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Geeky get-togethers in Madison

How to share your scientific obsessions among friends

BY LIZ MERFELD SEPTEMBER 11, 2014 2:00 PM



Whether you prefer the term "nerd" or "lifelong learner," Madison has something to offer curious minds nearly every day of the week. Here are a few events to get you started, all open to the public.

Nerd Nite

madison.nerdnite.com

Nerd Nite is a "monthly-ish" informal gathering, usually held at the High Noon Saloon, at which nerds and non-nerds alike meet, drink and learn something new. Topics include how to fly, the history of women and body hair, time travel, and Captain America. The next Nerd Nite happens Sept. 24 at 8 p.m. at the High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington, where topics will include the science of The X-Files and "What Is a Species?"

DIY Science

discovery.wisc.edu/diyscience

DIY Science is an adults-only, hands-on lab in which attendees don lab coats, goggles and gloves to get a firsthand sense of cutting-edge research in topics like "Sunshine and Green Plants: Using Light to Learn about Life," "Aquaponics: From Fish Tank to Table" and "IceCube: From the South Pole to the Edge of the Universe." Classes are held monthly at 7 p.m. on Friday evenings, at the Discovery Building, and registration is required: \$12 per person per date or \$40 for a group of four.

High Tech Happy Hour

hthh.org

Drawing a crowd of about 200, High Tech Happy Hour is a free networking event that takes place monthly at different locations around Madison usually the last Thursday of each month (5-7 p.m.). The next one is Sept. 25 at Pooley's Sports Bar. On occasion, a rapid-pace, small-group presentation called PechaKucha (from the Japanese term for the sound of

"chit-chat") precedes the event. The next PechaKucha is in November.

Wisconsin Innovation Network

wisconsintechcouncil.com/win

The largest science and technology networking group in the state is the Wisconsin Innovation Network, the networking arm of the Wisconsin Technology Council. WIN hosts a luncheon on the fourth Tuesday of each month, where about a hundred members and non-members discuss economic development, science, technology, business policy, innovation or research. Annual events, like the **Wisconsin Entrepreneur's Conference** in June and the **Early Stage Symposium** in November, are also open to non-members.

UW-Madison Science Alliance

science.wisc.edu/sciencealliance.htm

Anyone interested in science research — university students, scientists, K-12 educators, parents, lifelong learners — can join the Science Alliance and attend weekly meetings (every Monday during the school year, 10 a.m.), held at the **UW-Madison Genetics/Biotechnology Center**.

Saturday Science

discovery.wisc.edu

Learners of all ages are invited to explore hands-on science fun during this free, family-friendly drop-in event, held at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month in the Town Center of the Discovery Building. Past topics have included "Healthy from Head to Toe," "Wade into Water," "Time Machine Earth: Dinosaurs, Fossils and the Future" and "Farms and Fields of Wisconsin."

2014 Wisconsin Science Festival

wisconsinsciencefest.org

The Wisconsin Science Festival (Oct. 16–19) is an annual statewide festival, with nearly 80 events taking place in the Madison area. Admission to most events and venues is free. A highlight this year is the "Science of Supper Clubs" (Oct. 17, Discovery Building, 5-8 p.m.), spotlighting "the distinctive food, culture and history of Wisconsin's supper clubs," including the origins of the Old Fashioned cocktail, relish tray and fish fry.

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