

Tech News

Yuri's Night

This Saturday, 12 April, is Yuri's night, to celebrate the first flight of a human being in outer space by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gargarin (12 April 1961) in the Vostock 1. It also celebrates the first flight of the US space shuttle on 12 April 1981.

One of the major parties will be happening at NASA Ames Research At \$40-\$50 a person, it isn't cheap, but it looks like a great combination of musicians, dance, speakers, documentary movies, and art installations, running from 1:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Full details of what sort of celebrations are planned around the world and a history of Yuri Gargarin and the space shuttle can be found on the web page

<http://www.yurisnight.net/2008/>

The historical information can be found under the "About" menu.

"Circling the Earth in my orbital spaceship I marveled at the beauty of our planet. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty—not destroy it!" —Yuri Gargarin

Soda bottle rockets

To celebrate Yuri's night we will launch water rockets this week, and build our own launchers next week. I'll need about \$6/launcher for parts (\$15 if you want to get a cheap bicycle pump also). Please send me e-mail (karplus@soe.ucsc.edu), if you want to make a launcher, and bring money next week.



Chindogu

The kickoff for Invention Convention reminds me that there is a modern Japanese art form known as chindogu, which is the invention of simple gadgets to do everyday tasks, but which are too silly to really be used.

The Japanese name contains two characters: one for "unusual" and one for "tool". The art form has been popularized in books by Kenji Kawakami, such as *The Big Bento Boc of Unuseless Japanese Inventions*. Many of the inventions seen at the Invention Conventions seem to fit the Chindogu rules:

1. A chindogu cannot be for real use.
2. A chindogu must exist.
3. Inherent in every chindogu is the spirit of anarchy.
4. Chindogu are tools for everyday life.
5. Chindogu are not for sale.
6. Humor must not be the sole reason for creating a chindogu.
7. Chindogu is not propaganda.
8. Chindogu are never taboo.
9. Chindogu cannot be patented.
10. Chindogu are without prejudice.

The key idea is that Chindogu must solve a real (though perhaps minor) problem, but do so in a way that is silly enough that no one would actually want to use them.



*This chindogu is intended to be worn to keep contact lenses from being lost when they fall out. It is from Kawakami's book *The Big Bento Boc of Unuseless Japanese Inventions*.*