking Tinkering”, an exploration of the engineering design process developed in association with the Texas Network for Exhibit-based learning and Teaching (TexNET), on the floor of The Imaginarium of South Texas, with additional support provided by Target.

In June, The Imaginarium will host another national exhibition from Philadelphia’s Franklin Institute. “Nature’s Numbers” explores math in nature. Components such as Repeating Patterns, Basic Shapes and Structures and Designs In Nature all relate natural formations specifically to math. By asking visitors to solve nature’s puzzles, the exhibit builds a natural foundation for mathematical inquiry.

## A Special Thank You to our Donors and Sponsors

The Imaginarium of South Texas would like to send a special thank you to our sponsors for our new workshop programs this year. Thanks to TARGET, sponsoring the creative projects in “Create It!” this coming March and April. Thanks to IBM, sponsor of the 2009-2010 new workshop “Try Out Tech”. This workshop is a great way to find out about some engaging programs that harness technology to pursue creativity. And many thanks to the LAMAR BRUNI VERGARA TRUST. They are sponsors of our newest exhibit, “Air Play”, and sponsors of our traveling exhibit schedule for the 2009-2010 year.



## A Message from the Imaginarium Director

This past year staff has worked hard to create new and interesting experiences for you and your families. Thinking Tinkering was a huge step for us, and by the reaction we have had from the public, it is a great success! We have also rededicated ourselves to providing these rich experiences to audiences that find it difficult to visit us. Through a grant from the Twin Cities Public Television, we worked with the Rio Bravo and El Cenizo Community Centers this past summer and fall to share science investigations with the youth in their care. In 12 separate visits we tested water filters, made ice cream, created marble runs, constructed jitterbots and even cooked with solar power. Each workshop was loud and raucous, as children experimented and explored with a variety of materials.



Our goal remained the same: to motivate life-long learning. By reaching out to this new audience, we hoped to spark the curiosity children need to be a risk-taker, to find out more about their world and feel confident about contributing to it. We were one of nine museums selected to participate, and our program was the most ambitious. All instruction was provided in Spanish, and the variety was intended to appeal to a broad range of ages. The parents at the end of the program were profoundly grateful that we cared about their children to provide them with this enrichment. And staff were equally moved by the enthusiasm and energy of the kids they met. I thank the staff as it was their dedication and excitement that made this program come alive for the kids participating in it. We wanted these kids to become creative inventors of a future that we can only imagine.

## Pi Day • March 14, 2010 • 12noon - 6pm

We celebrate the Pi during Einstein’s Birthday - the geometric Pi that is! Join us for a jumble of activities as we work to get a decent Rube-Goldberg chain reaction running, complete with Crickets, switches and more! And watch out for the Diet Coke/Mentos Geyser demo - we will challenge some guests in a height contest to see who can force the bubbles up, up and up! (weather permitting).



## Engineers Make a World of Difference: National Engineers Week February 17th – 21st, 2010

Engineers use their imagination and analytical skills to invent, design, and build things that matter. They are team players with independent minds who turn ideas into reality. By dreaming up creative and practical solutions, engineers are changing the world all the time.



National Engineers Week is part of a country-wide effort to stimulate interest in engineering as a career choice. Here at the Imaginarium, we will host a week of special activities highlighting the engineering design process. We will make kinetic sculptures, confetti launchers towers that withstand the wind, and a pop flyer for ping-pong balls!

Don’t miss Girls Discover Engineering Day, a chance for girls to meet our local woman engineers to find out how varied and wide their jobs really are! Special pricing for all girls on this special day! (Sign up early; limit 180)



## Spring Break CAMP 2010

Don’t miss out on the fun - limited space is available!



The Imaginarium’s “Earth Movers” Spring Break Camp runs March 15th 18th, Mon - Thurs, from 9am to 3pm. Forces of the Earth will be harnessed and studied with lots of hands-on activities, demonstrations and plenty of problem-solving! As always, members receive a discount. Members cost \$95 and Non-members cost is \$115. Lunch is \$5 or bring a sack!



Imaginarium of South Texas  
5300 San Dario, Ste. 505  
Laredo, TX 78041

Housekeeping Alert: New Price Change January 16th -

Admission changes to \$4 per child, \$3 per adult. Member Prices stay the same!

### At Home Activity: Periscopes

from the exploratorium.edu

Periscopes are something that allows you to see something that is not in direct sight. Here is how to make a periscope.

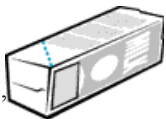
1. Use the knife to cut around the top of each milk carton, removing the peaked "roof."



2. Cut a hole at the bottom of the front of one milk carton. Leave about 1/4 inch of carton on each side of the hole.

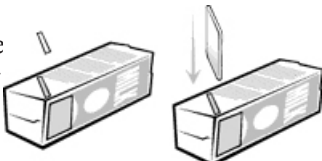


3. Put the carton on its side and turn it so the hole you just cut is facing to your right. On the side that's facing up, measure 2 3/4 inches up the left edge of the carton, and use the pencil to make a diagonal mark there. Now, use your ruler to draw a diagonal line from the bottom right corner to the mark you made.



4. Starting at the bottom right corner, cut on that line. Don't cut all the way to the left edge of the carton- just make the cut as long as one side of your mirror. If your mirror is thick, widen the cut to fit.

5. Slide the mirror through the slot so the reflecting side faces the hole in the front of the carton. Tape the mirror loosely in place.

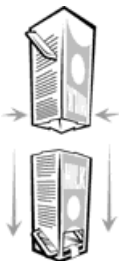


6. Hold the carton up to your eye and look through the hole that you cut. You should see your ceiling through the top of the carton. If what you see looks tilted, adjust the mirror and tape it again.  
7. Repeat steps 2 through 6 with the second milk carton.

8. Stand one carton up on a table, with the hole facing you. Place the other carton upside-down, with the mirror on the top and the hole facing away from you.



9. Use your hand to pinch the open end of the upside-down carton just enough for it to slide into the other carton. Tape the two cartons together.



10. Now you have a periscope! If you look through the bottom hole, you can see over fences that are taller than you. If you look through the top hole, you can see under tables. If you hold it sideways, you can see around corners.



Let us know if you do this on our Facebook page! Did your kids like it?!

find more cool stuff at [exploratorium.edu/sciencesnacks](http://exploratorium.edu/sciencesnacks)

### NanoDays

The Imaginarium is excited to present once again this info-filled program about nanotechnology and how it affects our lives. NanoDays is a nationwide festival of educational programs about nanoscale science and engineering and its potential impact on the future. NanoDays events are organized by participants in the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net), and take place at over 200 science museums, research centers, and universities across the country from Maine to Hawaii. Look for it March 24th-27th!

### Now at the Imaginarium Gift Shop: Perplexus

Ages 8 and up, only \$24.99

Perplexus is a can't-put-it-down, three dimensional ball of fun. With plenty of twists, turns and barriers between start and finish, it will leave you perplexed! Watch out though because once you try it, you'll be hooked! It is a 3-D labyrinth game enclosed in a transparent plastic sphere. Perplexus is fun and educational at the same time. Children will have hours of fun as they improve hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills and spatial relationships.



Imaginarium of South Texas  
[www.imaginariumstx.org](http://www.imaginariumstx.org)

Contact  
(956) 728-0404, Fax (956) 725-7776

Hours  
CLOSED Mondays-Tuesdays (open for Field Trip groups only by appt.)  
Wednesday-Thursday: 10am-7pm  
Friday-Saturday: 10am-8pm  
Sunday: 12noon-6pm

Admissions  
\$4 per child, \$3 per adult

Location  
Inside the Mall del Norte, next to Dillard's  
5300 San Dario, Ste. 505 • Laredo, TX 78041

Discover Museum Membership  
Get free admission for a year, discounts on parties, programs and more!



## Imaginarium of South Texas Calendar of Events

### WINTER HOURS:

Wednesday-Thursday: 10am-7pm  
Friday-Saturday: 10am-8pm  
Sunday: 12noon-6pm  
(Monday-Tuesday: 9am-2pm for School Groups)

### WINTER PROGRAMS:

Bright Sparks*	Wed. 11am
Super Science*	Wed. 5-6pm
EcoArt*	Thurs. 5-6pm
Movie Maker Madness	Fri. 5-8pm
Bright Sparks*	Sat. 10:30am
Try Out Tech Workshop	Sat. 11am-1pm
Puppet Palooza*	Sat. 2-3pm
Create It! Workshop	Sat. 2-4pm
Chain Reaction*	Sat. 2:30-3:30pm
Incredible Edibles*	Sun. 4-5pm

\*Free with admission

### JANUARY is Recognizing Growth Month

- 2 Try Out Tech - Jan theme: PICO Crickets
- 15 5-7pm Members Exhibit Opening Reception
- 16 Air Play opens to the general public
- 16 Family Create It! - Cardboard Automata

### FEBRUARY is Discover Engineering Month

- 6 Try Out Tech - Feb theme: Scratch Animation
- 13 Family Create It! Workshop
- 14 special valentine's project for kids
- 17-21 National Engineers Week activities
- 18 Girls Discover Engineering Day
- 25-27 See us at the LIFE Downs!

### MARCH is Science Rocks Month

- 3-5 Informal Science Ed Assoc Conference in Port A
- 6 Try Out Tech - Mar Theme: Claymation
- 13 Family Create It! Workshop
- 14 Pi Day
- 15-18 "Earth Movers" Spring Break Camp
- 15-16 Open this Monday & Tuesday! 10am-7pm
- 24 Nano Days begin

### Family Create It! Workshops



Every month the Imaginarium brings a new opportunity for families to create together. Each workshop is different: from Valentines Cookies to Easter Eggs, the Imaginarium has a fun activity for the whole family! Check the calendar for the next family workshop.

### Field Trips & Family Science Festivals

Call the Imaginarium today to book these educational events for your class or school! If you are curious about these programs, Imaginarium staff is available to come and speak at your PTO meetings to give you a more in depth look at how these programs will benefit your children. Call 956-728-0404 for more information.



### Name Our New Critters! A Girl and a Boy!

They're coming! Can you guess what they are? Meet our newest critters March 6th in the Critter Corner. Big Hint: They aren't penguins but they are from Madagascar!

Send us an email with the coolest couple names you can think of for this great and exciting pair of creatures at [info@imaginariumstx.org](mailto:info@imaginariumstx.org) or visit our facebook page and start a discussion!

For the latest information about our programs and events, please visit

[www.imaginariumstx.org](http://www.imaginariumstx.org)

Dates subject to change

The Laredo Children's Museum, DBA Imaginarium of South Texas, is a 501c3 non-profit organization registered with the Office of the Secretary of the State of Texas.