

THINGS TO DO | NERD CULTURE | FILM & TV | VIDEO GAMES

Hatsune Miku Expo, Demetri Martin and Phoenix's nerdy events in April

Unique geek experiences over the next few weeks also include a solar eclipse viewing party and the Phoenix Reptile Expo.

By Benjamin Leatherman | April 1, 2024



Virtual Japanese pop star Hatsune Miku is scheduled to perform at Mullett Arena in Tempe on April 14 and 15. [Ticketmaster](#)

Geeks of the Valley, get ready for a busy month. A diverse lineup of nerdy events will be happening around metro Phoenix in April, including a few unique activities and experiences.

In addition to annual and semiannual events like the Phoenix Film Festival, Record Store Day and the Scottsdale Comic Book Show, you can also witness the celestial spectacle of a solar eclipse or attend a pair of concerts by virtual J-pop star Hatsune Miku.

Other highlights include the Phoenix Reptile Expo, a screening of the experimental animated film “Fantastic Planet” and a performance by comedian Demetri Martin.

Here’s how to let your geek flag fly in April.



Comedian, writer and actor Demetri Martin.

Stand Up Live

Demetri Martin

Thursday, April 4

Stand Up Live, 50 W. Jefferson St.

You don't have to be nerdy to get the intellectual humor of comedian, writer and actor Demetri Martin, but it certainly enhances the experience. Armed with a notepad, a sharp mind and an ever-sharper wit, his stand-up sets are replete with mathematical puns, awkward humor, quirky observations and occasional references to mythical creatures. Martin's deadpan delivery style adds an extra layer of comedic charm, turning mundane observations into uproarious moments that resonate with audiences across the geek spectrum. He's touring behind his new comedy album, "The Joke Machine," and is scheduled to perform at Stand Up Live in early April. The show starts at 7 p.m. and **tickets** are \$35 plus a two-drink minimum.

Sing Sing | Official Trailer HD | A24



Phoenix Film Festival

Thursday, April 4 to Sunday, April 14

Harkins Scottsdale 101, 7000 E. Mayo Blvd.

Forget streaming services; the annual Phoenix Film Festival offers the kind of binge-watching experience that local cinephiles can truly appreciate. The 11-day extravaganza at the Harkins Scottsdale 101 will showcase 250-plus different films, including foreign films, documentaries, shorts

and features. This year's highlights include the Native American documentary "The Bears on Pine Ridge," award-winning prison drama "Sing Sing" and the hilarious Ilana Glazer/Michelle Buteau comedy "Babes." The festival will also include parties, industry workshops, discussion panels and other activities (like a staged reading of the 1987 Coen Brothers classic "Raising Arizona"). Hours vary. **Tickets** are \$15 for single screenings, \$45 to \$120 for a "flex pass" covering multiple films and \$200 for a festival pass. VIP options are \$300 to \$350. PFF's complete schedule is **available here**.



Pinball machines at Jesse James Comics in Glendale.

Benjamin Leatherman

Heroes and Villains Show

Saturday, April 6

Jesse James Comics, 5140 W. Peoria Ave., #100, Glendale

You can immerse yourself in multiple fandoms at this evening-long geek event at Glendale's Jesse James Comics in early April. If you have a costume to show off, there's a cosplay contest for prizes. Joystick jocks can partake in pixelated action via a video game trailer out in the parking lot or any of the arcade and pinball classics located inside. More than 30 local vendors will sell items like board games, collectibles, anime merch, 3-D printing gear and much more. There will also be raffles, a car show and various food trucks. The geeky fun runs from 4 to 9 p.m. and admission is free.



Burton Barr Central Library in downtown Phoenix.

Lynn Trimble

Con-Fusion: The Adventure Continues

Every Saturday, April 6 to 27

Phoenix Public Library locations

Phoenix Public Library is getting into the spirit of con season by offering a **series of mini-conventions** at various branches throughout April. Each will offer a distinct theme and a variety of family-friendly activities. To wit: "We Could Be Heroes" on April 6 at the South Mountain Community Library, 7050 S. 24th St., focuses on costumes, comic book artists and voice actors. The following week, "Somebody's Watching Me" at the Cholla Library, 10050 Metro Parkway East, on April 13 will delve into ghost stories and fictional monsters. Local makers, artists, crafters and hackers won't want to miss the "We Can Make It" event on April 20 at the Burton Barr Central Library, 1221 N. Central Ave. The series concludes on April 27 with "PromiCon," an afternoon dance party at Burton Barr where cosplayers are welcome. Hours vary each week and admission is free.



A Valley resident uses filtered binoculars to watch the solar eclipse outside of the Arizona Science Center in 2017.

Benjamin Leatherman

Solar Eclipse Viewing Party

Monday, April 8

Arizona Science Center, 600 E. Washington St.

When a **total solar eclipse** graces the skies over the U.S. on April 8, Arizona residents will witness the celestial spectacle. Well, part of it, at least. Since our state isn't located within the path of totality (which will stretch across North America from Texas to Maine and into Canada), local skywatchers will only see a partial solar eclipse where roughly 64% of the sun will be obscured. Want to view this awe-inspiring sight safely? The Arizona Science Center will host an **eclipse viewing party** from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Solar telescopes and complimentary eclipse glasses will be available. There will also be hands-on activities and experts explaining the science behind the astronomical phenomenon. Admission is free.



Virtual Japanese pop star Hatsune Miku.

Ticketmaster

Hatsune Miku Expo 2024

Sunday, April 14 and Monday, April 15

Mullett Arena, 411 S. Packard Drive, Tempe

It's a good time to be a J-pop fan in the Valley. Thanks to the rampant popularity of the Japanese music genre in recent years, locals have had the chance to see a variety of touring J-pop artists and acts performing live when they roll through metro Phoenix. In mid-April, Phoenix geeks will get the chance to experience some unique performances: A pair of concerts starring virtual Japanese pop star Hatsune Miku. This interactive animated character is a 3-D projection that sings and dances while a live band performs onstage. Created in 2007 using Vocaloid software voicebank developed by Japan-based music technology company Crypton Future Media, Hatsune Miku has released albums, appeared on various merchandise, and performed for audiences worldwide. Her latest tour comes to Mullett Arena for two concerts that will serve as anime fandom events. Doors open at 7 p.m. and **tickets** are \$75 to \$150.



Record Store Day is Valhalla for vinyl geeks.

Jacob Tyler Dunn

Record Store Day 2024

Saturday, April 20

Valleywide

Think the lines at local cons are long? It's nothing compared to the number of people queuing up outside of music retailers on Record Store Day. Each year, vinyl junkies, crate-diggers and music nerds patiently wait for hours to snag exclusives during this annual celebration of independent record shops. Such will be the case at the 17 local stores across the Valley celebrating RSD 2024. **This year's haul** includes plenty of rarities, gems and re-releases, all of which will be in limited supply (highlights include Black Sabbath's 1970 banger "Paranoid," Joe Pesci's 1968 album "Little Joe Sure Can Sing" and Elmer Bernstein's "Airplane! The Soundtrack"). **Participating retailers** will offer a variety of giveaways and host special performances throughout the day. Hours vary by store.



Have a close encounter with cold-blooded creatures at the Phoenix Reptile Expo.

Pexels

Phoenix Reptile Expo 2024

Saturday, April 20 and Sunday, April 21

Mesa Convention Center, 263 N. Center St., Mesa

If you've got a passion for herpetology or just love lizards, slither on over to the Mesa Convention Center during the third weekend in April for the latest Phoenix Reptile Expo. The two-day event is the largest reptile show in Arizona and will offer a full-scale experience with dozens of vendors, a wealth of supplies and appearances by a variety of cold-blooded critters ranging from corn snakes to bearded dragons and turtles. Plus, you'll have the chance to learn a thing or two about the reptile world from local educators. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 20 and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 21. **Admission** is \$12 for adults and \$5 for kids.



Pick up some back issues at the Scottsdale Comic Book Show.

Waldemar/Unsplash

Scottsdale Comic Book Show

Sunday, April 21

Scottsdale Plaza Resort, 7200 N. Scottsdale Road

Organizers of this semiannual event might jokingly call it “Old Man Con,” but there will likely be more than just aging Comic Book Guys in attendance. Local geeks of every age, gender and level of cynicism are welcome to peruse the selection of vintage titles from the golden, silver and bronze ages of comics inside the Scottsdale Plaza Resort’s Grande Ballroom. More than a dozen dealers and retailers from Arizona and elsewhere will have tables, including local spots like Bubba’s Comics in Tempe and Scottsdale’s Fantastic Worlds Comics (a complete list is available [here](#).) Hours are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Tickets** are \$10 for general admission and \$20 for early-bird access.

Fantastic Planet (1973) trailer



‘Fantastic Planet’

Wednesday, April 24

Phoenix Art Museum, 1625 N. Central Ave.

Describing 1973’s “Fantastic Planet” ain’t an easy task. The French experimental animated science fiction film’s colorful and otherworldly visuals – which are like if Salvador Dali, Terry Gilliam and Alex Andreev took turns reinterpreting the works of Dr. Seuss – are only matched by the oddness of its plot. Here’s how Ernie Quiroz, Phoenix Art Museum’s curator of film, summed up the flick: “A

trippy, sci-fi animation allegory taking place on the planet Ygam where the native Draags enslave humans they call Oms. Psychedelic jazz score compliments the surreal landscapes in this counterculture classic." See it for yourself when PAM screens "Fantastic Planet" at 6 p.m. on April 24. **Tickets** are \$8 per person.



Giorgio A. Tsoukalos isn't saying it was aliens, but it was aliens.

Goatling/CC BY-SA 2.0/Flickr

'Ancient Aliens' Live: Project Earth

Thursday, April 25

Orpheum Theatre, 203 W. Adams St.

The History Channel series "Ancient Aliens" may never definitively prove that otherworldly astronauts visited Earth eons ago, but, much like its internet-famous ufologist Giorgio A. Tsoukalos and his gravity-defying hair, it's always an entertaining watch. We're expecting the program's touring live show, which comes to the Orpheum Theatre in April, will be much the same. The event will involve Tsoukalos, author David Childress, mythologist William Henry and UFO investigator Nick Pope discussing little green men and other out-of-this-world subject matter. Start time is 8 p.m. and **tickets** are \$52 to \$71.



Mesa Community College Theatre

Wikipedia

'She Kills Monsters'

Starting Friday, April 26

MCC Theatre, 1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa

Long before the world rediscovered the awesomeness of “Dungeons & Dragons,” playwright Qui Nguyen used the iconic fantasy tabletop role-playing game as a device in her 2011 comedy-drama “She Kills Monsters.” The critically acclaimed play follows the character of Agnes Evans as she delves into the “D&D” campaign of her recently deceased teenage LGBTQ sister to navigate her grief and understand her late sibling better. Alternating between the real world and the realm of swords and sorcery, the play delves into themes of loss, identity and the power of imagination. Mesa Community College will stage a two-weekend production of “She Kills Monsters” in late April. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. on April 26 and 27 and May 2 and 3 with matinees at 2 p.m. on April 27 and May 4. **Tickets** start at \$12.



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