

The AUsome Social Group

Teen/Young Adult Recreation/Social Group

Sponsored by the Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM); <http://www.autismmadison.org/>

Contact: Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

(608) 222-4378 or ausome@hughes.net

- What:** 47th Annual Madfest Juggling Show at Wisconsin Union Theater
When: January 16, 2010 (Saturday) 7:00-9:30 P.M. (come between 6:30 –6:45)
Where: Wisconsin Union Theater - 800 Langdon Street - Behind the Memorial Union on the UW Campus at the corner of Park Street and Langdon Street (parking's scarce – come early)
Cost: 2 Free tickets per AUsome member (Thanks to Capital Times Kid's Fund Grant) – additional tickets are \$10

The Best Juggling Show in town! There is a juggling convention in Madison every January. The culmination of that convention is always a Saturday night juggling show where the best jugglers at the convention show what they can do. The AUsome Group has gone to this every year since 1999. It is a hoot! There's lots of creativity, humor and slapstick in the show and the juggling talent is really good.

It's always freezing cold and parking is a challenge, but it's worth it! If you want to read more about the show at a creative and outrageous web site, see <http://www.madjugglers.com/madfest/>. You can also read the description of what happened last year at the juggling show on page 4 at <http://www.autismmadison.org/newsletter/ausome2009/au09Mar-Apr-MMOCA-Photo-Barbershop.pdf>.

As usual, I am combining the question about juggling show ticket counts with verifying the AUsome mailing list. I sent out an email asking for feedback on both items. I'm not sure if I will be able to call people this year or not so please let me know via email if you haven't heard from me.

I will purchase all the tickets in advance (it's cheaper) for all of you who told me you were coming. I will give you all your tickets in the lobby the night of the show. If you ordered tickets and can't make it, let me know ASAP so I can save our grant money. If you can't remember if you ordered tickets (or how many), either call my home 222-4378 or send me an email at ausome@hughes.net.

The cost this year (\$10/person) is covered by our Capital Times Kid's Fund Grant (Yea!) for each AUsome member and one guest. **If you need additional tickets for other family members, mail me a check for \$10 for each extra ticket. Make the check out to Nancy Alar and mail it to Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527.** I must have the money no later than Wednesday, January 13th. It might be possible for you to buy extra tickets from the box office the night of the show, but then they cost \$13. The show has sold out in many past years. Not sure if they will sell out this year. PLEASE let me know ASAP if you can't make it at the last minute so I can have an accurate seating count. Last year I had some tickets that I had to scramble to resell because some people didn't show up.

Please meet me in the lobby between 6:30 and 6:45 to pick up your tickets! The entrance to the theater is behind the Memorial Union right where Park Street ends at the Lake. The lobby is sort of crescent shaped with windows all along the side facing the lake. I'll be waiting for you with the tickets right in front of the windows. Look for the AUsome Social Group sign.

I got quite a big response to this outing (we had about 112 people signed up last year). This year's show coordinator will again be Mark Hayward (The guy with the mousetraps, blowgun and marshmallows in past years). Mark was also very helpful to me (Thanks!! Mark!!). As before, they are setting aside a special section for us so we can all sit together. We are the only group who gets special seating. All other audience members are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. We will be sitting in a reserved section in the center of the right hand side on the ground floor. This is the section closest to the exit

ramp on the right. This will make it easy for you to get out if you need to. Don't worry if you have to leave early. Someone has to leave early almost every year. Note: The bathrooms are downstairs.

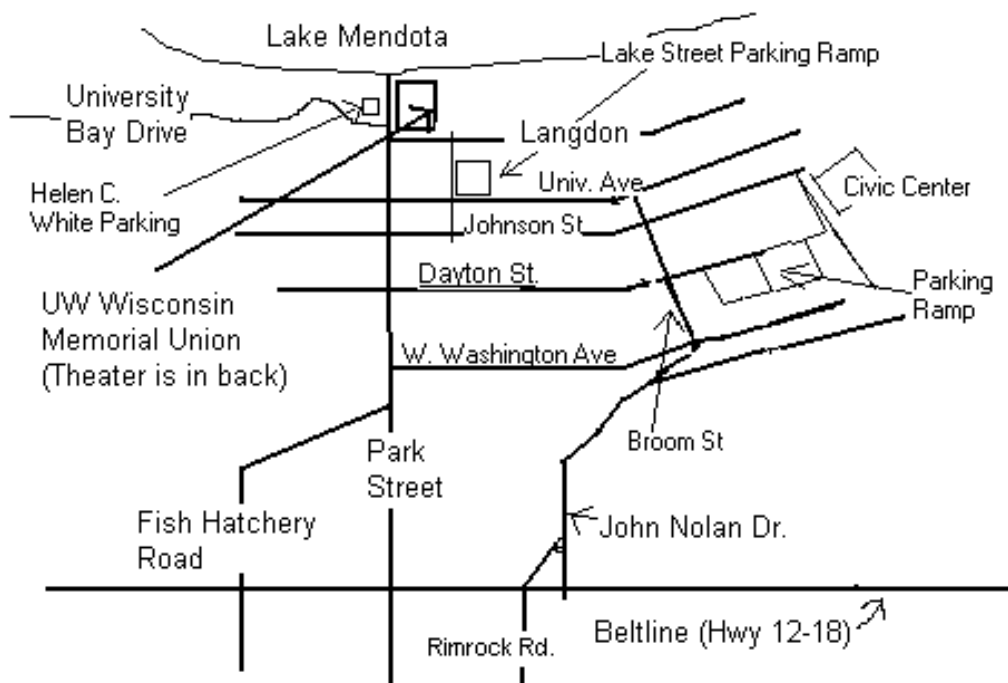
Plan to show up early if possible because **parking is a real problem on the UW campus**, and it is quite crowded. The best place to park is in the Lake Street Ramp, which is about 3 blocks from the Theater (See map below) or the Helen C. Wright underground lot across from the theater. We are not going anywhere as a group before or after because the show lasts so long. There will be soda available in the lobby and food in the Rathskeller part of the union during the 20 to 30 minute intermission. Plan to bring some extra money if you want to buy soda or other treats or a juggling show T-shirt.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ The show is rather long and the theater is crowded.
- ☺ There also are lots of noisy kids in the audience (we will be some of them!).
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if it gets to be too much.
- ☺ There may be balloons in the crowd and/or in the show.
- ☺ There is a 20 to 30 minute intermission in the middle, but the lines for the bathroom are long.
- ☺ Be sure to send extra ticket money so I have it by Jan. 13th if you need more than the 2 free tickets (\$10 each).

Get back to me either with email (ausome@hughes.net) or phone 222-4378 if you don't remember how many tickets you are getting.

Map to the Wisconsin Union Theater (Location of both January Juggling Show and February (Jan 29) Indian Story Telling).



- What:** Native American (American Indian) Storytelling
- When:** January 29, 2010 (Friday), 7:00 – 9:00pm. Note that this is considered the February AUsome activity even though it is in January.
- Where:** Wisconsin Union Theater - 800 Langdon Street - Behind the Memorial Union on the UW Campus at the corner of Park Street and Langdon Street (parking's scarce – come early). Same place as the juggling show
- Cost:** Free! No tickets are needed, but **tell me how many are coming**. This is a free event open to the public, but we will have a special seating section for our AUsome group. I need a count to have the seats reserved

This is your chance to learn more about Native Americans and actually hear stories in the languages that were spoken in this country long before Europeans came here. This Indian Story Telling event is an annual activity on the UW campus and usually occurs in February. I have heard good things about it and wanted to take the group there for a long time. However, I found out their funding has been cut so this might be the last year they do this storytelling show. That's why the AUsome group is attending this even though it is very soon after the juggling show.

They are planning to feature 4 different story tellers:

- Joey Awonohopay, Menominee language
- [Nancy Jones](#), Ojibwe language
- [Mary Louise Defender Wilson](#), Dakota-Hidatsa language
- [Sequoyah Guess](#), Keetoowah Cherokee language

You can find out more details about the Story Telling event and the American Indian Studies program at the UW at <http://amindian.wisc.edu/storytelling/storytelling.html> . As of this writing, the website has not been updated with the details, but it should be soon.

The show will start out with a 15 minute Native American drumming performance. After the drumming, 4 different American Indian Elders from the United States and Canada will do traditional American Indian Storytelling in their native language. The program will include an English translation of the stories either during or after the performance. Each speaker will also act out the story as they are telling it, so the action is usually easy to understand. There will be an intermission and another drumming performance after the last story.

We will not be going out to eat afterwards because it will be so late when it is over. The parking situation is the same as for the juggling show since they are in the same location.

If you plan to attend, please let me know and how many will be coming. As always, you can bring friends and family members. I need to know how many are attending so we can reserve the right number of seats. Contact me at 608-222-4378 or nancy.alar@hughes.net.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ The drumming at the beginning and end will be fairly loud
- ☺ The stories will be told in native languages and will be translated but maybe not until the end, so this might be confusing to those who don't relate to that concept.

Important Information:

1. Visit <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for other services and activities sponsored by the **Autism Society of Great Madison (ASGM)**. The 3rd Tuesday evening of the month is either a parent support group meeting at the Midvale Community Lutheran Church or a special presentation. There is also sensory friendly Saturday movies on the last Saturday of the month and quarterly birthday parties at “Pump-it-up”. There are also many other special events (such as A-Maze-ing Days at the Treinen Farm Corn Maze) through out the year.
2. **The Annual Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) conference will be March 18-20, 2010 at the Hotel Sierra (formerly the Regency Suites) in Green Bay.** This is much earlier than usual. The registration form is a little confusing because the full conference rate for someone on the spectrum is \$90 (up from \$60 last year, but still a real bargain) regardless of when you register. Parents and other attendees have to pay a lot more. See the ASW web site for more information - <http://www.asw4autism.org/>.

Yes! We will have 2 special autism conference strands (youth and “across the lifespan”). We will have a hospitality room and an art/favorite things display. On Friday evening, we’ll have a pizza supper, a talent show, and a dance. Register early so we know how many to plan for.

At this conference we try to make those on the spectrum as comfortable as we can. We will take sensory issues and dietary restrictions into consideration as much as possible. Those who want to participate in the youth and self-advocacy strands will need to register for the conference and pay the registration fee (the fee for those on the spectrum is only \$90!). This conference is a place where those on the spectrum are valued for their differences. You are the reason this conference exists.

3. AUsome Newsletter Mailing Issues:

There have been some problems in the past 6 months with the AUsome Newsletter mailings getting out on time – especially the hard copies. This has been due to “growing pains” as ASGM staff take over more of the mailing tasks that I have been doing by myself all these years (believe me, this change is a GOOD thing). ASGM has a new staff member (a big welcome to Tom Alesia!) who will be working with me to iron out the kinks in our mailing process. As we move more to electronic communication, if you have an email address or your email address changes, please let me know, since it is faster to get out email copies. It saves us a lot of money if we can send mail electronically rather than via snail mail.

What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

Video Game Night and Pizza at Lussier Community Education Center (LCEC)

Saturday, November 7, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

As usual, this was a really great time!! Since the church is under construction, we had the activity at the Lussier Community Center. Thanks so much to Keith at the LCEC who helped us set up the tables and figure out how to use the kitchen resources. We had over 60 people attend and gaming systems galore. I thought it was most interesting how we had 2 projectors going at once in adjacent corners of the gym with gamers watching at right angles to each other.

Those who were there as spectators enjoyed looking at all the AUsome scrap books of our past activities. A lot of family members and friends joined in the fun. Every one enjoyed the evening even after fighting hard fought video battles. A few people brought their wii games along too. We made sure to give our athletes plenty of elbow room for their bowling arms.

We had about 10 TV's set up with game equipment of all kinds. (Thanks to all who brought TV/game setups and controllers!! It also was helpful that several people remembered to bring extension cords and power strips. I know it is a pain lugging that heavy stuff around, but we couldn't do it without you!). A special thanks to all the group members for their efforts on technical support. AUsome members should be proud of their skills with equipment.

AUsome now owns 2 (very old) surplus projection units to hook up to our video games instead of a TV! We'll use them until the bulbs burn out (a very expensive replacement proposition). These units are also used by ASW for their annual conference hospitality room. These projectors are very useful because popular games can be projected on a screen or wall so others can watch. The gym walls were kind of rough, but it didn't seem to hamper play.

We bought the pizzas at Pizza Hut on Mineral Point Rd. We ordered 19 pizzas – 4 pepperoni, 4 cheese, 3 supreme (the works) – 3 veggie, 2 sausage/mushroom, 1 barbeque chicken, 2 ham + pineapple. We also had soda, carrots and Oreo cookies, and some other nice dessert things that people bought. Our goal is to make sure there are snacks for people with all kinds of food issues. We did have some pizza left over because we had a slightly smaller turnout than usual. We did have some confusion over the different location and the weather was threatening.

Another special thanks to the Capital Times Kid's Fund for buying the pizza, soda pop, cookies and other supplies and to all those who helped with the setup and cleanup.

Lochlan Masters the Magician, Saturday, December 5, 2009, noon – 2 pm

Lochlan is REALLY a great magician! His act was wonderful and kept everyone on the edge of their seats. He was also very funny and kept us guessing and laughing with his magic. His wife, Kristyn, was there to help out. We had about 26 people show up in spite of the cold weather.

Lochlan entertained us with disappearing, magic rubber bands, pieces of rope that changed length and even fixed themselves when the rope was cut! He showed us his magic purse with red balls that appeared and disappeared (Ty helped out with that trick.) Kim helped Lochlan out with the trick with the magic copper and silver coins that changed places and disappeared and re-appeared.

His last trick involved "Birdie", a plastic bird in a cage that he took out and pretended was alive. When Lochlan did his magic, "Baby" – a real live rabbit – materialized in Birdie's cage! Baby was doing her debut as a magic rabbit. Thanks to my neighbor Marlis Reese who loaned us Baby to help out Lochlan. She seemed to enjoy her night out as a "magic rabbit".

Thanks to all who brought treats to share and helped to set up the seating and put things away again. And thanks again to Keith of the LCEC who once again helped us get everything in place including figuring out the intricacies of the LCEC coffee machine.

AUsome Social Group Philosophy and Ground Rules

Group Sponsor:

The AUsome Social Group is sponsored by the Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM). **It is highly recommended that you join the Autism Society of Greater Madison. You should at least subscribe to the Autism Society of Greater Madison newsletter (subscription cost is only \$5) if you are not a chapter member.** It is possible that Madison chapter membership may be required in the future as the AUsome group becomes larger and requires more resources. You can get more information about the Madison Chapter (including an extensive autism resource list), by calling (608) 213-8519 or sending a note to ASGM, 2935 Fish Hatchery Rd #101, Madison, WI 53711

See the ASGM website at <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for membership information and a link to the AUsome Group web pages <http://www.autismmadison.org/ausome/index.htm> . If you join the Autism Society of Greater Madison, this automatically gives you the chapter newsletter plus membership in both the state (ASW) and national Autistic Societies so you will get all those mailings as well. (Changes are underway with national vs local membership, so check with the website to confirm membership details.)

Group Purpose:

The AUsome group was organized to provide recreation and social opportunities for people ages 12 and over who are challenged by sensory/communication issues related to Autism/Asperger's/PDD/Tourette's. However, anyone is welcome to join the activities. I try to set up activities that allow for social interaction between group members and between parents and siblings of the group. Friends of group members are welcome to come along.

The AUsome Newsletter:

The AUsome Group has a separate newsletter that is sent out every other month, containing details for the next 2 outings and a summary of what happened the past 2 months. The AUsome newsletter will be sent out at least a week in advance of the next outing (I hope). Some things may be planned with short notice if something interesting comes up. If you have an e-mail address and are OK with receiving the newsletter that way, let me (Nancy Alar) know. It saves time and postage if notification can just be sent electronically. I will maintain a mailing list of participants, and will verify this list annually – usually in January in conjunction with a call about tickets to the juggling show. Our AUsome newsletter is also available on the web at <http://www.autismmadison.org/newsletter/index.htm>

General Activity Plans:

The general plan is to have an activity about once a month that will last from 2 to 4 hours. The target day will be the first Saturday of the month. However, this is subject to schedule conflicts and availability of interesting activities. Activities that we have done include bowling, miniature golf, gymnastics, movies, a talent show, art gallery visit, fossil hunt, Little Amerricka (a local amusement park), swimming, horse back riding, Go Cart driving, farm market, airplane rides, pottery making and a limousine ride. Each January we attend the 47th annual Madfest Juggling show. In August we join other ASGM members for a private pool party at the Monona Pool. Every November we have “video game night”. If you are especially interested in a particular activity or have other suggestions, please let me know.

Sensory Issues:

Every effort will be made to accommodate sensory issues by limiting cigarette smoke, strong odors, unusual lighting, large crowds and high noise levels where possible. If an activity might involve some of the sensory problems mentioned above, they will be described in the AUsome newsletter. It will not be possible to accommodate everyone's needs all the time so individuals must decide their tolerance levels for each activity. Please let me know if you have any special requests in this area. Also, please be sensitive to requests from group members who have special sensory needs (such as problems with others chewing gum.).

Logistics:

Some individuals may need to arrange for a support person to accompany them. Please use your best judgment in this area. Transportation will be the responsibility of each individual. However, effort will be made to provide help with transportation by designating central meeting points, etc. **Please call me, Nancy Alar, (608) 222-4378 or e-mail me at ausome@hughes.net if you have transportation problems, and I'll try to help work out a way for you to get there.**

Since these activities are loosely organized social outings, each person participates at their own risk.