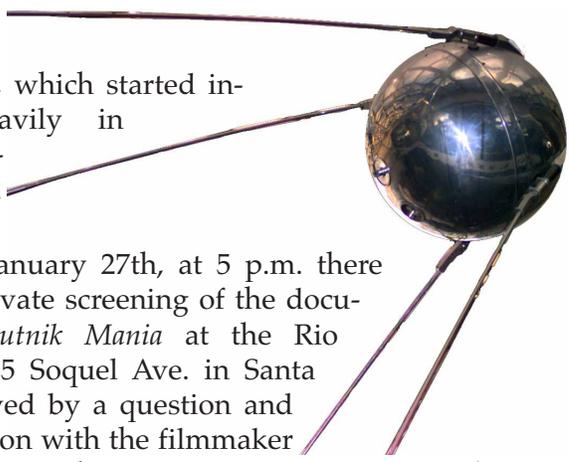


# Tech News

## Sputnik Celebration

The first man-made satellite to orbit the Earth (sputnik 1) was launched 4 October 1957. This panicked the American government, which started investing heavily in scientific research and education.

Sunday, January 27th, at 5 p.m. there will be a private screening of the documentary *Sputnik Mania* at the Rio Theatre, 1205 Soquel Ave. in Santa Cruz, followed by a question and answer session with the filmmaker (ticket price: \$10, children under 10 admitted free).



## Good luck at Science Fair

Science Fair is next Tuesday, 29 January, so get your posters done this weekend. I'm looking forward to seeing some exciting projects Tuesday night.

As in previous years, I'm willing to give the Science Fair winners some extra coaching to help them get ready for the County Science Fair, March 7-8.

## Scratch Conference

MIT is having a Scratch Conference 24-26 July 2008 in Cambridge, MA. Registration is \$175/person until 15 Feb, \$250 until 1 June, \$325 after that. They say "There are no age restrictions for the Scratch@MIT conference. But the conference is intended primarily for people (such as teachers and researchers) who are interested in discussing ways to help other people learn with Scratch." Despite this warning, several kids on the scratch forums have expressed an interest in going. You can get more details on the forums and at <http://scratch.mit.edu/conference>

## Recommended Website

The winner of the 2007 Webby award for education was <http://www.howstuffworks.com>

This site has many short articles and videos about various subjects from autism to Mexican wrestling. I looked at a few of the articles in the science section, and they seem like simple introductions to topics, well-illustrated, much like a children's encyclopedia. Coverage is not as thorough as Wikipedia, but the style is more kid-friendly.

To go with today's cartoon, try looking up how gyroscopes work!

**XKCD** <http://xkcd.com/332/>

## His Darkest Material

Researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Rice University have created the darkest material ever made by man. The material, a thin coating comprised of low-density arrays of loosely vertically-aligned carbon nanotubes, absorbs more than 99.9 percent of light and one day could be used to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of solar energy conversion, infrared sensors, and other devices. The researchers who developed the material have applied for a Guinness World Record for their efforts.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/01/080122154610.htm>

