



# Shifting Gears

Quarterly Newsletter from the Imaginarium of South Texas

May • June • July 2010

## 2010 Exhibit Schedule - Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust



### NATURE'S NUMBERS

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

Coming May 28th!

Thanks to the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust, the Imaginarium of South Texas will host the third in a series of science and math based exhibits. "Nature's Numbers" provides opportunities for play with math and nature and was developed by the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia.

"Nature's Numbers" joins "Thinking Tinkering", the exploration of the engineering design process developed in association with the Texas Network for Exhibit-based learning and Teaching (TexNET), with additional support provided by Target, on the floor of The Imaginarium of South Texas. "Nature's Numbers" finds that Math is everywhere in Nature! Looking around at the patterns of spots on dogs, the delicate symmetry of butterfly wings, the shape of crystals in salt, finding evidence of mathematical properties of nature is easy. Thematically divided, the exhibit delves into repeating patterns, basic shapes and structures, and puzzle solving to engage the visitor and create a natural foundation for mathematical inquiry.

"Nature's Numbers" will replace "Air Play" in the Explorazone space here the last week of May. Until then, "Air Play" remains an exciting exploration of the force and properties of turbulent air. "Air Play" will round out the school field trip season which has been one of the busiest yet in the Imaginarium's young history. If you have yet to experience "Air Play", be sure to stop by and experience the many activities that play with the invisible yet powerful forces of moving air.

## A Special Thank You to our Donors and Sponsors

The staff of the Imaginarium of South Texas sends a special thank-you to our sponsors in the upcoming months. Thank-you to the International Bank of Commerce, Arugindegui Management, and the Fernando A. Salinas Charitable Trust for their support of our Summer programming. Thanks to them we offer camp scholarships to the children of Sacred Heart Children's Home, LISD and UISD and offer admission to the residents of the Casa de Misericordia Shelter this summer. Without their support, we would be unable to provide this benefit to children who crave opportunities to be successful and creative. And our heartfelt thanks to the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust. Their continued support of our 2009-2010 exhibit schedule is a testament of their commitment to the education of this community's children.



## A Message from the Imaginarium Director

Exciting News! We are now a SciGirls Museum Affiliate! What is SciGirls? SciGirls is a PBS program focusing on teen girls doing experiments in Science. SciGirls broadcasts on PBS Sundays at 4:30pm. SciGirls are real girls who identify a problem in their community and figure out a solution using Science. They are creative, ingenious, and persistent. Check out [www.scigirls.org](http://www.scigirls.org)!

Girls make up over 50% of current University students, but in professional fields of science, technology, engineering and math, girls are seriously underrepresented. Somewhere along the way, usually during the teen years, girls internalize that science is not girl-friendly. This past April Congressman Henry Cuellar hosted a STEM career fair at Cigarroa, Clark and United Middle Schools to introduce students to the exciting prospects of a career in the STEM professions. Texas Instruments, Mercedes-Benz Technology, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, IBC, Crane Engineering, Gilpin Engineering, Tech Labs Inc., Lab Resources Inc. and others, including the Imaginarium who presented Nanotechnology, participated in the event. There was even an Astronaut Spacesuit, a Moon Rock, and men and women NASA scientists!

STEM jobs pay on average 70% more than other jobs. STEM jobs are also incredibly significant in our national economy. We can only "grow out" of this recession with a growth in technology and innovation, both fields that depend on expertise in the sciences. And boys can't do it alone, not if they are only 50% of the available pool of students.



So how do we keep girls interested? First, you as parents need to tell them to be the pilot, not the stewardess. This simple change in the framework of their own expectations is **powerful**. Then we need to keep science girl-friendly. Girls value communication and aesthetics, so science projects should include collaboration (group work) and materials to allow girls to add a creative touch, perfect for engineering in particular, but essential to all fields. Check out our SciGirls Summer Camp, a great opportunity for your girl to flourish in science!



## What to Do this Summer?

From inventing the machines we need to survive on Mars to engineering the latest toys to investigating the curious behavior of bugs to unearthing the bones of dinosaurs, Summer Camp 2010 promises to never be dull!

And at home, DO THIS: create your own "Inventor's Box". Any sturdy box will do. Fill it with recyclables, plastics of interesting shapes, construction paper, Sharpies and scissors (this is age-dependent!), plus basic tools (again, age-dependent!) and lots of Tape! (nice and cheap!)



Every brilliant idea begins with a problem. How to remember important things (post-its), how to reach an out-of-reach item (grab-its), how to seal fabric? (velcro!) Help your child find one.

Maybe your child needs to remember to feed the goldfish, or needs to protect things in his/her closet, or wants to create a great space for his/her science fair award. Or maybe it's a new game to chase away the boredom, or a way to keep cool in the heat, or a new flavor of ice cream.

[www.exploratorium.edu](http://www.exploratorium.edu) has some great activities. So does [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org) - Zoom and Fetch activities are very popular. [www.makershed.com](http://www.makershed.com) is another great place for inspiration. Do. Make. Create. NASA has this great saying: **Fail. Fail Fast, and Fail Often.** That is the surest way to create truly *Revolutionary Inventions*.

## Robotics Demo • April 2010

Harmony Science Academy Middle School Robotics Team took 1st Place in the South Texas Robotics Competition and came to share their creations with Imaginarium visitors! Look for them on Laredo Kids' Connection!



## Math Week • April 2010

Math Week, held in conjunction with the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics, showed kids why math matters! Math is mental weight-lifting - it makes you a **stronger** problem-solver in every field!



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

## SANDtastico Returns! • July 2nd - July 4th 2010



Can't get to the beach this summer? Not to worry, we bring it to you as we open our seasonal "sandbox" exhibit! With plenty of tools to make all sorts of interesting sand sculptures, you can enjoy the fun without the long car ride! And we love the Beach AC we keep cranked all summer long! This event includes sundae-making, sand art, and what would a beach party be without Limbo! Bring the family, and kick-off your shoes!! Thanks to Reno Sand and Gravel for their support!

Summer Camp Programs 2010

May 31st thru the first week in August  
all camps\* run from 8am to 2pm, Monday thru Thursday

**IMAGINE MARS**

May 31-June 3  
Hop aboard for a space adventure! Engineer your way through common adaptation problems in the quest to settle the last frontier - Mars!



**TECHNOKOOL**

June 7-10  
Play with Technology, Circuits and more while you build projects with batteries, wires, computer programs and even Legos! Create a stop animation movie, make a light paintbrush to create a masterpiece photo, dabble in robotics and build a kinetic sculpture! Geared toward ages 7 and up.

**BUGGIN' OUT!**

June 14-24  
Our most popular camp! Learn about insect behavior, habitats, and their significance to our lives. Lots of interesting and unusual hands-on experiences with the most abundant species on Earth!



**MAKERKIDS**

July 5-8  
Make all week long! Design and engineer a variety of gadgets and toys, and discover your inventing genius!



**DYNAMO DINOS**

July 12-22  
Back by popular demand...explore the world of 100 million years past. Be a paleontologist!



**SCIGIRLS DESIGNERS**

July 26-29  
Girls have talents that are unique. We collaborate and communicate in creative ways. SciGirls PBS has a great way to encourage us girls to design for the future. You can investigate, invent, and interact in a social network (like a special Facebook) with similar girls across the country, and we'll get you started. We'd like to tell you more about what we'll be doing in camp, but the boys might read it - this one's for GIRLS ONLY (ages 8 - 13)!

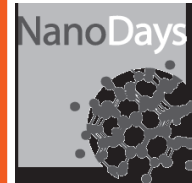
**DIRTY SCIENCE**

August 2-5  
Wear clothes that can get messy as you mess around with kitchen chemistry! A study of the states of matter that you can Eat! Plus much more!



**DISCOVERY CAMP** \*(exception)

May 31-June 3 • June 14-17 • July 5-8  
Especially for pre-schoolers, Discovery Camp allows for hands-on exploration that delights the senses. Age-appropriate activities like arts and crafts, puppet shows, and material manipulation are proven to engage the younger ones. This is a Space-Limited camp, so register early. Offered for three different weeks only - check the schedule! Camp meets from 8am to 1pm.



Thank-you to Dr. René Rentería, UTHSCSA Physiology Assistant Professor and guest speaker at our NanoDays event. Dr. Rentería talked about his research on the human eye, how microscopic technology makes it possible, and what science can tell us about how the eye functions so that others can look at how to solve the mysteries of when the eye abnormally functions. Some great questions came from the kids who attended.



**Now at the Imaginarium Gift Shop: Bouncing Air Putty**

All Ages, only \$3.99  
Bouncing Putty is like slime on steroids. It is a silicone rubber based material that doesn't dry out, won't have a bad smell and is much more pleasant in one's hand than slime. And it can be molded in thousands of different ways. Get creative!



Imaginarium of South Texas  
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

**SUMMER HOURS:** (start May 31st!)  
Monday-Thursday: 2pm-7pm  
Friday-Saturday: 10am-8pm  
Sunday: 12noon-6pm  
(Mon-Thurs: 8am-2pm for Summer Camps ONLY)

**SUMMER PROGRAMS:**

Engineer It!*	Mon. 5pm
Puppet Palooza*°	Tues. 3pm
Super Science*	Wed. 5pm
EcoArt*	Thurs. 5pm
IBM's Try Out Tech°	Fri. 5-7pm
Bright Sparks*	Sat. 10:30am
Mythbusters (monthly)*	First Sat. 2pm
Puppet Palooza* °	Sat. 3pm
Family Create It! (monthly)	Sat. 2-4pm
Chain Reaction*	Sun. 2:30pm
Incredible Edibles*	Sun. 4pm

\*Free with admission ° New TIME for this program

**May is Wild Things Month**

- 1 Try Out Tech - May theme: Robotics!
- 8 Family Create It! - Birdbaths
- 22 Scratch Day! International! (in Try Out Tech)
- 27 Nature's Numbers Members Preview, 5-7pm
- 28 Nature's Numbers opens to the public
- 31 Summer Camp begins!

**June is Motion Month**

- 5 Try Out Tech - June theme: PICO crickets!
- 12 ^Growing Up Wild! teacher/parent training
- 19 Family Create It! - Woodworking

**July is Shell Shine Month**

- 2-4 SANDtastico is back! Beach time fun!
- 10 Try Out Tech - July Theme: Monkey Jam!
- 24 Family Create It! - TBA

^ In conjunction with Texas Parks and Wildlife, we offer a training in Growing Up Wild! Nature Program for 3-7yr. olds. Open to teachers & parents, cost for this 3 hour event (9am-12p) is just \$15! Adults only. You must PreRegister; space is limited to 20 participants. Earn Prof.Dev. Credit.

**Family Create It! Workshops**



Every month the Imaginarium brings a new opportunity for families to create together. Family Time should be quality time. Take advantage of Mother and Father Day gift-making while creating some treasured memories.

**Field Trips 2009-2010**



We've hosted over 4900 students and teachers these first 8 months of the season! And May promises even more!

**Our Critters are here! Madagascar Hissing Roaches!**

These are fascinating creatures. They are creepy and cool at the same time! Surprise yourself - touch one. Able to force air through their respiratory systems, these insects are unique in how they produce sound. Find out about the strange and unusual. Go ahead, challenge yourself!



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

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.