Brick Journal

Issue 3, Winter 2005

people • building • community

THE EVENT ISSUE

Reports from:

AFOL Days
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LEGO ®Fest
LEGO® World
Northwest BrickCon
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Interviews, Instructions and Much More!

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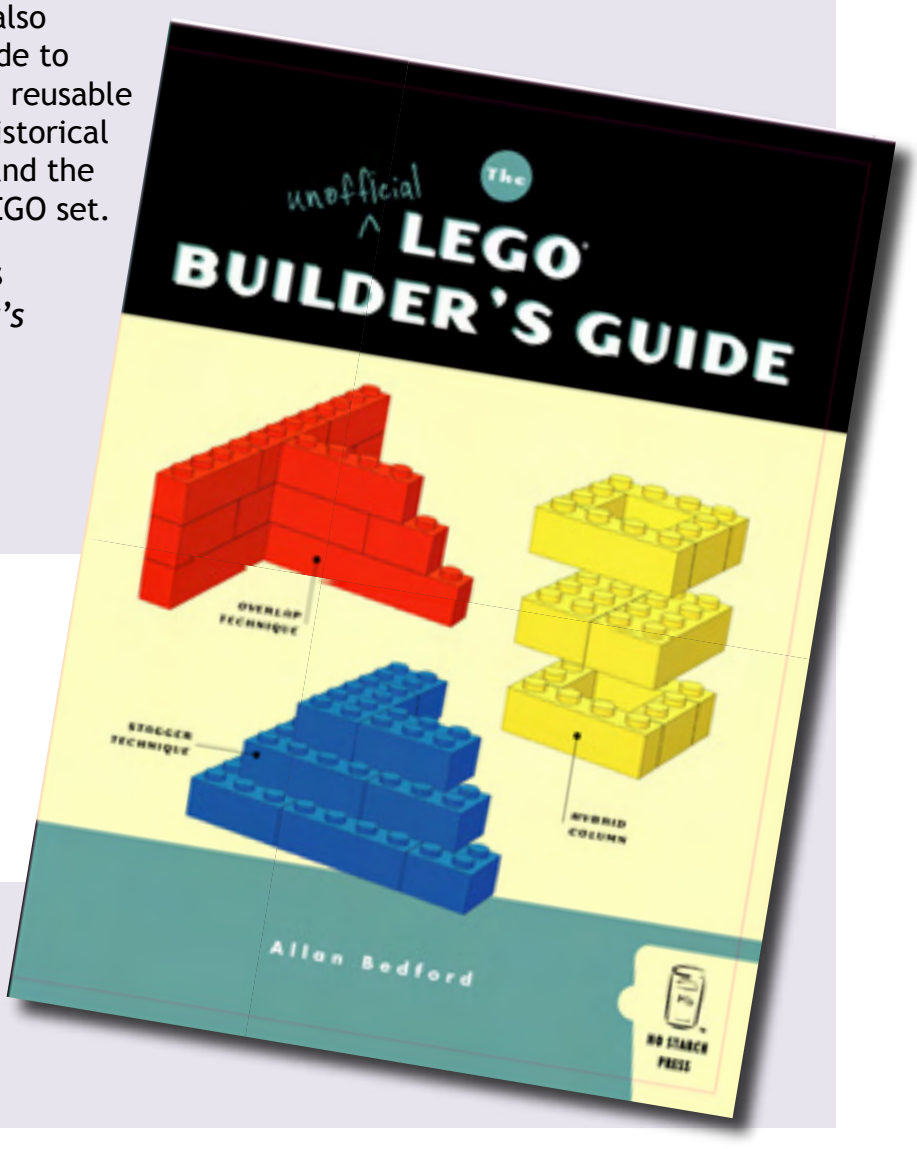
Build A Firm Foundation for Your LEGO® Hobby!

Have you ever wondered about the basics (and the not-so-basics) of LEGO building? What exactly is a slope? What's the difference between a tile and a plate? Why is it bad to simply stack bricks in columns to make a wall? *The Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide* is here to answer your questions. You'll learn:

- The best ways to connect bricks and creative uses for those patterns
- Tricks for calculating and using scale (it's not as hard as you think)
- The step-by-step plans to create a train station on the scale of LEGO people (aka minifigs)
- How to build spheres, jumbo-sized LEGO bricks, micro-scaled models, and a mini space shuttle
- Tips for sorting and storing all of your LEGO pieces

The Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide also includes the Brickopedia, a visual guide to more than 300 of the most useful and reusable elements of the LEGO system, with historical notes, common uses, part numbers, and the year each piece first appeared in a LEGO set.

Focusing on building actual models with real bricks, *The LEGO Builder's Guide* comes with complete instructions to build several cool models but also encourages you to use your imagination to build fantastic creations!



The Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide
by Allan Bedford
No Starch Press
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AVAILABLE NOW

Available in bookstores everywhere or directly from the publisher at www.nostarch.com. Visit the author's website at www.apotome.com for more information.

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Volume #1
Issue 3

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About the Cover:

Photo of Castle Drachenschlaf courtesy of Robin Sather.

From the Editor:

Hi there!

BrickJournal is late, and it's pretty much my fault. I apologize for that - there has been so much going on that things have been really busy since October...

Doing what? Well....you'll find out soon enough.

Enough said there.

BrickJournal is a double issue this time, with the vast majority of the extra pages going to events that have happened here and internationally. I have wanted to be as inclusive as possible, and with the help of Jan Beyer of the LEGO European office and the efforts of Gael Frazier, Didier Enjary, Sybrand Bosma, Holger Matthes and Luca Giannitti, I have reports from almost all of Europe. And I still have some events that had to be cut!

Reports in the United States covered the National Model Railroad Association show (which was a first for the LEGO clubs here), BrickFest and Northwest BrickCon. Coverage of BrickFest is extensive for one reason - this was the first opportunity that the *BrickJournal* staff could coordinate the staff on a event. The result is hopefully a sampling of what made BrickFest special this year.

As time goes on, I hope to see just as extensive coverage on all the events that happen that are LEGO-related. From Germany to France to the US to Japan to Australia, there's so much to report on - so everyone is encouraged to pass the word to us, *BrickJournal* wants to spread the word about events and record them for the community and public to see and admire!

And I and my staff will be roving around to find events and articles! I hope to see y'all then!

Joe Meno
Editor

P.S Have ideas or comments? Drop me a line at admin@brickjournal.com. Or go to www.legofan.org or www.lugnet.com and leave a comment on their forums! I'm open to suggestions and comments and will do my best to reply.

What is the LEGO Community?

By Kelly McKiernan
Photos by Gael Frazier, Ashley Glennon, and Dean Husby

Sometimes people just click.

Two guys discover through a newsgroup that each enjoys LEGO trains, and first meet in a fast food restaurant; they go on to form one of the first regional LEGO train clubs in the US. Another club on the US East Coast decides to host a gathering of LEGO fans, which becomes a series of international events with hundreds of attendees and thousands of public visitors. Somebody in Florida wants to discuss a new LEGO-related trading card game and sets up a forum, which evolves into a Bionicle community that becomes home to tens of thousands of members and millions of posts. Two people open a modest newsgroup-based discussion site, which blossoms into an international focal point for LEGO enthusiasts.

There are thousands of stories about people connecting with their hobby, and with each other. Together, these individuals make up groups that interact and interconnect in both cyberspace and in the real world. Together, these people are part of something a whole lot bigger: the LEGO community.

Some may not even know they're part of something so large and complex. Kids and adults have been enjoying the LEGO brick for half a century, but the organized LEGO enthusiast community has only been around for about a decade. Who knows how many closet LEGO fans lurk through toy stores, pretending to buy sets for their children? Some may even browse through a LEGO fan magazine and be blown away at the depth of interest adults invest in a bright plastic toy, and at the incredible creations they are capable of producing.

During the last decade an interest in building with LEGO bricks (especially among adults) has brought to life various web sites, online discussion groups, e-mail lists, in-person club meetings, specialty shows, conventions, and more. Individually, each group may focus on a specific interest or theme, or geographical location. It may be as small as a couple of people gathering in a workroom every few weeks or months to show off and compare their creations; or as large as a nationwide club putting on massive public exhibitions for tens of thousands of visitors.

The number of creative outlets for LEGO enthusiasm continues to grow. For example, a quick search of Google for "LEGO fan" results in more than half a million results.

So what, exactly, do all these people talk about?

At first glance, you might think there would be a limit to how much you could discuss about the LEGO hobby. But you'd be surprised at just how many different topics one can focus on. Not only does The LEGO Company produce the well-known plastic binding brick, it has also delved into robotics (with its Mindstorms products and First LEGO League initiative), among other things. There are also a large number of CAD (computer-aided design) enthusiasts interested in building a virtual world, as well as other geek types who find enjoyment in putting together web sites or computer applications centering around their favorite hobby. (Guilty.)

And let us not forget the creations. From moonbase modules to mosaics, Alpha Team to Znap, somebody's put together something amazing. Each LEGO theme has a subculture and each subculture tends to have its own way of designing and building a MOC (which stands for "My Own Creation"). Inspiration is only a couple of clicks away.

OK, so there's a lot to talk about and see. Where is it all?

Much of it is online, but more and more there are in-person clubs and organizations specifically created to cater to the LEGO enthusiast. The first step is finding them, and the best place to start is online.

First, there are plenty of discussion groups: LUGNET.com, BZPower.com, Classic-Castle.com, FBTB.net (From Bricks to Bothans), 1000steine.com (in German), EuroBricks.com, and many, many more places provide areas for enthusiasts to discuss things LEGO-related. You can see thousands of inventive, creative, amazing, and even scary custom LEGO creations on sites such as BrickShelf.com and MOCPages.com. If you're after reference material, try BrickSet.com, LUGNET's set guide (guide.lugnet.com), or Peeron.com to start. And in addition to your local toy store, you can purchase new and used sets and individual LEGO pieces from places like eBay.com, BrickLink.com, and AuctionBrick.com, just for starters.

These are just a few places to start diving into the wide, deep, and endlessly intriguing LEGO community. They'll also help you find local clubs or organizations, mostly geared toward adults, and provide myriad ways of getting started or continuing with the LEGO hobby.

In other words, the LEGO community can provide you a foundation to build from. And, when you think about it, isn't that the whole point?

Helping Those in Need: The AFOL Relief Effort

Article by Joe Meno

When Hurricane hit New Orleans, the images that were shown on the news showed a disaster like none other in recent memory. People were stranded on house roofs and in shelters, some being plucked by rescue helicopters and others rescued by National Guardsmen. Families were displaced and evacuated, and there was an outcry for help.

It took a couple of days for me to fully understand the scope of the disaster, but I was watching local groups organize donation drives for the care organizations that were stepping in to provide disaster aid.

From there, an idea came out: a relief effort on the part of the AFOL community. I presented the idea out to some people in the community, who were very supportive and offered help and suggestions. The strongest suggestion was to join up with the LEGO group in some kind of effort.

About this time, on LUGNET (www.lugnet.com - the AFOL's primary website for information), some ideas for relief were posted, from Mark Bellis and Kelly McKiernan (both who are LEGO Ambassadors). They suggested that the LEGO Group (TLG) find some ways to provide disaster aid, most notably by donating toys and clothes to children at relief centers.

I sent a note with suggestions to Jake McKee, Community Liaison to TLG about doing something with TLG, and the note was forwarded for consideration. After a few days, I got a reply that TLG was willing to join with the AFOL community in a relief drive: every dollar sent to TLG's Enfield office would be matched by the Edith and Godtfred Kirk Christiansen Foundation.

In this time, Bruce Hietbrink and Anthony Sava started their own initiative for a toy drive for the evacuees in Houston. Another drive was started on BrickLink (www.bricklink.com) where there was a Brick Link for Relief Day on September 21, where participating brickshops on the site donated proceeds to the AFOL Relief Fund.

Donations came from around the world, with a total of $1400 going to the Red Cross on the behalf of the AFOL community. In Houston, Anthony Sava bought sets from donations and delivered them along with the donated sets sent to him to an evacuee center, then did another toy drive!

Photos by Anthony Sava

BrickJournal *would like to recognize all those who played a part in all of these efforts, including:*

Anthony Sava, Bruce Heitbrink, Christina Hitchcock, Steve Hassenplug, Robin Werner, Mark Bellis, Dan and Jennifer Boger, Cyndi Bradham, Felix Greco, Larry Pieniazek, Michael Huffman, Mike Walsh, Kelly McKiernan, Michael Collaco, Kunie Devorkin, Derek Rooney and Geoff Gray.

Jared Burks, Robert Martin, and Emily Sarao held charity auctions on eBay for custom minifigs

For Brick Link for Relief Day:

The Legobah System (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Legobah_System)

ToysNTreasures (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Tiny_TNT)

NEVER2MNYLEGOS (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=loki6285)

Finder's Keepers (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=slmalczyk)

Brick Onion (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=mhn1957)

Trade Express (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Trade_Express)

Kristin's Brick (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Thomas)

BRICKBOX (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Stripes)

Brick Lot FREE S & H (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=Spider-Man)

Karen?s LEGO Café (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=lepperk)

BrickFrenzy (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=tremor)

Al?s Toy Barn (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=BigAl)

Zelda Aslan & Merle Bricks (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=vitalogy)

Brick w/o Mortar (http://www.bricklink.com/store.asp?p=pedalingman)

and www.1000steine.de

What's NXT?

LEGO Group Unveils LEGO® MINDSTORMS™ NXT Robotics Toolset at Consumer Electronics Show

LEGO Press Release

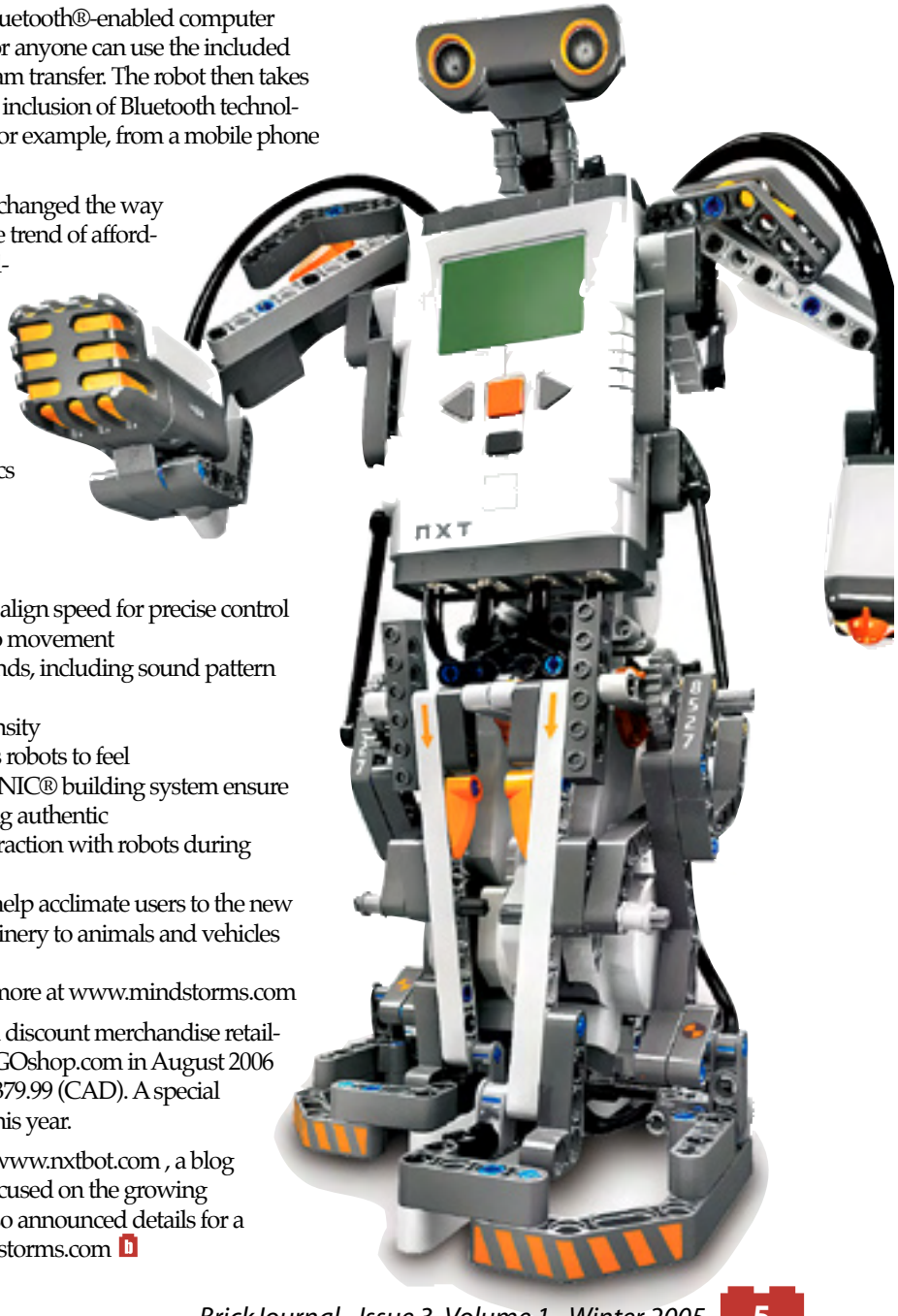
LAS VEGAS (January 4, 2006) –LEGO Group today announces LEGO® MINDSTORMS™ NXT, a new system that redefines the consumer robotics category the company created in 1998. Smarter, stronger and more intuitive than ever, LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT is a robotics toolset that provides endless opportunities for armchair inventors, robotics fanatics and LEGO builders ages 10 and older to build and program robots that do what they want. LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT, available in August 2006, was shown for the first time to media who attended tonight's Digital ExperienceTM, and will be demonstrated during the 2006 International Consumer Electronics Show.

Building upon the success of the globally-renowned Robotics Invention System, the next generation of LEGO MINDSTORMS makes it quicker and easier for robot creators to build and program a working robot in just 30 minutes. Simultaneously, new technologies and expanded sensor capabilities add a level of sophistication to excite and challenge more experienced robot creators.

The heart of the new system is the NXT brick, an autonomous 32-bit LEGO microprocessor that can be programmed using a PC, or for the first time in the retail offering, a Mac. After building their robots, users create a program within easy-to-use yet feature-rich software, powered by LabVIEW from National Instruments.

Downloading programs to an invention is easy. Users with Bluetooth®-enabled computer hardware can transfer their programs to the NXT wirelessly, or anyone can use the included USB 2.0 cable to connect their computer to the NXT for program transfer. The robot then takes on a life of its own, fully autonomous from the computer. The inclusion of Bluetooth technology also extends possibilities for controlling robots remotely, for example, from a mobile phone or PDA.

"When LEGO MINDSTORMS launched, we fundamentally changed the way people viewed LEGO building and play and helped spark the trend of affordable and attainable consumer robotics," says Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, CEO, LEGO Group. "Eight years later, we're ready to improve upon the single best-selling product in the company's history. We've developed the new toolset with expanded components and capabilities to challenge our existing community of dynamic fans. Meanwhile, the system's new software, design and 30-minute quick-start program are geared toward recruiting a new, younger generation of robotics enthusiasts."



LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT highlights include:

- All-new NXT intelligent brick
- 3 interactive servo motors feature inbuilt rotation sensors to align speed for precise control
- New ultrasonic sensor makes robots "see" by responding to movement
- New sound sensor enables robots to react to sound commands, including sound pattern and tone recognition
- Improved light sensor detects different colors and light intensity
- Improved touch sensor reacts to touch or release and allows robots to feel
- 519 hand-selected, stylized elements from the LEGO TECHNIC® building system ensure robot creations will be sturdy and durable while also looking authentic
- Opportunities for physical programming of robots and interaction with robots during programming
- 18 building challenges with clear, step-by-step instructions help acclimate users to the new system to create robots ranging from humanoids and machinery to animals and vehicles
- Digital wire interface allows for third-party developments
- Information, inspiration, news, community programs and more at www.mindstorms.com

LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT will be available at most toy and discount merchandise retailers, select consumer electronics retailers or online at www.LEGOshop.com in August 2006 and will have a suggested retail price of $249.99 (USD) and $ 379.99 (CAD). A special version for school and institutional use is also releasing later this year.

In related news, LEGO Group also announced the launch of www.nxtbot.com , a blog written by writer, gamer and robotics enthusiast Jeff James, focused on the growing and fascinating world of consumer robotics. The company also announced details for a Developer Program. Information can be found at www.mindstorms.com

'Tis the Season...

LEGO clubs help children and hospitals during Christmas season. BrickJournal *spotlights one effort in Atlanta and clubs in the US that have done community services.*

Article by Scott Lyttle
Photos by James Trobaugh

Photo by Tammy Ellis

For the past five years, the North Georgia LEGO Train Club (NGLTC) has been participating in their local "Festival of Trees" fundraiser. One of Atlanta's premier holiday events, the Festival of Trees features specialty shops and fun activities for children, while raising funds for the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) children's hospitals. Each year, proceeds are targeted at a particular portion or center of the hospital. For 2005, proceeds for the event will benefit the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Children's Healthcare.

To help make the tree special each year, NGLTC incorporates the help of patients at Children's Healthcare, bringing tubs of loose brick, along with advent calendars, in the hospital's activity room. Children from the hospital come down to build ornaments and other Christmas items out of LEGO bricks. "It's some fun time away from being sick." Says James Trobaugh, NGLTC's founder and president. These ornaments are then placed on a tree, and sold at the Festival of Trees event, to raise money for Children's Healthcare. The money is then used throughout the hospital, including providing funds for those families not able to afford treatment.

The LEGO Group (TLG), with much help from LEGO Brand Retail, has helped provide sets for the participants of the build sessions each year. As children leave the build session, each is given a LEGO set to take with them and build back in their rooms.

NGLTC's involvement with the Festival of Trees started in 2001. The 7 1/2-foot tree became an instant hit, winning

a "Best Of Show" award. For the years 2002-2005, The "LEGO Tree" was named as a focus tree, resulting in a larger, 10-foot tree being displayed. Each year, only four focus trees are available. For 2005, club president James Trobaugh decided to "step it up a notch" this year by making a central tree of LEGO elements, with four smaller trees representing each of the four build sessions with different groups of children from the Atlanta area. One tree was decorated with ornaments made by patients from one of the two CHOA hospitals. Students from Matt Elementary School in Cumming, GA, decorated a second tree. The third tree was decorated by a Sunday school class from Lewis Valentine's church, and the fourth tree was decorated by local Girl Scout troops. Surprisingly, NGLTC won the 2005 "Spirit of the Festival" award.

NGLTC was the first LEGO-themed club to start a Festival of Trees, but NGLTC was not alone. Other local clubs followed by participating in their local Festival of Trees events.

New England LEGO Users Group NELUG, participated in Boston's First Annual local Festival of Trees event in 2002, to benefit the National Kidney Foundation.

Michigan-area LEGO Users Group MichLUG has participated in 2003, 2004 and, 2005 on their local Festival of Trees, contributing to the Children's Hospital of Michigan, not only by selling a tree, but also by charging $1.00 to run the train on their Festival of Trees layout for a few minutes (resulting in over $1000 in additional funds donated to the hospital).

The Pacific Northwest LEGO Train Club (PNLTC) did some work for their local Festival of Trees in 2003, contributing $5000 to their local hospital,

The Washington, DC Metropolitan LEGO Users Group (WAMALUG) provided two wreaths, one completely LEGO based, and one decorated with LEGO ornaments, for the Festival of Trees in 2004.

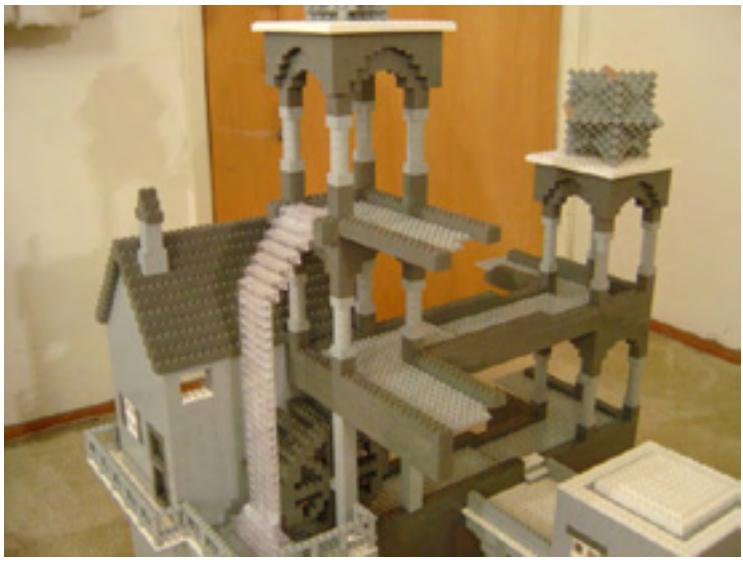
North Carolina LEGO Train Club NCLTC, in 2002, did not have a Festival of Trees, but had a display and collected a sizable donation of food for the Food Bank of North Carolina.

With this growing trend of LEGO clubs helping out at Christmas and the holiday season, it's nice to see the LEGO fan community truly contributing to their local communities.

Waterfall

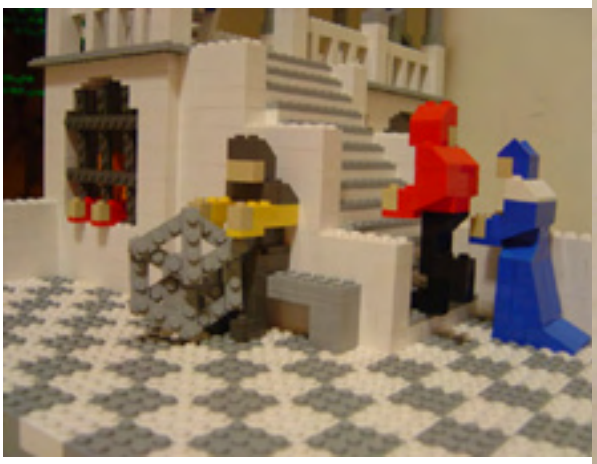
Henry Lim: Escher Builder

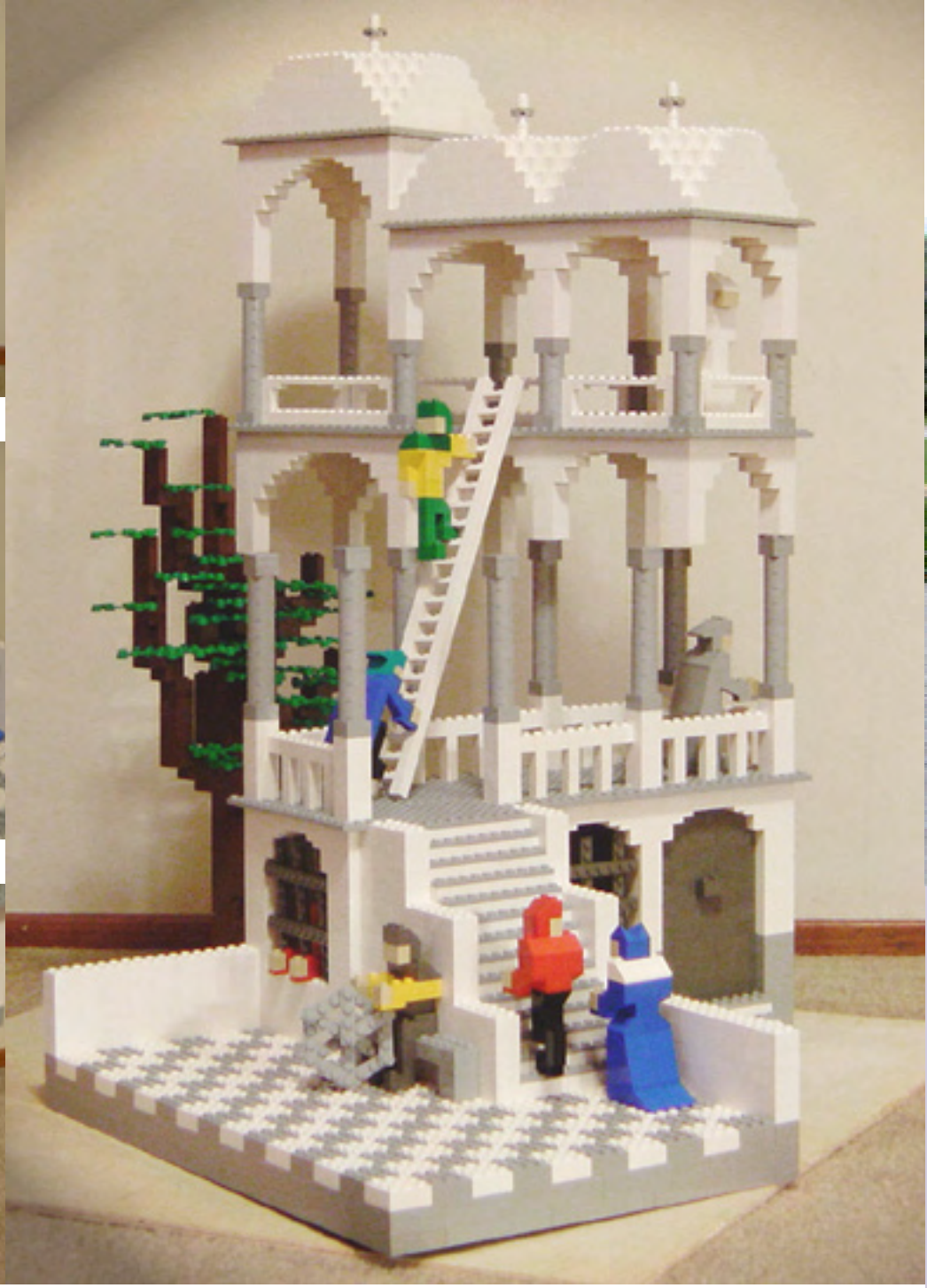
This is the first of hopefully an ongoing series. Instead of an interview or article, In Their Words will be a short article written by the builders themselves to briefly discuss the spotlighted models. For the first ITW, BrickJournal chose Henry Lim:



“I was born in 1972 in San Francisco. I grew up in Hacienda Heights (a suburb of Los Angeles). I got my bachelor’s degree in communications at UC San Diego and my master’s degree in library and information science at UCLA. I currently live in Redondo Beach and work at the UCLA Music Library. I have no formal art training.”

Relativity





Belvedere

“In September 2005, I was commissioned by the Hong Kong Science Museum to sculpturally recreate a series of Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972) lithographs. The critical angles notwithstanding, no photographic trickery is in effect—the impossible objects are approximated via optical illusions. Patrons will be able to view the sculptures from various perspectives whilst peepholes’ll be provided at the sweet spots. It took me about a month to build (and rebuild with glue) all four sculptures. Special thanks to Al Seckel for illusion expertise. And hats off to Andrew Lipson and Daniel Shiu.”

Building the Time-Traveling Delorean: No Flux Capacitor Needed!

One of the neatest model cars to appear recently on Brickshelf is this Delorean from the movie "Back to the Future" BrickJournal *spoke to its builder Zachary Sweigart about building the movie icon.*

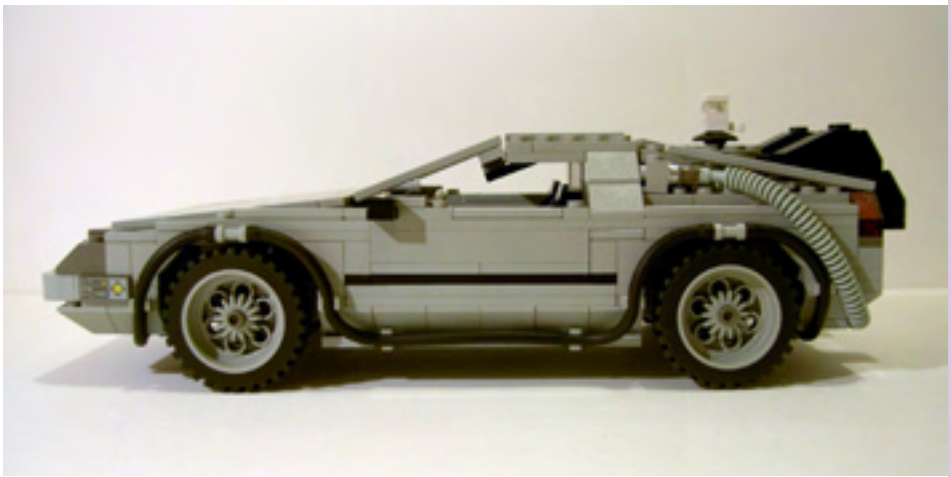
Interview by Joe Meno
Photos by Zachary Sweigart

Top: The Delorean with the Hill Valley Clock Tower, another model built by Zach

Above: Zach with his models

BrickJournal: Tell us about yourself.
Zachary Sweigart: I am currently a college student at Delta Community College in Saginaw, MI. I've been building with LEGOs for about twelve years now and it is by far my favorite hobby. I also enjoy writing and reading books and playing the guitar, but to a lesser extent than creating MOCs (My Own Creations). I am a Christian and I believe that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Besides my LEGO collection, I also collect die-cast cars, some of which are inspiration for my LEGO MOCs. Movies that I enjoy include "STAR WARS" (the whole saga), "The Matrix," and, of course, the "Back To The Future" trilogy. I plan on going into a career in being a graphic artist, but like my MOCs, that plan will likely go through several revisions.

Three-quarter view with gull door open



Side view

Rear three-quarter view

BJ: When did you start building?
ZS: I started building way back when I was four, but I really only remember my first creations when I was about six or seven. Of course, they weren't anything spectacular, but it was a great start to learning the rules and limits of what LEGOs could and couldn't do. It would be some time before I learned how to bend those rules.

BJ: And when did you start building cars?
ZS: Well, I've always been a car fanatic. I got that trait from my father, who worked as an engineer to produce halfshafts for different vehicles. My dad always prided himself in the fact that I knew the Big Three (Ford, Chrysler, General Motors) at the age of two. Since then I was able to correctly identify every car in any parking lot.

I started building cars with LEGOs almost as soon as I got my first set. I remember getting one of those yellow buckets shaped like a brick that included only four wheels amidst the basic bricks. Every occasion since I received that set was an opportunity to ask my parents for sets that included more wheels, windshields, and steering wheels. Once I had those essential elements, I was ready to create entire fleets of cars. The first ones were not that impressive by today's standards, but I tried my hand several times at creating cars that were modeled after the real thing. (Though often it was hard to tell what that multi-colored four-wide vehicle I made was supposed to be.)

When I reached about ten years old, I received my first LEGO Technic set. It was a monster truck with a full functioning tow hook, working engine, steering, and all around suspension. After four grueling hours, the masterpiece was finished. I really think that that set had a lot of influence on my car-building because it allowed me to see the potential of LEGO bricks to create truly amazing models.

After that, I was working my way up from four-wide, multi-colored cars to eight-wide vehicles that I managed to keep in one color. At twelve, I thought eight-wide was the ultimate; it could hold minifigs nicely and it seemed to provide just enough detail to make it look realistic. The only problem was I didn't have enough "big" wheels to make more, so the few models I made were often cannabalised for other models.

Twelve years old also marked the beginning of my family's move from rural Saginaw, Michigan to Paris, France. LEGOs seemed a lot more expensive over there until my mother discovered Brocants (the French equivalent of a garage sale), where Legos could be bought by the box full for hardly any money. My collection probably increased 200 percent during our stay there.

It was also in France that I first saw a classic American movie; one that would have a big influence on one of my future creations.

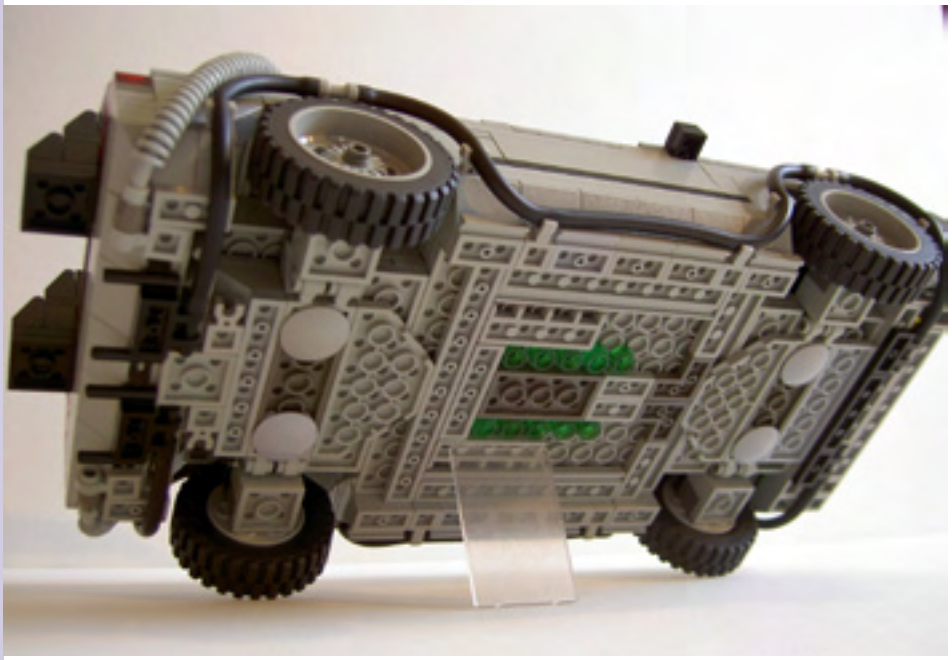
BJ: Why did you decide to build the Delorean?
ZS: Ever since I saw the movie "Back To The Future" (and its subsequent sequels), I was in awe of the John Z. Delorean's stainless steel wonder car. I thought there couldn't be a more perfect automobile in the world. It was definitely my favorite car when I was twelve and it remains so to this day.

Since I had been so fascinated with receiving inspiration from movies, I decided that the next natural step was to create a LEGO Delorean just like Doc Brown's. I had already tried creating other movie icons like an (almost) full- scale representation of "Jurassic Park," an early prototype for KITT from "Knight Rider," and many "STAR WARS" creations (before the LEGO sets were introduced). So a prototype for the Delorean time machine was built.

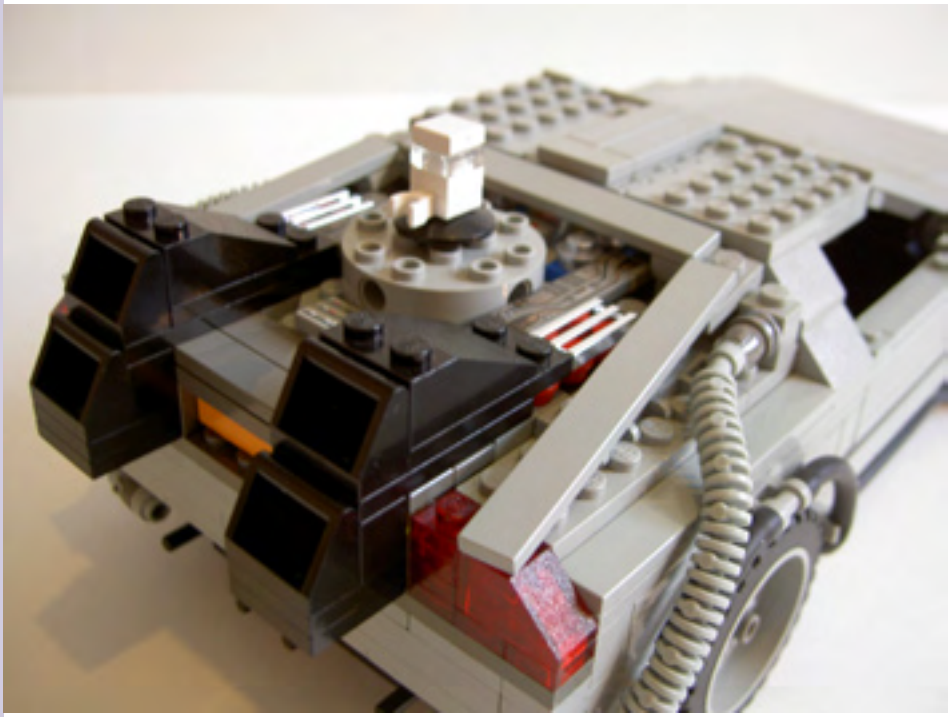
It wasn't perfect, (or a uniform color), but the multi-colored vehicle with folding hover-converted wheels and Aquazone gullwing doors was a start. Much later, in October of 2005, I started work on a cultural icon.

BJ: What were the challenges you had in building?

ZS: At first glance, I said to myself, "Well, the Delorean is such an angular car, so making one with angular LEGO bricks should be a breeze." Wrong. I found that the angular shape was pretty hard to achieve by building that same way I had for thirteen years. The biggest obstacle was the hood. It needed to slope down slightly to make the wedge shape, but I also needed wheel-wells for the sides so the pneumatic hoses (doubling as flux dispersal bands) would have a place to attach. The result came after a few weeks of planning and revision.



Bottom view

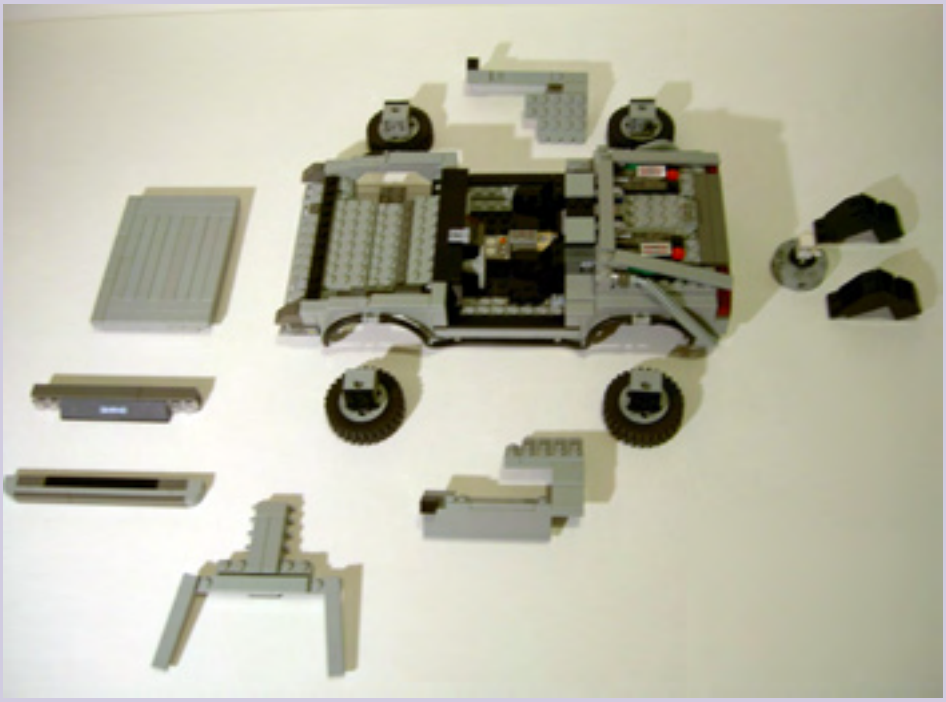


Rear view - note the Mr. Fusion

Interior

"The way I see it, if you're gonna build a time machine into a car, why not do it with some style?"

—Doc Brown, "Back to the Future"



Various construction shots

After about the second version, I realised I definitely need the trademark gullwing doors. After toying with the idea for a week, I finally came up with a system to make the doors both look good and be structurally sound. I used basic roof hinges to connect the doors to the central roof beam (which also supports the windshield). I also made sure the contact area was very smooth with nothing for the doors to "catch" on.

I find that in creating the Delorean (or any car), it's really helpful to use hinged bricks to help you sculpt a good curve or slope (i.e. the rear quarter panels and windshield of the Delorean). I also can't stress enough the importance of using tiled or smooth bricks. They make the car's overall look appear much cleaner and make it much more recognizable. Another thing I have discovered over the years is that the final draft is never the first draft. Most (if not all) of my models have gone through extensive revision and perfection. A good model doesn't happen overnight, and when you put a real effort into what you're doing and you do it with pride, it shows. The Delorean had gone through four major revisions before becoming the one you see here.

BJ: Your Delorean has certainly made an impact online by being spotlighted on websites and here. Can you share anything from online that is noteworthy?

ZS: Well, I know the Delorean has been featured in a few Delorean club newsletters. A few e-mails from Delorean enthusiasts have led me to believe that it has been quite the rage around their community. Then the letters came from people (many of them from the LEGO community) wanting to buy it or commission me to build one for them. Come on, LEGO GROUP, if you're out there, please make this into a real set!

But seriously, the only thing I can attribute to the Delorean's success is the fact that it's an internationally known icon of a movie just about everyone enjoys and the fact that even non-car enthusiasts can immediately identify with it.

BJ: What other cars have you built?
ZS: Well, even though the '80s was not really a decade I remember well (I was born in '87), I have enjoyed making some other MOCs relating to some TV shows of that time. First there is KITT, the talking Trans Am from the show

"Knight Rider." That was a fun model to build because, like the Delorean, it's instantly recognizable even to non-car enthusiasts. There were also no Knight Rider-related MOCs anywhere and I felt it was high-time KITT got some recognition from the LEGO community.

Then there's the Ford Gran Torino from the show "Starsky and Hutch." That one was pretty fun too, but designing the grill was a real pain.

One of the more recent American icons I've emulated is the 1967 Shelby Mustang GT-500 from the film "Gone In Sixty Seconds". Yeah, I know; the film wasn't that hot, but Eleanor, Nicholas Cage's notorious stolen car, was a beauty. It was only right that she have a LEGO counterpart.

I could go on and on. There's more where those came from. Even now I'm working on a big project to design a McLaren F1.

BJ: Why do you build?

ZS: I build for the pure joy of creating something of value - something that takes time and care to perfect until it become the expression of what you want it to be. I am very thankful for the gift of creativity that I have and I feel that it is only right that I use and develop that gift to bring joy to others and glory to God. I am thankful that He has given me a talent that I can use to bring Him credit.

The Delorean with some of Zach's other cars

BJ: Are there any closing thoughts you would like to share?

ZS: Just that I'm really honored that my Delorean is being featured in the best LEGO fan publication in the world and I'm glad to be part of the growing community of dedicated LEGO enthusiasts. You guys are a great bunch. And in the words of Doc Brown:

"Your future is whatever you make it, so make it a good one!"

More photos of Zach's models can be found at his Brickshelf account: http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?m=flicker404 and at his MOCpages account: http://mocpages.com/home.php/2733 Zach can be contacted at zacharysweiggart@delta.edu for Delorean instructions.

Joe Meno, besides being Editor of BrickJournal, *is an Ad Artist for the local newspaper in Raleigh, North Carolina. He also has built a Delorean, but nowhere near as good as Zach's!*

Left to right: The '74 Ford Gran Torino from "Starsky & Hutch," the Delorean, and KITT from "Knight Rider"

What Is It Like On The Other Side?

So we are all a bunch of geeks, or kids, or fanatics and we all seem to accept that about ourselves and the other AFOLs we know. But have you ever wondered what it must be like to live with such a person? BrickJournal *recently had a contest with No Starch Press to pose just that question to a few AFOL significant others. Here are the winning replies (not edited):*

Leah Hendrix (wife of Rob "BrickModder" Hendrix):

My name is Leah Hendrix, and I am an AFOL's other half. When my husband and I first met, I did not realize that adults played with LEGO. I truly saw them as just a child's toy. I think it was our second or third date that he took me to his house to show me his salt-water aquarium and his LEGO collection. I would have to admit that I was shocked or maybe even wowed that he still played with LEGO. Almost three years down the road, we were married and he was still playing with LEGO. Well it wasn't but about two or three months out after we were married that he wanted to join MSLTC (MidSouth LEGO Train Club) here in Arkansas. So trying to get into his hobby and something he enjoys a lot, I joined with him. This is when I discovered that I think more adults play with LEGO than children. That was a very weird thought at first, but now it is second nature to see adults playing with LEGO.

I myself like LEGO, and love to see all the wonderful things that the AFOL community does with them, but I'm just not a fanatic about it. The children are always wowed, and seeing their faces light up when they see the creations has a great deal of magic. I have tried to get involved in some building because I like to try to show interest in his hobby and maybe find something I could do to enjoy it more. I built a small building for our club's train layout, and I built the club logo, so I do build with LEGO occasionally. I just feel I don't have the vision or the knack to build anything significant. Especially after seeing all the great work at BrickFest. I mean after its over I go home and think well maybe I'll try this or that, and when it doesn't come out the way I want it or I don't know where to begin it is very discouraging. Sometimes even seeing the wonderful things that everyone else has built makes me and others feel that what we build, when we actually do build, is really terrible. The thought also comes across, as we could never compare to these models.

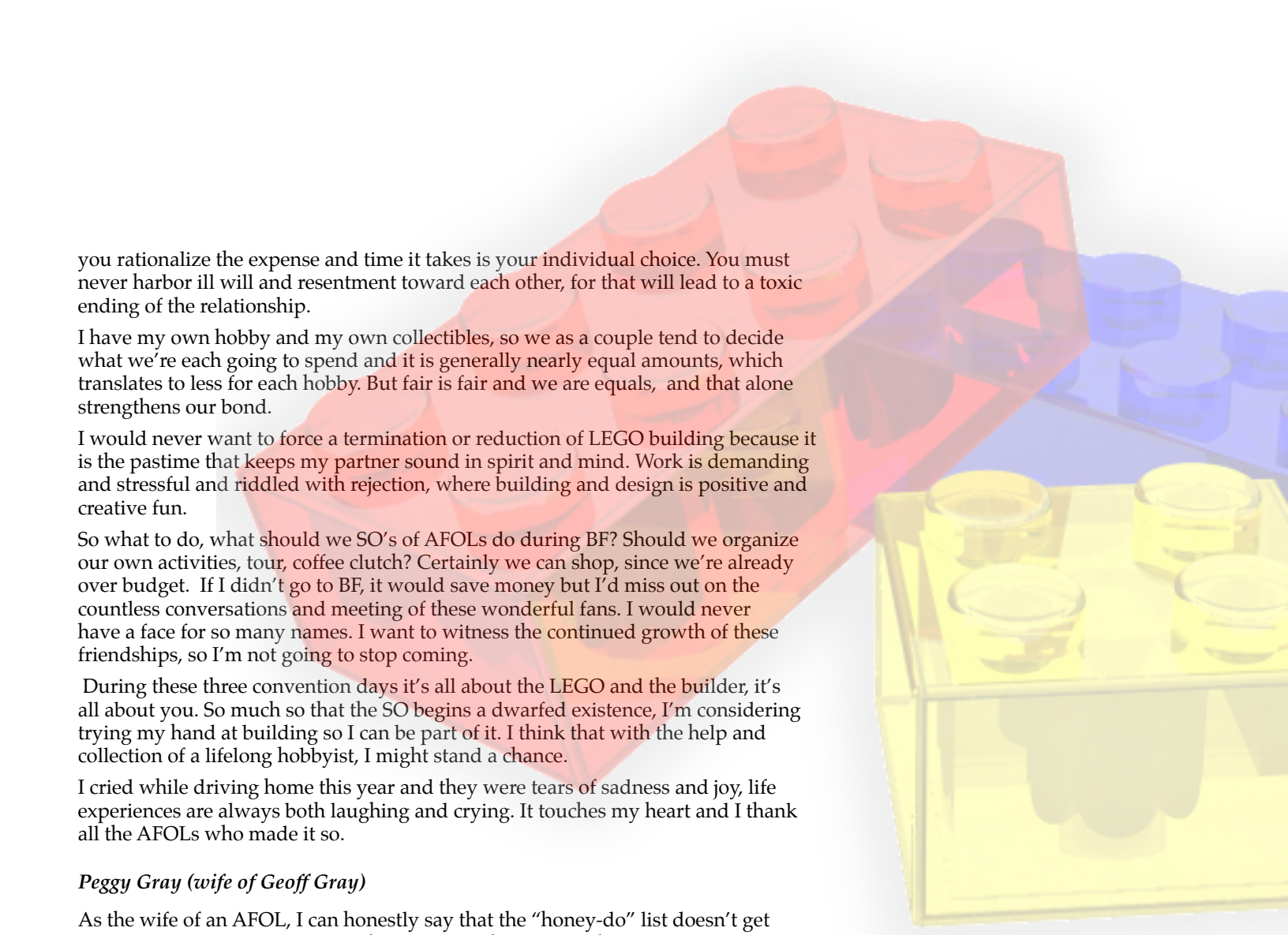
But don't get me wrong I like LEGO, and I do try occasionally, but I'm just not into it like my husband and a lot of his friends. I love to go to BrickFest because it is something he enjoys. I enjoy seeing all the awesome creations, the kids' faces, the social aspect, and spending time with my husband doing something he enjoys so much. This community is really great which helps me when I tag along to his LEGO conventions, shows, and meetings. I have made some new friends from these experiences that I love to hang out with and make the trips worth my while too. Each year I think I like LEGO a little more. I just don't know that I will ever be as involved as my husband. I hope everyone sees now that I may get a little bored at some of the events, but I do enjoy it more than one would think. It is nice to see that the grownups still have a child in them somewhere, and they are bringing that to the kids. It would also be nice for us AFOL other half's to get to know each other, so when we have had enough LEGO for a while we can go do something we can enjoy as much and the AFOLs enjoy doing their LEGO thing. Thanks for letting me tell my story.

Evangeline Reynolds (wife of Cynthia Bradham)

I didn't know falling in love with my partner meant that we would collect LEGO to the extent of filling all the upstairs closets in our office and library and finally renting a storage compartment for our collection. I didn't know we would budget all year to travel to BF and shop at the LEGO outlet. In complete honesty neither of us knew.

Twelve years ago, my partner thought she was alone in her enjoyment of the hobby, she had no idea of the hundreds of fans who shared the same passion.

Regard for a mate's passion is a given when you accept that your role is not to change that person but to support and encourage all that is not destructive. How



you rationalize the expense and time it takes is your individual choice. You must never harbor ill will and resentment toward each other, for that will lead to a toxic ending of the relationship.

I have my own hobby and my own collectibles, so we as a couple tend to decide what we're each going to spend and it is generally nearly equal amounts, which translates to less for each hobby. But fair is fair and we are equals, and that alone strengthens our bond.

I would never want to force a termination or reduction of LEGO building because it is the pastime that keeps my partner sound in spirit and mind. Work is demanding and stressful and riddled with rejection, where building and design is positive and creative fun.

So what to do, what should we SO's of AFOLs do during BF? Should we organize our own activities, tour, coffee clutch? Certainly we can shop, since we're already over budget. If I didn't go to BF, it would save money but I'd miss out on the countless conversations and meeting of these wonderful fans. I would never have a face for so many names. I want to witness the continued growth of these friendships, so I'm not going to stop coming.

During these three convention days it's all about the LEGO and the builder, it's all about you. So much so that the SO begins a dwarfed existence, I'm considering trying my hand at building so I can be part of it. I think that with the help and collection of a lifelong hobbyist, I might stand a chance.

I cried while driving home this year and they were tears of sadness and joy, life experiences are always both laughing and crying. It touches my heart and I thank all the AFOLs who made it so.

Peggy Gray (wife of Geoff Gray)

As the wife of an AFOL, I can honestly say that the "honey-do" list doesn't get completed very often. I can also honestly say that a good chunk of money goes to The LEGO Group! Most of the purchases are made by my husband, but it is not uncommon for me to check out the toy department when I'm shopping and call him with any kits that may be on sale. I can always count on LEGO kits appearing on any Wish Lists he gives me for holidays too!

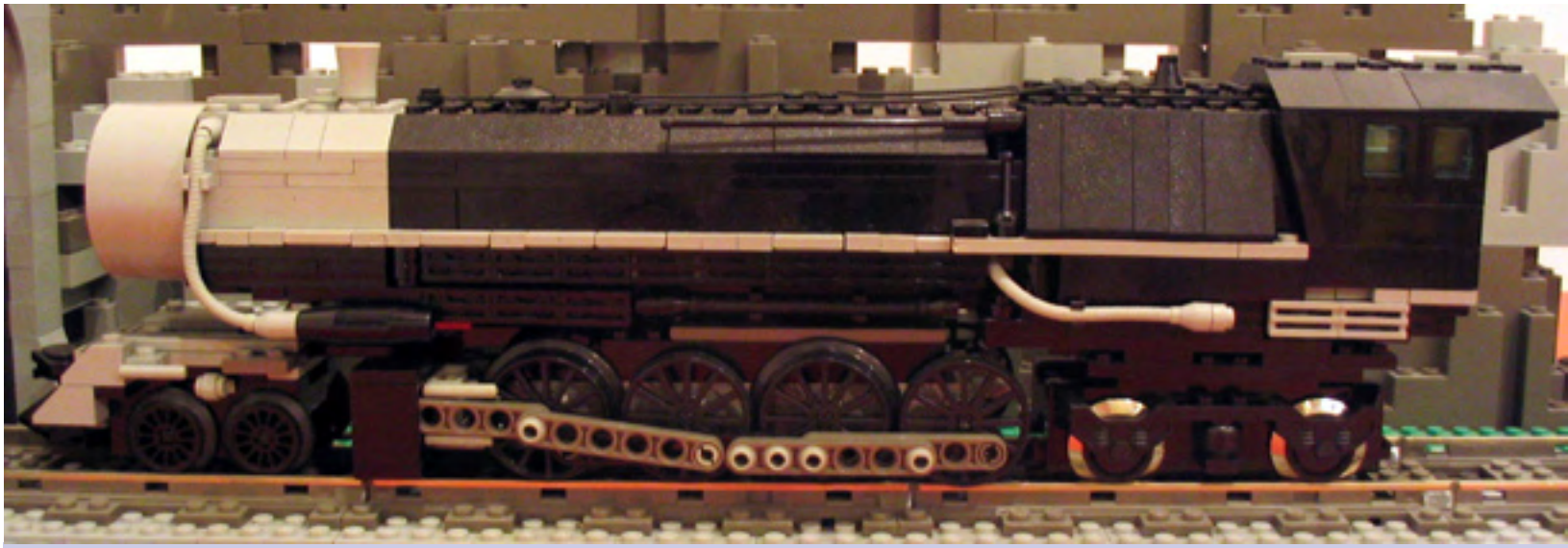
My husband loves LEGOs! He comes up with some excellent ideas and designs and never seems to stop thinking of things to build and ways to do it. Even when we "escape" to go camping for a weekend, he'll come up with solutions to design problems and write them down so that he can incorporate them when we get home.

One thing he knows he can never do is get upset with me for buying craft supplies like scrapbooking or stamping materials! If either of us were a "neat freak" we'd go absolutely crazy because when we get projects going, they can take over the family room, the dining room table, the foyer, etc.

Our boys have learned valuable skills through LEGOs too. LEGO bricks have helped them learn addition and multiplication as well as stretching their imaginations. Some of the creations that they come up with are amazing! Having LEGOs in our house is as natural as having our cat (although they take up significantly more space!).

Many thanks to No Starch Press for providing prizes for this contest. You can see their catalog of books at www.nostarch.com!

Below: 4-8-4 Steam Engine featuring BBB train wheels



Making Your Own Bricks

A Look Behind the Scenes at Big Ben Bricks

Ever wonder what it takes to produce a custom part? Ben Fleskes of Big Ben Bricks, LLC explains the design and production of his wheels for BrickJournal.

Article and photos by Ben Fleskes

Nearly everyday I take some time to browse the latest creations on Brickshelf.com and other LEGO websites to admire the creativity and imagination of the LEGO builders around the world. Every now and again I see a train made with Big Ben Bricks LLC (BBB) train wheels and smile. This article will share the story of how BBB wheels came to be and share a little of what is required to make custom bricks.

There are five major activities associated with making your own bricks:

- Prototyping
- Design
- Tooling
- Injection Molding
- Testing

Prototyping

The first step in making custom part is to start with some initial designs and prototyping a few parts. Figure 1. shows a few BBB prototype parts. Prototyping is especially important for parts intended to move – like train wheels. In some cases, prototypes were made by just modifying existing LEGO parts, like the 4 stud diameter red wheel that had the outside flange removed. In other cases, precision computer controlled machines were used to make the parts. The spokes on the Aluminum wheels shown were cut on a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) water jet machine. The black wheels were cut on a CNC lathe. Other options for making prototype parts are Rapid Prototyping machines (sometimes called Stereolithography) which use a 3d layering process to build parts with reasonable precision. Rapid Prototyping machines require a computer generated 3d model of your part most frequently in a .stl format. Over 50 prototype parts were made in developing BBB train wheels, ranging in cost from $10 - $20 each.

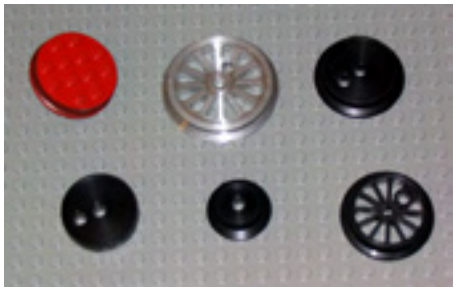


Figure 1. *BBB prototype wheels*

Design

In creating a design, precision and accuracy are paramount. LEGO bricks are made to remarkably high tolerance and accuracy with very little variation between bricks. This is one of the things that makes the LEGO system of play so rewarding and 'playable'. To maintain a high degree of accuracy and have parts be compatible with LEGO bricks, it is important to know a few details about LEGO geometry. It is commonly known that 8.0mm is the distance between the center to two studs on a brick. However, a 1x1 bricks is only 7.9mm x 7.9mm, while a 1x2 is 7.9mm x 15.9mm. The 0.1mm (~0.004 inches) difference is the space that allows a little bit of wiggle room between the bricks. Without it, bricks would not assemble or come apart as easily. When you intend to make bricks to match LEGO quality, 0.1mm makes all the difference.

When you intend to make bricks to match LEGO quality, 0.1mm makes all the difference.

Many iterations of a final design may be necessary. With each iteration, the design is tested, checked and validated with a prototype or by being reviewed by another person.

Early designs may simply be sketched or drawn in a notebook. Final designs however, require a 3D CAD (Computer Aided Design) software. BBB used Solidworks – a parametric, solid modeling and design tool. Other options include AutoCAD and TurboCAD. Good CAD software is expensive. A single copy of Solidworks can cost $5000 and take a long time to learn. TurboCAD is the most affordable of the three listed, but least commonly found in industry. The 3D model created using CAD software is necessary to create a quality tool to make parts.

When designing a part to be made using injection molding, a few design criteria are important to consider. First, it is best to keep the thickness uniform throughout the part. Have you ever noticed the small holes underneath the bottom of each stud (looking at the tube side) on a LEGO 2x4 brick? That hole is to keep the thickness of the plastic uniform. If the thickness is not consistent, there will likely be some dimpling (small indentations) as the plastic solidifies, cools and shrinks in the mold. You also need to consider how the tool will be made and how the part will be released out of the mold. It is sometimes desirable to make the sides of a part with a slight angle to aid in their release out of the mold (referred to as draft angle). You should also consider where the plastic will be injected into the part and where and how many ejection pins are necessary to push the part out of the mold.

Tooling

Injection molding tools are perhaps the most expensive and difficult portion of making custom parts. Injection molding tools (sometimes called dies or molds) are large steel blocks with small cavities inside in the shape of the part you want to make. Injection molding tools also have inlets and outlets for fluid to be circulated through the tool to control temperature. There are also channels inside the tools for the plastic to flow to the part and for air to escape while the plastic flows inside. The tool will often split into two or more pieces to release the part with the aid of ejection pins built into the tool. Figure 2 shows a picture of the tool used to create BBB train wheels. Since plastics change size as temperature changes, based on their properties of thermal expansion, the cavities in the mold needs to be built slightly larger to compensate for the shrinkage that will occur between the injection temperature and room temperature. Another key element of the tooling is surface finish. Some portions of the part may be smooth, while other portions have some texture. It takes a highly experienced tool maker to get the desired surface finish.

Figure 2a. *BBB Production Mold*

Production grade injection molding tools are expensive. The BBB mold has four cavities inside (one large flanged wheel, one blind wheel and two small wheels) and is worth about $10,000. A four cavity tool will produce four parts during each injection cycle. Tools can also be made of aluminum or steel with inserts of aluminum or steel. These other types of tools do not maintain the quality possible in a dedicated all-steel tool.

The BBB mold was made by a seasoned tool maker (Cooney Tool in Forest Grove, Oregon) who used CNC equipment to make the mold. He started with my solid model and worked from there. At no point did he rely on a paper drawing for dimensions or other information. In this way, precision of +/- 0.001" is possible.

Figure 2b. *Inside of BBB Production Mold*

Figure 2c. *Detail of ejection pins shown in the extended position*

Injection Molding

The design is done, you have a tool, now you can make some parts. BBB chose to contract separately with a tool maker and then took that tool to a plastics injection molding company to have parts made. Most often, companies will go to the plastic injection molding company with a design for a part and the plastic injection molding company will contract with a tool maker to make the mold for the part.

I chose R&D Plastics in Hillsboro, Oregon to make BBB parts. I did an initial run of 100 parts to test the mold. It costs between $100 - $250/hour to run a tool in a precision production grade injection molding machine. It takes about an hour to set the tool up and set all the variables correctly. Each part is held in the tool for 20 – 30 seconds for the injection molding process. For such small parts the cost of ABS is minimal in comparison. The first 100 parts were tested to confirm everything worked correctly. A few minor changes were made to the mold and the final parts were made.

Regarding the plastic, black ABS pellets (sometimes call granules) used in the molding process are readily available. Other colors are typically made from uncolored ABS pellets with a color concentrate added. (Unless you are the LEGO company and order pellets in the exact color you want). The concentrate is a lot like the pigments added to white paint to get the final color you want. Ultimately, I found getting a good color match to LEGO colors beyond the financial resources of BBB. The colors are close, but far from perfect.

Testing

Throughout the process I tested the prototype parts and gave prototypes to others for their input. Their input was essential to coming up with quality designs and validating the final parts.

Finally

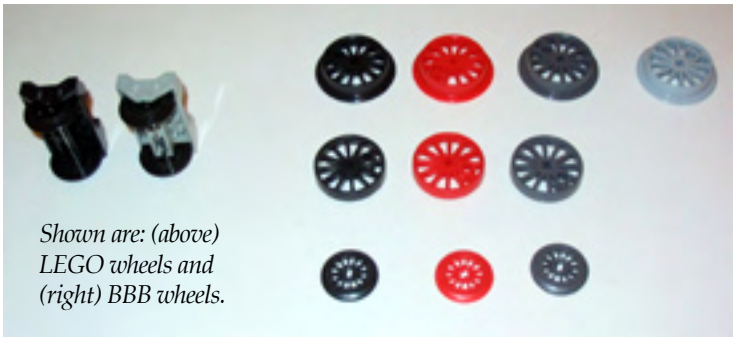
If you have purchased BBB wheels, thank you for inviting them into your collection. I'm very humbled that many a LEGO fan has chosen BBB wheels to reside among their LEGO collection.

Moving forward, BBB continues to look for new parts and opportunities to serve the LEGO community with quality products. BBB continues to prototype and research new product ideas.

About Big Ben Bricks LLC

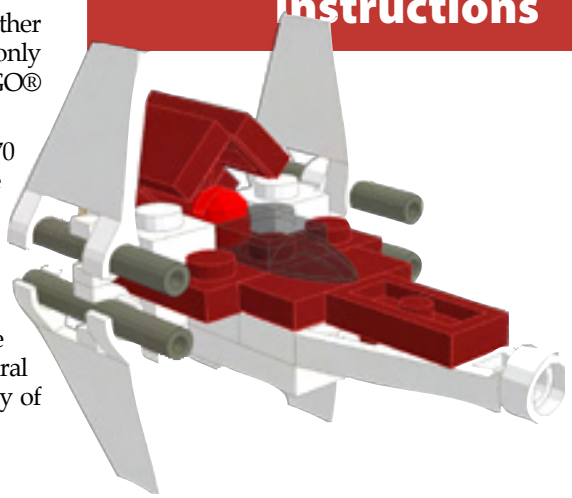
Big Ben Bricks LLC was founded in 2003 and is owned and operated by Ben Fleskes in Portland, Oregon USA. BBB specializes in custom LEGO compatible parts. Current offerings include three train wheels (Large Flanged Driver, Large Blind driver and a small flanged train wheel) and three pneumatic fittings (T-fitting, Union & one-way valve). More information about BBB parts can be found at *www. bigbenbricks.com*

Ben Fleskes is 38 years old, born and raised in Portland, Oregon and has played with LEGO since his earliest memories. Ben co-founded the Pacific Northwest LEGO Train Club (PNLTC) and is now a member of the Greater Portland LEGO Railroaders. Ben holds a Mechanical Engineering Degree and a MBA. His 'day job' is building interactive science exhibits for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI). All this experience has been useful in designing and making BBB train wheels. But perhaps most important to making BBB happen, is his wife Deborah who encouraged him to "go for it". Ben can be emailed at benfleskes@hotmail.com



Shown are: (above) LEGO wheels and (right) BBB wheels.

You Can Build It
V-Wing Fighter MINI



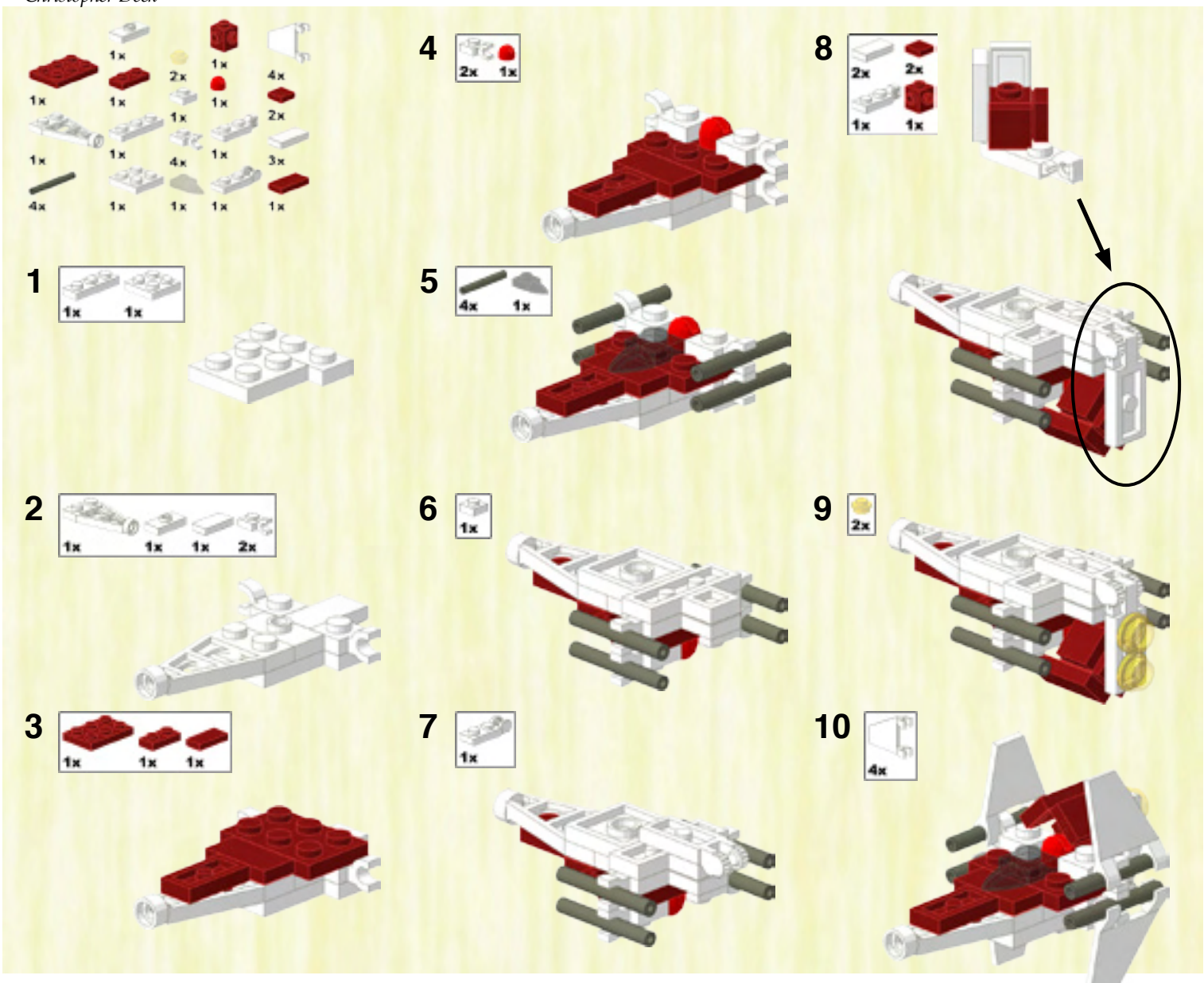
Hello! I am certainly glad we meet again in this issue. Today I want to present to you another vessel from the new Star Wars movie – *Revenge of the Sith*. Although the V-Wing has only a short appearance, it nevertheless is a nice starfighter to build. And we all know LEGO® released a system-scale V-Wing, so why not have a MINI version?

I've wanted to build a MINI V-Wing since I saw that the official MINI ARC-170 starfighter came with those nice trapezoid flags. Once I finally managed to get those flags, construction began. By using the trapezoid flags, the model would be much smaller than the presented version of a MINI V-Wing in the *LEGO® Star Wars™ Video Game*, which you certainly know. There, they used standard 2x4 wedge plates which made a rather large MINI model.

If you want to build this model, I will give you some more hints where to locate some parts. The cannons are "rigid hoses" with a length of 3 studs. They can be found in several LEGO Technic® sets. The nose piece is also called "Space Wing". You will find plenty of these in Classic Space sets.

With this I call this model finished, and wish you happy building!

Christopher Deck



'Tis the Season to be Building...

BrickJournal *takes a uniquely LEGO way of celebrating the holiday season!*

Article and Photos by Didier Enjary

Christmas is here, and due to winter vacations (or summer for those in the Southern half of the world), your children will be idle. Can we give them something to do? We suggest having a look at decorations for your Christmas tree or shelves made of LEGO bricks. There are some classics: Santa Claus of course, with his reindeer and gifts, snowmen, Christmas trees, angels and elves. All of them have been the subject of one or more official models, mainly in advent calendar sets or Shop-at-Home exclusives.

Santa Claus can be easily recognized with his white beard, his red dress and hat, and his black boots. Some white details as buttons, hems, pompom and a belt can be added. Kids should be able to reproduce most of the officials models with only bricks, plates, slopes and a very few specialized elements such as patterned 1x2 bricks. To begin, they will create the body from red bricks, separated by a plate for the belt. Then you will put on black elements to make the boots. White slopes and bricks should make his beard and hair and a simple 1x2 yellow brick as a face will complete your Santa. The hat is certainly the most recognizable element of this character so you will have to use well chosen parts: slopes and inverted slopes, red bricks and 1x1 white rounded plates as bobbles.

Santa is sometimes accompanied by one or more accessories: The top of a chimney in set #1549, a reindeer (set #1129), and a sled (1628) or more simply with his pack on his back (1627) or a gift in his hand (1127). Most of the instructions for these models can be found in Peeron PICSL (see BJ#2).

Once you've built some Santas, elves are easily made as you can recognize some common elements: red dress and hat with white trim. Elves are typically smaller and commonly represented with gifts. Gifts can be made of shiny and colored bricks. Ribbons

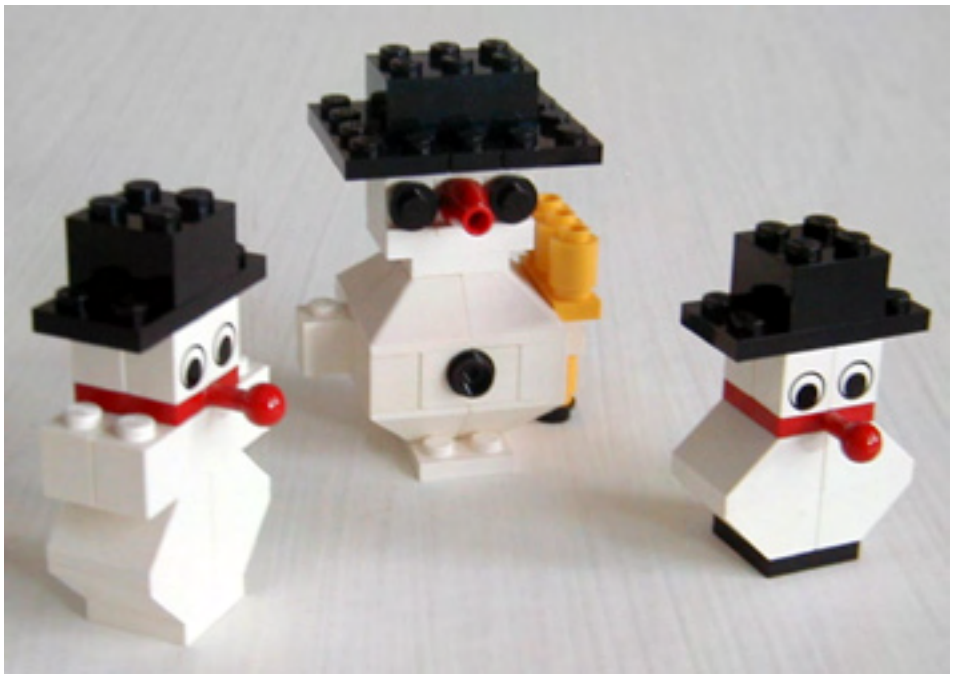
are simply made with different color plates, while ties are made of a variety of elements such as small slopes or modified plates and tiles.

In some countries, Christmas comes with snow...and snowmen. Both the snowman's body and head are spherical, children will easily build some of them with your white parts especially when they find some 2x2 slope bricks. The most noticeable detail is the red nose – a 1x1 cone will do. Don't return your white bricks to the collection yet! They will perfectly fill your needs for some angels and their wings made of 1x2 and 1x3 slopes bricks.

So far we have used red bricks and slopes for Santas and elves, white ones for snowmen and angels...and now we need green for Christmas trees. A simple brown brick makes the trunk base and don't forget some trans-colored 1x1 round plates for the perfect decorating balls and baubles.

You can simply collect these creations together on a shelf or maybe you would prefer to use a 1x1 Technic brick and cotton yarn to hang them in your Christmas tree's branches.

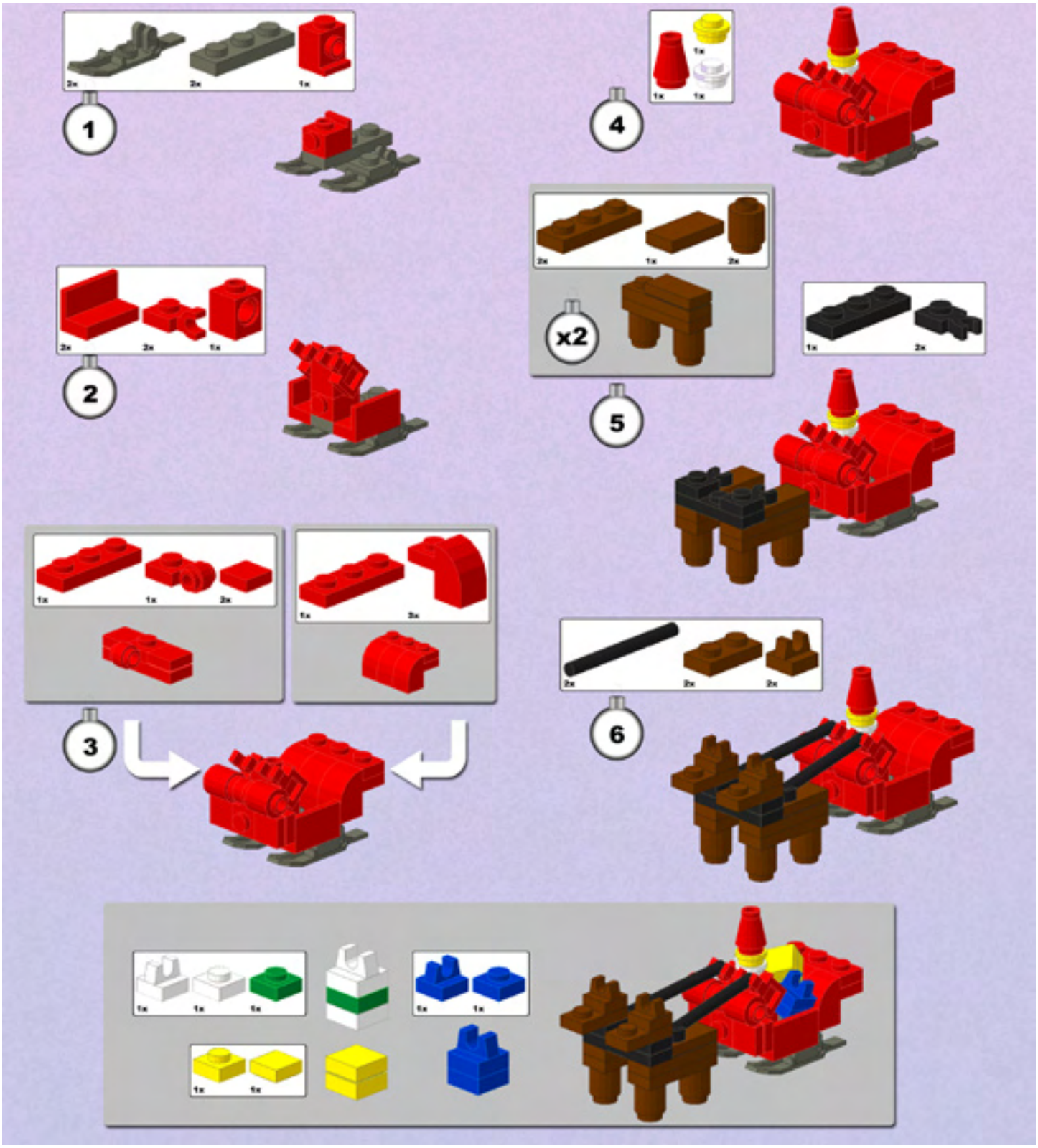
As you have certainly noticed, these models are bigger than minifig scale... but creativity also is in microscale where "you can build it"...



You Can Build It

MINI Sleigh

For the Christmas season, *BrickJournal* presents a mini scale sleigh with a special driver! Many thanks to Didier Enjary, who presented the model , and the model creator, Alban Nanty. We hope you enjoy building this model!



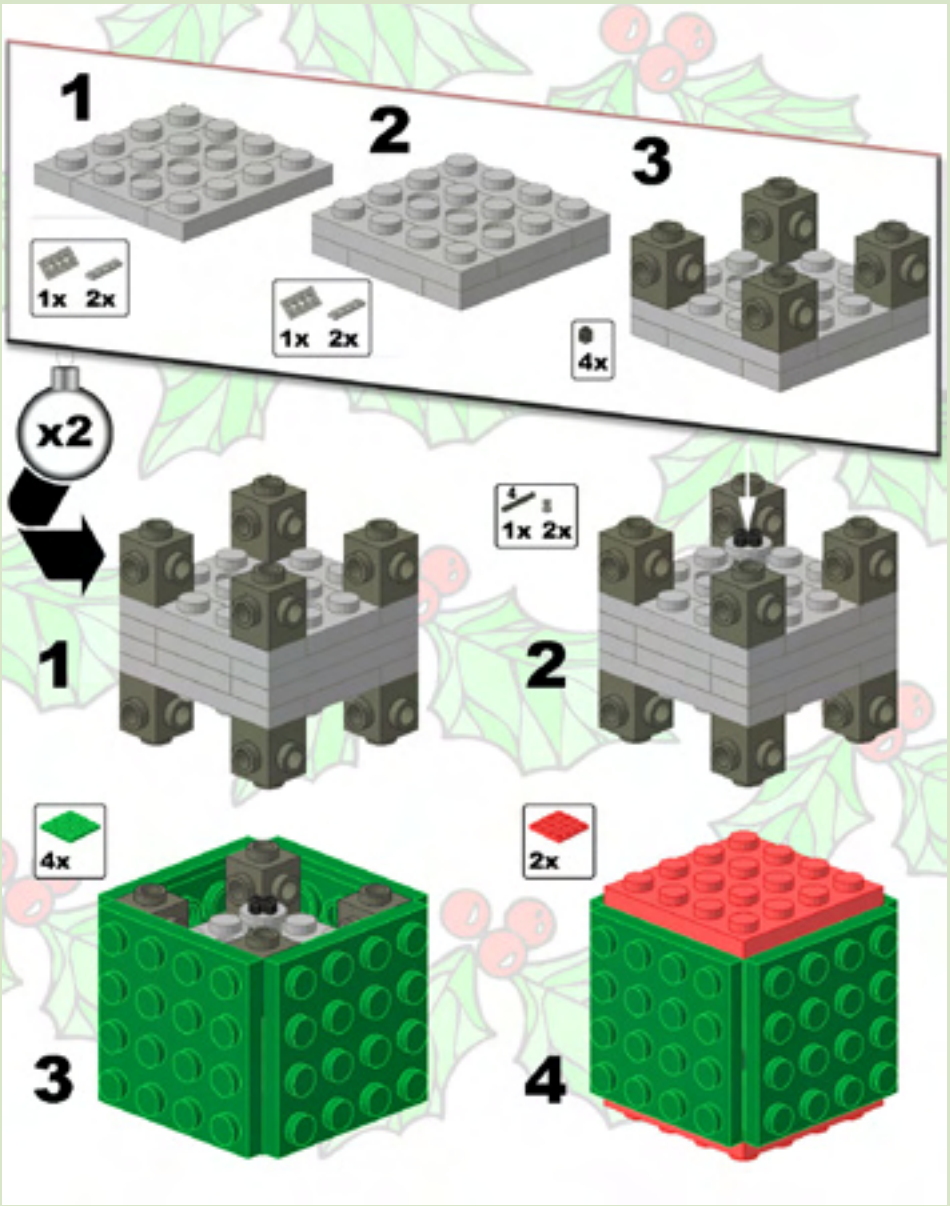
You Can Build It

Studs Not on Top (SNOT) Building

Instructions, Models and Photos by Geoff Gray

The model below is an example of making the studs of an element point in different directions, which is very useful in creating detailed models. This base was first built by Bruce Lowell, and has been named "The Lowell Sphere" by LEGO builders. Variants of this model have been used by not only community builders but also LEGOLAND California and most recently, the Christmas catalog for LEGO Shop at Home. Examples of Christmas ornaments are on the left, showing the flexibility of the model.

Enjoy!



Misérable And Port Brique, Australia

Article and Photos by Richie Dulin

It's 1805, the Napoleonic era, Australia has been settled by the British, and also, in this LEGO version of reality, by the French. On the mainland of Australia, 300 kilometres north of Sydney Cove, the French colony of Port Brique is a bustling centre of commerce and industry, home to the Grande Armie of the South Pacifique, and the renowned French Squadron, under the command of Jacques Legeaux in his 32 gun Frigate, the Misérable.

Locale

I come from the dreamtime, from the dusty red soil plain,
I am the ancient heart - the keeper of the flame.
I stood upon the rocky shore, I watched the tall ships come.
For forty thousand years I'd been the first Australian.

- Bruce Woodley and Dobe Newton

I often ponder what my ancestors would have thought, seeing those tall ships arrive in Australia. Great wooden ships, with towers of canvas reaching to the skies – larger than any man made object they'd ever seen.

Of course, the British were the first Europeans to settle Australia. But it was nearly the French: La Parouse landed in Botany Bay just five days after the British First Fleet arrived, but decided not to stay, and disappeared en route to the Solomon Islands.

There might well have been other French settling in Australia, choosing a site not too far from the present day Port Macquarie as the site for their colony, the site that would become known as Port Brique.

Port Brique 1805 exists in its LEGO form in my house. It is quite large, but the masts of several ships still tower above it. It's home to a few hundred minifigs, and has a nice dock where various vessels of the South Pacifique call from time to time.

Building ships

I came to building ships as the Lego Pirates theme died away. I have bought very few specialist parts new, instead spending time trawling eBay for bargains.

There are a few specialist ship building parts, the hulls, masts, rigging (ratlines), ships wheels and anchors, but many more which are very useful. I find I have an unending appetite for 2x2 flags, for instance, and 1x1 cones are fantastic for detailing.

I find building ships particularly challenging; besides the limited selection of parts, graceful curves need to be captured with square bricks, the ship must be styled for the historical period and the proportions must be believable and consistent, all the while keeping the ship structurally sound.

Since I took up building sailing vessels seriously, there have been a few key large ships. I began with the brig (two masted) *Eponine* in 2002, before building the second *Eponine*, a 24 gun frigate (three masted) in 2002, and the *Misérable* – a 28 gun frigate – in 2003.

Following the first Mis, I took a hiatus from large ships, before building the Corvette

Entry to Port Brique

Honour Guard on the Grande Boulevard of Port Brique

Entrance to Notre Brique Cathedral

Chrome Cuiraissler at Arc De Petite Triomphe

Officials honor a fallen general

Fort Brique Square

Reprendre (three masted) and the schooner Bleusoucière (two masted) earlier this year. Neither approached the Mis in terms of size, but these two vessels represented a large improvement in ship design and building.

Building big ships

I build to a scale suitable for minifigs, rather than minifig scale. The vessels have to look believable, if not entirely practical. Selective compression, that great cheat used by train modelers, just doesn't work for these sorts of ships - a 32 gun frigate, with less than 32 guns just doesn't cut it!

Using the standard shipbuilding pieces presents limitations in the size of the build. The hull width is the obvious one, with standard widths of ten and fourteen studs, although the Misérable had shown that use of a double row of inverse slope bricks could yield an effective eighteen stud width.

The masts and static rigging (ratlines) are in a limited number of lengths. Though they can be built up higher, things rapidly become unstable.

Guns also become an issue – though it's just a simple matter of putting more guns in, it's nice to be able to display the model both with gun ports closed and gun ports open and guns run out. Removable decks or hull panels become awkward, and can dramatically reduce hull strength.

Even things such as the size of the ship's boats and the size of the anchors become an issue with larger vessels.

The new Misérable – breaking the size barrier.

When I contemplated building the second Misérable, I decided that it would be the best representation of a frigate that I could achieve. Hull width couldn't be addressed adequately with standard Lego parts, so I took the hacksaw to hull parts – much to the horror of several fellow lego fans - to make the pieces that LEGO should have made in the first place.

Cutting each hull section down the middle allowed me to progressively widen the hull. The bow was four studs wider and the central part of the hull ten studs wider, before tapering to an unmodified stern section. The sheer volume gain was amazing, and the extra width yielded an excellent amount of deck space on the finished model.

(continued next page)

The *Misérable*

Broadside

Stern

Bow

The masts of the new Misérable remain fragile, but less so than the old frigate despite being considerably taller. The fore and main masts are based on columns of 2x2 rounds (reinforced with technic axles), surmounted with standard masts. The mizzen is a standard mast. The use of long ratlines (double height for the fore and main), means that the all the fighting tops are at the same level.

Possibly the trickiest part of the build turned out to be what to do about the guns. Connecting each broadside to a technic mechanism to run the guns in and out seemed like a great idea at the time. Early experiments with a pneumatics revealed that such a thing could double as a self-destruct mechanism. Eventually, a double rack and pinion mechanism, geared to the capstan was squeezed into the hull - around the working steering mechanism.

The problem of anchors and ship's boats were solved with brick built solutions. The use of LEGO's standard 6 wide bow sections, together with SNOT plates allows decent side-by-side seating for oarsmen, whilst not making the boat look to bulky.

The new Misérable is 82 studs long (114 including the bowsprit), with a beam 28 studs, the deck is 10 bricks above waterline, and the main and fore mastheads tower 76 bricks above the deck.

What's next?

I've long thought that building a ship of the line at a scale suitable for minifigs wasn't possible because of the hull width and rig height limits imposed by the standard parts. But with the completion of the new Misérable, a two deck sixty-four gun ship of the line seems quite doable. Although I will need to get a few more cannons and another whole pile of red 2x2 flags…

BrickJournal Is Coming to Your Town...Layout!

In support of *BrickJournal*, ME Models has created a Delivery Truck (ME #1004) and a London Bus (ME #1005). Both models are sporting the exclusive *BrickJournal* logos, with proceeds from the sale of every model going to support the magazine. Each model comes in a sealed collector box with high quality laser printed instructions and decals. The models may be purchased by going to this website: **http://www.me-models.com.**

ALL buyers and multiple orders welcome. PAYPAL, cash, money orders and personal checks are accepted. Postage will be calculated when you place your order.

BrickJournal Delivery Truck *(comes with minifigure driver)* **$22**

BrickJournal London Bus *(comes with minifigure driver)* **$25**

ME Models "Add a little realism to your hobby"
www.me-models.com

Please e-mail ME Models if you have any questions at memodels@me-models.com .

The U.S.S. Constellation

A History

In this article, Allan Bedford provides you with further background information on the U.S.S. Constellation along with building tips for creating your own version of the model featured in the last BrickJournal *magazine.*

A Brief History of the Real Ship

The real *U.S.S. Constellation* first set sail in 1854. It was a 'sloop-of-war' class ship that was the last all sail-powered ship to be designed by the U.S. Navy. She was 186 feet in length with a beam of more than 42 feet. Her main armaments consisted of sixteen 8-inch shell guns (that fired exploding shells) and four 32-pound long guns (that fired solid shot), along with several secondary weapons.

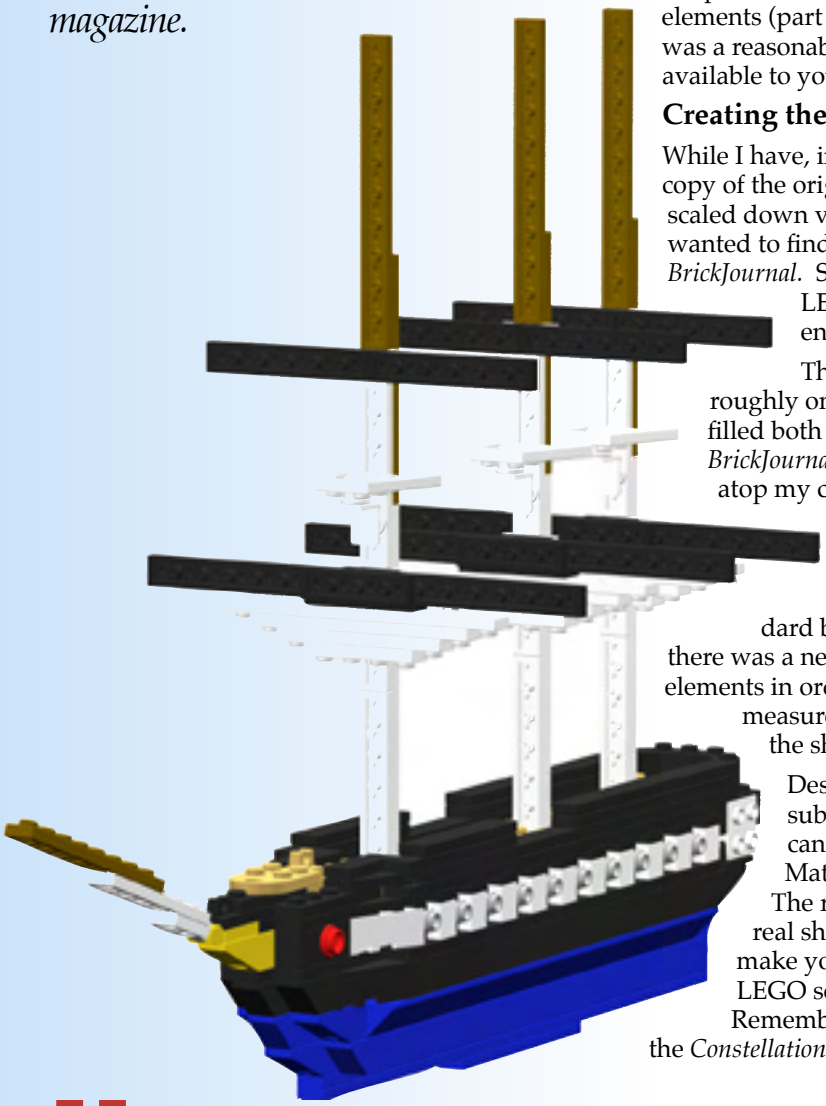
The original crew of the ship included 20 officers, 220 sailors and 45 marines. From 1862-1865 the Constellation saw action in the American Civil War. Later, the ship was used as a training vessel, right up to the early 1930s. Then she was designated as a flagship for the U.S. Atlantic Fleet during World War II but was finally decommissioned in 1955.

After many years of neglect a 9 million-dollar restoration project was begun in 1994. The task was completed in the summer of 1999 and today the ship is anchored in Baltimore, Maryland. It is now a tourist destination open to the public.

A Brief History of the Official LEGO Set

The history of LEGO's version of the *Constellation* doesn't date back nearly as far as the real vessel. The official set (#398) was first released in 1978 and was, at the time, one of the largest sets available from the LEGO company. It consisted of 1033 elements; mostly common bricks, plates and slopes. In some ways the set was as much a sculpture as a traditional model. It came with no minifigs or characters of any kind and was therefore better suited as a display model than a play set.

LEGO re-released the *Constellation* (set #10021) in 2003 as part of their Legends series of sets. The ship was modeled in the same colors as the 1978 kit with a few minor part substitutions, most noticeably being the coveted 1×1×1 window elements (part #39) that are no longer made. Otherwise, the new version was a reasonably faithful reproduction that once again made this large set available to young and old builders alike.



Creating the Mini *Constellation*

While I have, in my collection, the parts required to build a complete copy of the original LEGO set, I set a challenge for myself to create a scaled down version instead. The reason for this was two-fold. First, I wanted to find an interesting subject to present as a model in issue #2 of *BrickJournal*. Second, even though I really love the design of the original LEGO version of the ship, I wanted a model that was small enough to easily rest on top of my computer monitor.

The version of the *Constellation* that I created ended up being roughly one-half the size of set #398. I'm happy to report that it fulfilled both of its roles. The complete instructions did indeed appear in *BrickJournal* #2 and the model looks quite handsome when displayed atop my computer monitor.

Substituting Parts on the Mini

Like the official model, I tried, where possible, to build my Mini *Constellation* from mostly common parts: standard bricks, plates and slopes. Given the small scale, however, there was a need to employ things like tiles, offset plates and headlight elements in order to present some of the key details within the reduced measurements. This is most noticeable in the portals on the side of the ship where the cannons are located.

Despite the size restriction there are still possibilities for part substitution in this model. The one most obvious thing you can do (if you don't have the parts specified in the Bill of Materials) is to simply change the color scheme that I've used. The reason my version has a blue lower hull is that I used the real ship's current colors as my inspiration. You can just as easily make your hull entirely from black elements (as in the original LEGO set) or use any other color(s) you have in your collection. Remember that this doesn't have to end up as an exact replica of the *Constellation*. The instructions provided in *BrickJournal* #2 can be used

as inspiration to create a ship for your own mini fleet.

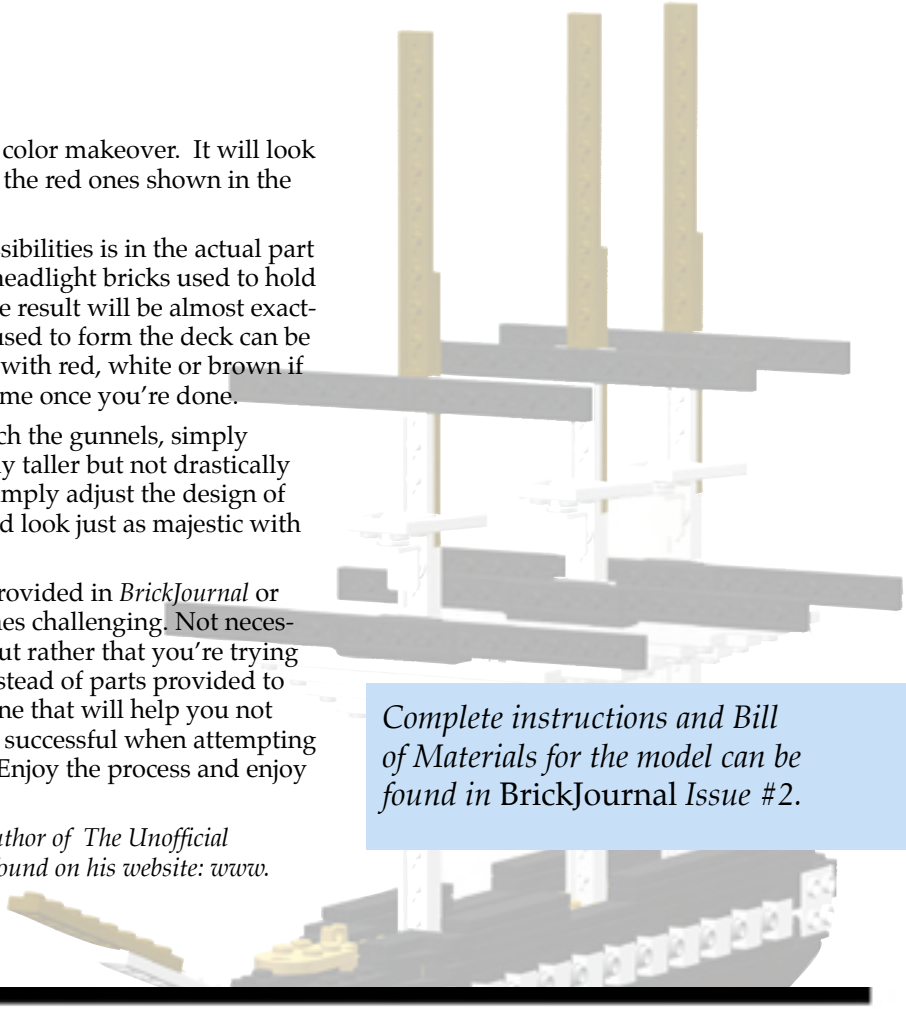
The stand, upon which the ship rests, can also survive a color makeover. It will look just as good built from black or brown elements as from the red ones shown in the instructions.

The next most obvious place to look for substitution possibilities is in the actual part selections; regardless of color choices. For instance, the headlight bricks used to hold the cannons can be replaced with 1×1 Technic bricks. The result will be almost exactly the same look as my design. Similarly, the tan plates used to form the deck can be replaced with any combination of small plates (perhaps with red, white or brown if need be) so long as the openings for the masts are the same once you're done.

If you find yourself short of 1×N black plates as you reach the gunnels, simply substitute 1×N black bricks. The hull will end up slightly taller but not drastically so. If you aren't well stocked in white 1×N plates then simply adjust the design of the sails to match your inventory. If fact, the masts would look just as majestic with no sails at all.

Building a model from just instructions (such as those provided in *BrickJournal* or on www.bricksonthebrain.com/instructions) is sometimes challenging. Not necessarily because of the complexity of the model's design but rather that you're trying to build something from your own collection of parts instead of parts provided to you in an official LEGO set. The idea of substitution is one that will help you not only build your own Mini *Constellation* but also be more successful when attempting models from other instructions you might come across. Enjoy the process and enjoy the final results!

Allan Bedford is from Stratford, Ontario Canada. He is the author of The Unofficial LEGO® Builder's Guide. Information about the book can be found on his website: www.apotome.com.



Complete instructions and Bill of Materials for the model can be found in BrickJournal *Issue #2.*

Fan Theme Focus:
Steampunk and Victorian Science

One of the many things that are created by builders are themes. BrickJournal *will be showcasing these fan themes from time to time with an article by one of the theme's experts.*

Article and Layout by Daniel Sabath (bricks@rustyclank.com)
Photography by David Winkler, Kevin Heckel, Dan Sabath and Tim Deering

Steamed Onions by Kevin Heckel

I have been interested in alternative science for as long as I can remember. Rube Goldberg machines and the idea of steam-powered walkers fascinated me. The supposition that all that we do with electricity today would have been just as possible with those Victorian gadgets and contraptions is a theme I have explored with relish. Had Edison not discovered that carbonized sewing thread produced the best filaments for electric lights, would gaslight have remained the status quo? If the Hindenburg had not exploded when it did, would zeppelins flying overhead have become a normal occurrence? Would we find ourselves in some Jules Vernian landscape where steam and coal drove the boilers of the world's fleet of mechanized men? Would real-life Captain Nemos cruise the seas? Would we have a League of Extraordinary Gentlemen to keep the earth safe from nefarious and dastardly evil? What if there were Sparks, or certain incredibly talented people who could create wonderful clockwork devices or constructs without even being aware of their actions? What if mechanization took the place of electricity and brass became the workingman's gold? These suppositions are what define historical steampunk.

Steamy by Tim Deering

The best reference when deciding what to build in this theme is your own imagination spurred by some of the stories and worlds mentioned above. Steampunk and Victorian Science building crosses all of our presently established genres with the creation of wild ornithopters, flying steam trains and floating castles. Towns await destruction as the Sparks' mechanized walkers battle for dominance and zeppelins watch the skies overhead. Whether the world is at war or peace is entirely up to the builder. Steampunk is a small but rapidly growing theme so there is still plenty of room for you to define the genre further.

While steampunk has been present at fests since at least 2004 and online for a longer time, it is coming into its own with several active builders on Lugnet and Classic Space actively identifying their works as Steampunk. Northwest Brickcon was the first time we defined our own space (space!) with a large showing of zeppelins, monowheels, a floating castle, some ships, and several clanks and walkers.

Be it large or be it small, I can't wait to see your next contraption added to our world.

model by Dave De Gobbi

Building Tips:
All colors work well for steampunk, but tan, brown, black, and grey seem to feature prominently to date with red, yellow and white as highlights. While Sparks are brilliant, their choice of colors is dictated more by practicality than by aesthetics. They do sometimes have a feudalistic mindset regarding livery, however. Think about how you might accomplish something using boilers and gears and emphasize those attributes. Do not limit yourself by what you *know* is possible, rather think outside the box and explore what could be and if in doubt add some boilers, hoses and gears. Barrels work very well for greebling and you will find that you cannot get enough 1x1 tiles with the gauge pattern. There is plenty of room for building small as there is for building large. In this genre, small sometimes looks even better.

models by Dan Sabath

Inspiration:
I have used Girl Genius, and some knowledge of the Victorian era to heavily influence my own building and costuming. I maintain my own list of references online at rustyclank.com/links/. There is an excellent article at wikipedia for the lowdown on the genre.

Best LEGO sets to purchase:
Some of the best minifigs come from the Adventurers, Pirates and Wild West sets while I find that my eye for pieces has expanded into all themes, including Belville and Scala, even pieces of those Time Twisters sets can be used at long last.


cargothopter by Dan Sabath

References:
http://rustyclank.com/links
http://jaspermorello.com/gazette/?page_id=6&currentSelection=3
http://girlgeniusonline.com
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steampunk


model by Dan Sabath

Movies:
Steamboy
Howl's Moving Castle
Wild Wild West
Back to the Future III
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
Around the World in 80 Days

Review:
ME Models

A Look at the Sets from ME Models

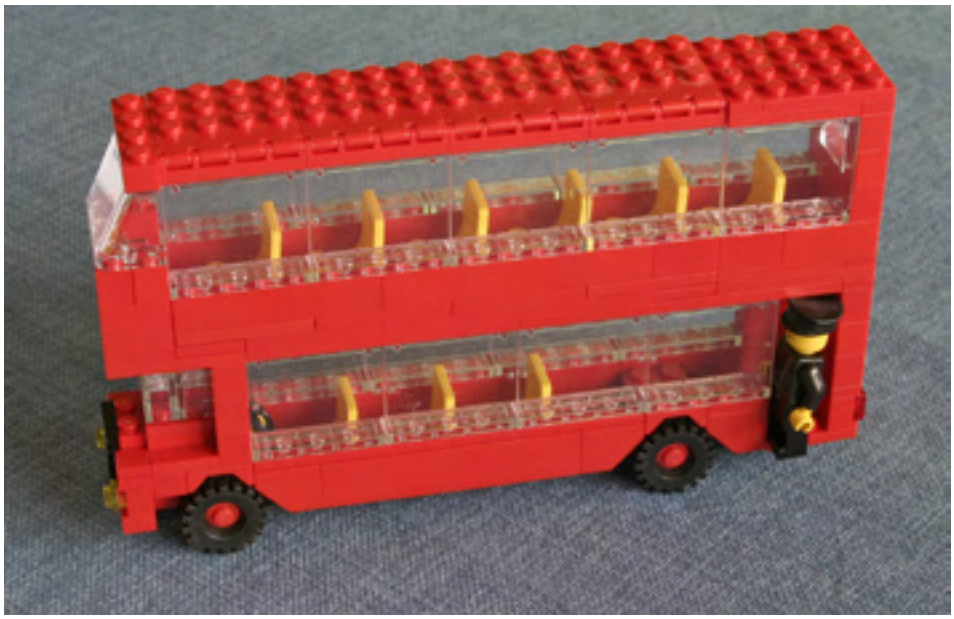
Photo Editor Geoff Gray reviews ME Model's Symphony Bus

One Saturday afternoon in the basement of George Mason University, I had a chance to meet with Eric Olson and Michael Fetsko of ME Models. They had a little stand set up at the Brick Bazaar and were selling some very nice small models made entirely of LEGO bricks. The first sense I got from this meeting was that these guys have a good solid plan for what they want to do and truly enjoy the hobby as much as the business. The setup was extremely professional, and the models they had were reasonably priced. I was given a copy of their set #523 "London Symphony" bus to build and review. I was very excited about building it, and didn't want to wait, but in order to really do the review justice, I decided to wait until after the show.

Moving forward one week, I am still swimming from all of the things I need to do and remember from the show. However, I had a quiet Saturday afternoon to work, so I sat down to build my London Symphony Bus. After removing the shrink wrap, I opened the box. It is a sturdy flip-lid box reminiscent of cigar boxes. It should hold up well over the years for storing the model. The pieces are separated into 2 ziploc bags, and there is also a set of instructions and a sticker sheet.

After taking a couple of pictures of the packaging, I set about building the kit. As I looked at the parts that came with the kit, I noticed that they were all very shiny and looked to be new. The windows and clear bricks were in mint condition. The wheel-sets that came with the kit are very old wheels (according to Peeron inventory, the only set you can get them in since 1992 is a McDonald's promotional kit). They also were in very good condition. As I started building, I came across the only thing so far that appeared to be a drawback to the kit. The instruction set, while printed on high quality paper with waterproof ink, was lower resolution and the colors were a bit dark. This made reading them take a little more effort than I would have liked.

It took me about 40 minutes to complete the assembly (which included a couple of interruptions for other things). The model fit nicely back into the box when it was done, and the final product looked good. This particular kit uses hinge plates to allow access to both the lower and upper cabins in the bus. That's a nice touch as people will probably want to swap out minifigs when using them in a layout. I have to admit that I did not yet apply the stickers. They are printed on an Avery sticker sheet that you cut out yourself. Given the amount of stickers and the fact that the kits are made by hand, this is totally understandable. However, I like models without stickers and this one looked good, so I decided to put the stickers on later.



My final rating on this model is 4 out of 5 studs. I think the instruction set, if redone, could put this kit almost to a 5. Many thanks to the owners of M E Models for donating this kit for us to review. I look forward to purchasing a few more kits in the future, especially the train and house kits.

The London Symphony Bus retails for $25 and can be found at www.me-models.com

Packaging and Initial Presentation	
Condition of pieces included in kit	
Quality of Instructions and Ease of Building	
Final Model Look and Feel	
Price	
Overall rating:	

Central Ohio LEGO Train Club

Article by Larry Pieniazek
Art and Photos by Mike Gallagher

Seen the Columbus skyline lately? Like many downtowns of midsize cities, it has lots of skyscrapers! If you're looking for a LEGO version, go to a COLTC (Central Ohio LEGO Train Club) show... COLTC likes to build big, and likes to do spectacular things. They've built 8 out of the tallest 10 skyscrapers in Columbus (at a one brick to one meter scale) so far and show no signs of stopping.

COLTC gained some notoriety in the LEGO train community this summer by being the "host" or "anchor" club for the National Train Show in Cincinnati, held July 6-10, where 14 clubs and organizations came together to do the largest (at 50x70 feet) and most spectacular (with buildings and skyscrapers visible from across the exhibit hall) multi-club LEGO layout ever done.

So then, how did such a young club (COLTC was founded on Feb 9, 2003) get so big and so accomplished so fast? I had a chance to talk to Paul Janssen, COLTC founder, about that and here's what he had to say:

BrickJournal: How and why did COLTC come into being?
Paul Janssen: I started it to be able to do shows. After I participated in a MichLUG (Michigan LEGO Users Group)/MichLTC (Michigan LEGO Train Group) GATS (Great American Train Show) show in Novi during January 2003, I knew that I wanted to do shows, but knew it would be prohibitive to drive over 4 hours for each event if I did them with MichLTC. That's the why. How did I start it? Bootstrapping! I looked on LUGNET, found people that posted in .loc.oh.columbus, and invited them to my house for a get acquainted meeting. Four people showed some initial interest, and two were able to make it to that first meeting. We've continually grown from there.

BJ: So what challenges did you face in growing your club?
PJ: We faced the normal start-up challenges, no money, no significant support from the LEGO Group, and bigger plans than the available money and manpower could accomplish. We use a pretty loose governance structure which has stood us in good stead so far.

BJ: How did you overcome these challenges?
PJ: We overcame them gradually by recruiting more members, doing some shows for money, and learning to work with the different approaches of the core-members towards the LEGO hobby.

BJ: We know you have a great track record so far, but can you highlight it for the readers?
PJ: Significant events so far have been participation at the Train Festival 2004, with a 35 x 30 foot layout, a 2-month show at the Groveport Museum, with front-page newspaper coverage and a huge billboard promotion, and ongoing participation in the Way of Lights of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Illinois. Despite being only 2 years old, we've had well over 300,000 visitors to our layouts so far, and that's not counting NTS!

BJ: So what's next?
PJ: The club is still moving forward, we now have well over 20 members, of which 10+ participate in the majority of our events. The show opportunities continue to present themselves as we gain in reputation, and we are turning more and more shows down.

Financially, we want the club to own all non-MOC parts of the layout, such as baseplates, track, trees, figs, cars, as well as hardware, such as tables, and even the trailer. Within the next few years, we hope to establish a clubhouse.

We recently changed from wooden tables in the MichLUG/PNLTC (Pacific Northwest LEGO Train Club) style (compatible with MichLUG and Michiana-LUG) to plastic folding tables. The wooden tables did offer more flexibility but since we rarely use sneeze guards, we decided that the time savings and weight savings outweighed that flexibility.

BJ: Thanks for the info Paul, and good luck with your future growth! That's it for this issue, next issue will feature a profile of another club!

Event: 1000steine®-Land

Berlin, Germany
June 24-26, 2005

Bricks in Berlin!

by Holger Matthes (HoMa)

When I had checked my e-mails earlier last year, it seemed to me as if the biggest German LEGO fan event was still light-years to come. Particularly, last year it was calm and I could relax. I thought to myself that the MOC display I was going to present had already been packed in boxes. Another exhibition earlier last year went smoothly and by now I was an expert in setting up LEGO Venice. Last time I managed to set it up in only 4 hours! So I sat back and built only one additional, rather tiny house, using nearly all my sand blue bricks.

Suddenly, e-mail traffic concerning the 1000steine-Land (insiders use the short form "TSL", the English literal translation would be "thousand-bricks-land") increased and uncounted questions came up. Wasn't it Friday that we planned as special day for 1000steine members? But what would make this day so special? Having my great BrickFest PDX experience in mind, I volunteered to organize this day for us. René Hoffmeister and Axel – the 1000steine masterminds – were busy doing other things, so I posted some ideas about possible "special things and happenings" at the 1000steine forum.

But let's focus on the event itself rather than on the planning. For some of the visitors, i.e. those who traveled through half of Germany to reach the capital Berlin, TSL 2005 started as early as Wednesday. And that was when the fun started. I shared a rented mini van with two other guys and we had a wonderful trip without any air conditioning on one of the hottest days of the year.

Thursday – under the blazing sun we began to set up our MOCs at the Tegler Seeterassen – a mid-sized event center featuring 2500 square meters space for MOC displays, a restaurant and a nearby lake. Within several hours, a wonderful exhibition including everything from Moonbase modules to castles, from 1:13 trucks to Venice, from LEGO train history to Lord of the Rings, from microcity to Star Wars, from sculptures to historic houses was put out of the boxes and set up and displayed on the tables.

Friday – our day! From the early morning onwards, more and more well known and also a lot of unknown LEGO fans from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and even Hungary signed in at the main entrance. They all received their special ticket (which they had to book online in advance). Andreas Tretbar's "Ding Dong" shout was so loud that everyone must have heard it and we all went upstairs to meet in the conference room. Phew, it was still pretty hot outside. But it got much hotter inside: 120 AFOLs with friends and family stacked in a room without any air conditioning. Nevertheless René started to distribute some door prices. Some older LEGO and 1000steine t-shirts found a new owner and some lucky guys had one of the new Vikings LEGO sets to bring home. While everyone was sitting together, René and Ben revealed the special 1000steine-Land set: A white old-fashioned car using lots of SNOT and one absolutely rare part: one arched castle window in white (!) color. Only 200 copies of this set were "produced" and the building instructions in the good old 80's LEGOLAND style is numbered and signed.

But that was not enough for such a special day. Just after this first conference, the first activity started. Marmaris had organized a "2x4 brick throwing" competition. Each attendee had to bring his own machine to throw a normal 2x4 brick as far as possible. The machine was limited to a piece count of 50 not-clued or taped LEGO pieces only. Stefan's machine did very well and reached a maximum of 10.38 meters. At the same time, another "Ding Dong" sound out of Tretty's mouth announced that two PowerPoints were ready and the first ever German LEGO talks by fans for fans were about to begin. Oliver presented the Moonbase standard and HoMa talked about the MOC developing process from reality to model. More than 40 visitors listened attentively and at the end we had a fruitful discussion about building with LEGO as an AFOL.

During lunchtime we lost our timetable just a little bit. Ben was next and he talked about "Building in odd numbers" and presented numerous examples of 7-wide train cars and engines, describing the challenges to build in this uncommon width. In comparison to this, Tobias uses merely normal standard bricks, whereas Ben does not even use neither plates nor jumper nor SNOT pieces. You might consider this an easy building method and ask yourself why this is it worth an entire 60 minutes presentation? The challenging sub topic of Tobias' presentation were LEGO sculptures. After his Dark Ages, he started to build the famous

minifigs he used to play with as a child in maxifig scale. His masterpiece is a 14 kg TUX (the Linux penguin) sculpture. In Berlin, he also displayed the sculpture of TUX' little brother and presented fully colored printed building instructions. During his talk, he explained to us some mathematical methods to convert a 2D scribble into a real 3D LEGO sculpture.

So many talks – wasn't there anything to do at the TSL? Yes of course, LEGO sponsored a new timed building experience: the brand new LEGO Technic Super Crane 8421. Five fans needed nearly two hours (1:55) to complete this brilliant set, which will be out in autumn. This crane was also the topic of Martin's and Frank's talk. Rather than having another Q&A session with LEGO employees, these two guys from the design department gave an almost complete detailed trip through the product development process of this new Crane set. Ok, some sub slides were confidential and we were not allowed to see them. But I can tell you: being a LEGO designer is a hard job. It is nothing compared to being an AFOL building a MOC that you and your LUG can build. A LEGO designer must be creative, must know the internal guidelines, must hit the price category this product will be in, and must give up cool ideas. Frank showed a prototype of the Crane with even more pneumatic power, more cylinders, much bigger. Unfortunately this was all too big for a LEGO set. And LEGO designers use working methods a real AFOL would never use. It seems to be a very common method to meet in the "sprayer cabin" where LEGO parts are sprayed in colors that normally do not exist. And the pair of pliers is the most frequently used tool. Why searching for a 1x8 beam if you can just cut off a 1x12 beam? Almost all of the guests who listened to this insider information that Friday were staggered with amazement.

The program of this hot afternoon was continued with a MOC tour through HoMa's Venice. I lifted some roofs and showed some of the inside building techniques I've used to a small but interested group. Klaas had built MOCs full of action, which attracted a lot more LEGO fans. Who can build the fastest train and win the rail racer's competition? Or who is concentrated enough to catch as many pieces of candy as possible with "The Crane"? Klaas really knows what younger and older kids like to play with!

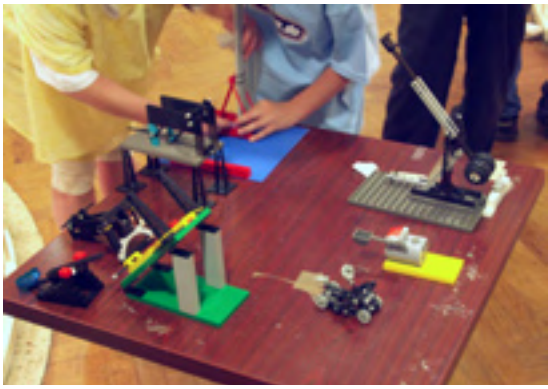
Have you ever heard about the LEGO mosaic set? Have you seen the huge mosaics at BrickFest showing a famous site of the city? Weeks before TSL, several people had received a 48x48 baseplate and endless 1x1 plates in white, gray, light and dark gray and black and an instruction for this baseplate. Many thanks to Steve Barile who helped a lot in giving us the instructions and in providing us with some baseplates. No one knew what there were going to build. It took a while to get all the 90 (!) baseplates in the right position. Meanwhile, the number of spectators on the gallery grew constantly. And then it was finished. A 207.360 pieces mosaic showing Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt. René used a 360° panorama picture which was converted into the mosaic. Just minutes before the mosaic was laid out, the pano-shot.de guy took a 360° shot of all visitors.

A fantastic day was slowly coming to an end. But we had one more attractions left before everyone hit the buffet: Dirty Brickster. I don't know how many people joined in. It took a while until every present was unwrapped, most gifts changed their owner and finally someone had to go home with the Clickits accessory pack. But we had all fun!

Saturday and Sunday – the TSL was open to the public and despite the tropical temperatures, more than 2600 visitors stopped by and had a look at all the MOCs. Raffle tickets were sold within a few hours and we had prices ranging from a Kellogg's cereal box over a Biff promo set (#3929) to a hotel voucher for a weekend in Hamburg. The two LEGO designers started one building event for the kids after the other while answering tons of questions. At the end of the day, Frank could hardly speak a word.

The third TSL was an overall success and we went bigger and better than the years before. Hope to see YOU this year in Berlin at the 1000steine-Land!

More info: www.1000steine-land.de



Event:
Summer AFOL Days

Reims, France
July 9th and 10th
2005

Summer Fun in France

BrickJournal *went to France to meet with FreeLUG (French LEGO Users Group) and attend their event this summer - here's the report!*

Articles and Photos by Gael Frazier

For the third consecutive year, FreeLUG (French LEGO Users Group) organized its Summer AFOLs Days. The event took place in Reims (Northeast) of France, with AFOLs coming not only from France, but also from the Netherlands and Belgium.

A little bit of history...

The Summer AFOLs Days (SAD) was born in 2003, 6 months after the official creation of FreeLUG to have another "good" reason to meet each other. The first event was in Rennes (Northwest) then in Grenoble (Southeast) in 2004.

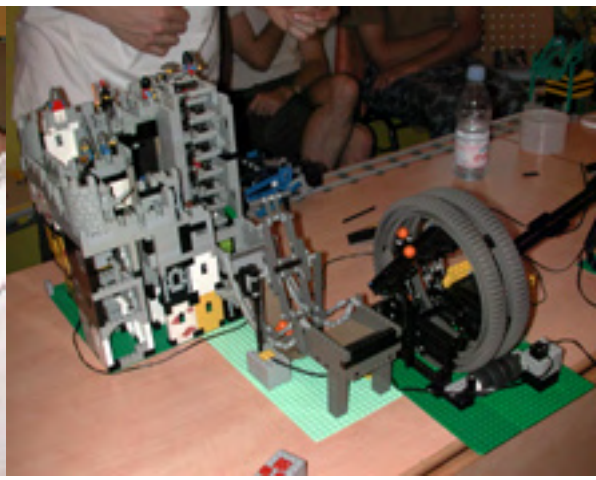
These events were organized to meet several goals: First: meeting together. FreeLUG's members are split all over France and Belgium. Other reasons: to provide AFOL only time and show our MOCs, put together some collaborative projects, and have good food and drink, after all, we are French! We also try to change the event location every year so everyone can eventually participate as the event comes near them. Another good reason to change locations is to satisfy the partners, wives and kids who can discover another nice area of France and eventually take a week-long holiday.

Every year the event becomes bigger, from around 20 AFOLs in 2003 to nearly 30 in 2004 and now around 40. The size of the place we rent and the number of days of SAD have also grown. This year, the first attendees arrived on Friday evening and the last attendees left late Sunday.

2005

This year we had 2 major collaborative projects: the Great Ball Contraption (GBC to English, GBB translated to French) and the brickciel. We also had two competitions: the bridge contest and the "Wacky Crazy Race."

The GBB consists of motorized modules that move LEGO balls. It was great fun to



see all the modules built all over the country joined together and starting to throw (literally) balls all over the room. After some modifications fixes and changes, the 12 modules were all working together in a nice flow of balls. We saw some very great designs for these modules, from the one motor modules to the RCX-driven modules. You don't need to be a great Technic addict, as Nicolas Huyard (Nico) built a castle with a nice water wheel and a shooting ball system, while on the other side Philo or Jean-Louis Bergamo (Jlb) did some great pure Technic design.

The brickciel (SkyBrick) is a stack of sized-defined modules 8 bricks high. Erik Amzallag launched a "goal" for this year: reaching the ceiling of the room! Step by step (or module after module) the building grew. We then needed the help of Loys Bailly (Chimere) (2 meters tall) to add the last ones. While each module needs to follow specifics rules to hold the weight of the modules above it, the design is completely free which gave some very nice, original and interesting designs. Pascal Breard (LeGnome) created a very high module (around 32 bricks high) and organized a game where we had to guess the number of minifigs hidden in it.

The bridge competition took all our attention. Some were very light with a very few parts, others where very graceful or technically advanced. The goal was for the bridge to hold a minimum of 5kg. To simulate the weight we used a bucket that we filled with water. Most of the bridges did generate some cracks as the weight was increasing. But they all reached the 20kg which was just amazing!

The "wacky race" is quite simple: build a vehicle with a minimum of 2 wheels and a driver. The craziest one is always the best.

Meeting together is always a good opportunity for train fans. A non-organized layout took place with some nice locomotives and wagons. Also displayed was an interesting tramway like from Nico. Our friends from Netherlands came with superb buildings, one representing ancient Greece and the other a town. On the Star Wars layout, a race between pods was taking place. The pods were mounted on standard train motors, quite fun to adjust the speed not to have them hitting each other.

Freelug's Summer AFOLs Days is an awaited event from our club. We were very pleased to welcome for the second year our friends from the Netherlands who apparently enjoyed the weekend. We don't know yet where it will be next year, but any AFOLs from EU or the other side of the "pond" are welcome to join. We will post invitations not only on Freelug's web site but also on Lugnet.

Shall you need more info, please contact Freelug at contact@freelug.org

Links to more pictures:

http://gallery.freelug.org/Summer_AFOL_Days_2005

http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=136332

News: LEGOFest 2005

Turin, Italy
September 3-4, 2005

Article by
Luca Giannitti, Davide Cavagnino, and Alex Cordero

Photos by
Luca Giannitti and Loys Bailly

For the first time since the creation of ItLUG (Italian Lego User Group), a LEGOfest took place in Turin, one of the biggest towns in northern Italy. The three most active ItLUG members of Turin (Diego Rosati, Gianluca Morelli and Luca Giannitti) served as organizers for the event.

Because many ItLUG members hadn't yet built a new collective layout to show, it was thought it would be a great idea to invite our French "neighbours" to take part of this LEGOfest to meet them and build together a nice train/town layout. Many French AFOLs (Adult Fans of LEGO) come from southern France, which is about 3 hours distance from Turin (less than many Italian towns!), so it wasn't hard to find people who had the time to make a trip to LEGOfest. In the end, 5 French members of FreeLUG and Brique á Brac (BaB), both French clubs, were ready to come but health problems reduced them to 4 (Loys Bailly, Denis Huot, Xavier Viallefont and Ronan Poirier).

From Italy, the number of attendees was very high: over 30 members were ready to take part to the 20th LEGOfest.

The show lasted two days: the first one was reserved to ItLUG and FreeLUG members and the second one was open to the public. A brief announcement was sent to the regional pages of the national newspaper "La Stampa" and not only was it published, but a journalist wrote a long article about LEGOfest which was published on September 4th. Thanks to this story, on Sunday a lot of people (over 300!) came to see the LEGO® creations.

The Sassi-Superga station: on the foreground are three GTT bus models

A collection of LEGO® rarities

A special minifig done for LEGOfest by Loys Bailly

The exposition involved many themes. Entering the hall, visitors could first see the models of the station and the rack-railway Sassi-Superga (which connects the city of Turin to the top of the highest hill that overlooks it, where the Basilica of Superga stands). There were also some Turin GTT buses and one tramway in 1:37 scale.

In the left area of the exposition hall there were two interconnected railway loops, on which some train models (cargo trains, passenger trains, switchers) were running in a landscape. A particular notice for the cows moving their heads at the train passing (thanks to two MINDSTORMS® light sensors connected to an RCX brick). Inside the loops there were also a car factory, a model of a "LEGO Fabrik", a Roman cathedral, a modern train station, and a tall tower with the Harry Potter™ series' minifigures moving inside. Some of these models were presented by the French friends of FreeLUG and BaB.

Another area was devoted to some models of cars, buildings and trains from the 70's, 80's and 90's.

View of the "Battle of Endor"™ layout: each tree counts over 750 parts!

An impressive model, shown for the first time by Fabio Sali

In two other areas of the hall more than thirty models of TECHNIC® constructions were presented (both MOCs and catalog models). Another display presented some MOC military models.

One display area presented an ICE PLANET® collection (from the 90's), whilst another display showed a MOC Hogwarts™ Castle featuring many of the Harry Potter™ characters.

During the first day of the exposition, a display of space models from the 80's was presented by Willy Tschager, along with some impressive computer radiosity renderings of space models performed using CAD and rendering tools. Meanwhile, a MINDSTORMS® robot model was moving on the floor of the hall, guided through the vocal commands of its designer, interpreted by a computer and transmitted by means of the infrared transmitter.

The center of the hall was occupied by a MOC "My Legoland", and two other displays were a "Grandma House" (showing a part of a true house) and a "Magic Castle".

Many visitors went to the Great Ball Contraption show, where many builders connected their GBC modules, and made the LEGO motors working to make the small soccer balls moving around.

Also a scenery from Star Wars™ Episode 6 was displayed: the battle on the Endor™ moon was presented with MOC and catalog models: in particular, tall MOC trees were very impressive.

A poster session showed some interesting pieces and information: LEGO MINITALIA® history, with bricks, windows and slopes, and a technique that uses ultraviolet rays to distinguish between different moldings of bricks having the same color in normal light. Moreover, it was possible to see the "Red Track", which is an original prototype for the 9V train system tracks.

A noteworthy initiative was undertaken by Willy Tschager, during all the exposition time: a charitable bricks donation for a children's house.

The organization and the exhibitors felt the meeting was a success, both for AFOLs and also for the visitors of all ages interested in the LEGO hobby.

The car factory built by Denis Huot.

Event:
National Train Show

Laying Tracks in Cincinnati: ILTCO at the National Train Show

Article by Paul Janssen
Photos by Geoff Gray
Art by Mike Gallagher

Early February 2004, the Central Ohio LEGO Train Club (www.coltc.org) was displaying at a train show in Cincinnati. We were approached by the chairman of the annual convention of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) to display our LEGO train layout at the National Train Show (NTS) in July of 2005 in Cincinnati. A few months later at the 2004 NMRA National Train Show in Seattle, International LEGO Train Club Organization (www.iltco.org) had met with the NMRA on the very same topic, but with a slightly larger goal in mind; it was time for the world's largest multi-club LEGO train layout! ILTCO then contacted me, as part of the COLTC and asked if they would consider expanding the layout and including other clubs. Of course we welcomed that opportunity, and a good year later, on July 8-10, 2005 in Cincinnati, something exceeding the best-case scenario unfolded…..

No less than seventy-six AFOLs, from 13 different clubs, in overstuffed cars, vans, and trailers, found their way to Cincinnati. These clubs were complemented by the Georgia-based CUT team, which built a 10 x 15 foot replica of the Cincinnati Union Terminal (CUT). For some clubs, it was a 2-day drive; participating clubs came from Florida to Canada, and from Washington DC to Minneapolis! In addition, several individuals attended the event, flying in from as far away as Texas and Oregon. Finally, after well over a year of planning the overall show logistics as well as layout specifics, on July 6 we got the passes to enter the Cincinnati convention center. Around 1 PM, the first table was unpacked, and the building frenzy was officially a go. As the hours passed, more and more clubs and individuals arrived, and what at first seemed like an impossible task started to become reality: filling a 3500 square foot area with LEGO creations. But not just any creations, the clubs were asked to limit their contributions to town and train creations, and only to display their "best-of-the-best". The overview picture (http://www.iltco.org/albums/album37/1_a_group_layout_4.sized.jpg), shows the master-layout plan, and the logos of the participating clubs indicate their respective areas. At the end of the first day, significant progress was visible, but the bulk of the work was yet ahead.

On Thursday, every second of an 11-hour build-up session was utilized to further construct, and perfect, the layouts. No less than 750 man-hours of work were put into building the display on site. Of course,

750 hours would pale in comparison to how many hours of building time had been put into the individual MOCs. Connecting the various layouts went smoothly. Each club was very well prepared, and had a (sub-)baseplate detailed plan ready months in advance. These plans were shared with their direct neighbors, and tweaked to make the connections work smoothly. This was not a trivial task, as several clubs had as many as 4 connecting clubs to iron out the plans with. All clubs did an amazing job, it was often hard, if not impossible, to tell where the layout of one club ended, and another one started. This made the layout more impressive and massive, and the sense that all was 1 big layout was enhanced by uniform skirting (provided by Michigan LTC (MichLTC) and COLTC) and uniform crowd barriers.

….And relax! The ILTCO social event was held at the hotel where most of the participants stayed. Kirsten and Billy Lynch, local COLTC members, with help of Steve Barile had organized the get-together, and with support of the LEGO group, a pizza+ party gave us a chance to wind down. Engraved Maersk blue event bricks were handed out to all individuals that actively participated, event T-shirts were sold, and (a few very brief) speeches were held. The next day, the show would open at 9 AM, and all were looking forward to it.

Before the show had even officially opened, it was clear that it was going to be a huge success. Without having a single word of feedback from visitors, the National Train Show organizers were already wooing us to come back next year, and the year after that, and the year….. At 7.30 and 8.30 AM, live television interviews were conducted from the convention center. Little surprise was the fact that the TV crew chose the LEGO layout as a background for their coverage. They shot some teaser/filler footage to be used throughout the day, and conducted two 5-minute live sessions in which they interviewed one of the NTS organizers, and me. In addition to the local media, host Richard Einhorn of The Train Show (www.thetrainshow.com, a nationwide satellite show devoted to the model railroad hobby), shot many hours of footage, and conducted several interviews, to be molded into a full-sized show to be aired initially in October.

At 9 AM it was announced that the show had officially opened to NTS participants, as well as attendees of the NMRA convention. At noon, admission was opened up to the general public, and the crowd swarmed our layout. Despite it being a regular working Friday, many thousands of visitors came by our layout, and I am pretty sure that without a single exception, we blew every ones mind. Tons of questions were asked, mainly the obvious ones, "I did not know Lego made trains?", "Where do you buy all these bricks", and "How long did it take you to build all this". To aid in answering most questions regarding this layout and the LEGO train hobby, we handed out nearly 5000 business cards with the ILTCO logo and URL on one side, and 5 URLs pointing to shop.lego.com, Lugnet, Bricklink, Peeron, and Legofan. There was also ample time for the AFOLs to talk to each other during the show, and it was a great opportunity to finally put a face on the often familiar cyberspace profiles. Even visiting LEGO community

liaison Jake McKee, an avid LEGO train fan/builder himself, was blown away by the size and quality of the layout. After the show closed at 6, it was time to relax again, and a good time was had by all.

Saturday was expected to bring in the largest spectator numbers, and it did. There were only a few moments where the crowd was less than 2-deep around the entire 430 foot (130 meters) perimeter. Many voices were lost, and both the number of pictures taken and visitors to our layout went into the 5-digits. After the closing of the show, Billy and Kirsten invited all participants to their house for another social event. This proved to be a very productive and happening event; their house is now officially the birth-place of the "add-a-brick" game, we de-organized their LEGO collection, and a new drink or two were invented. A very welcome break before the last day of the show.

The last day of the show still drew large crowds, and the excitement by the AFOLs or the public had not decreased. None the less it was a long and tiring five days, and when the PA system announced "the show is now closed" a deafening cheer erupted from our layout. Alas, we knew we were not done yet, and tear-down loomed ahead. This too went smoothly, and by 8.45 PM the last participants left the building. It would take another 24 hours or so before all were back home, safe and sound.

In conclusion it was an amazing event and even more amazing were the people that made it so great. For those who were there, a big thank you for participating. You should all be proud of being a part of the best layout, at this national show, of the world's greatest hobby.

A Terminal Case of Building

One of the LEGO creations at the NMRA show July 8-10, 2005, was a replica of the Cincinnati Union Terminal (CUT). This local landmark was a big favorite with show attendees. BrickJournal *talked to Scott Lyttle and Bill Spurlock, two members of the CUT Build team.*

Above: Front and side view of the LEGO CUT at the NMRA National show
Photo by Dave Foster

BJ: What made you decide to build this?
Bill Spurlock: It's a building I've loved since I was a child. Travelling through Cincinnati on family trips, I would see this incredible building off to the side of the road. I had no idea what it was, but one day I convinced my dad to pull off and find out. I walked in the door, and fell in love with the building.

BJ: What's going to happen to the CUT, now that the NMRA show is over?
Bill: It's going to be exhibited at the Cincinnati Museum Center for the SummerRail show (August 13-14, 2005), and then again as part of the Holiday Junction Festival (Winter 2005). After that, we aren't quite sure what's going to happen to it.

BJ. How many pieces?
Bill: I'm not entirely sure. I would estimate roughly 68,000 pieces. There's a lot of small parts in it!

BJ: Wow, with that many pieces, how big is this?
Scott Lyttle: The footprint for the actual CUT at the NMRA show was 12 feet long by 11 feet. However, this is going to increase to about 14 feet long by 13.5 feet, due to some things we want to fix on the station for more accuracy and a better look. The NMRA show layout had some space restrictions, due to the overall size and number of clubs, in addition to the build deadline (aka show date).

BJ. How long did it take to build?
Bill: 2 months in planning, then 10 months in construction, with design changes and adjustments along the way.

BJ: How much did it cost?
Bill: I'm not entirely sure, as we didn't keep careful records, but it's in the neighborhood of $13,000-$15,000, near as I can figure.

BJ: Where did you get all that tan brick?
Bill: Mostly through Pick-A-Brick at the Discover Mills LEGO Outlet, close to my home. Linda Bryson, the Outlet manager, was a huge help, getting us many needed parts. TLG also helped us out a little in getting some hard to find brick.
Scott: Some extra Pick-A-Brick was purchased from the LEGO store in Rockaway, NJ and the Potomac Mills LEGO Outlet. We had some additional help from Erik Varszegi and his colleagues from the Shows and Events division at Enfield.

BJ: What reactions did you get from the show?
Scott: We had a lot of looks of amazement and wonder. One comment was "blasphemy is in order—Oh my God!"
Bill: Of the several mosaics in the station, there are two in the main Rotunda. Each has a small child amongst people-one of those children came to the NMRA show and commented how nice our creation was. One notable thing was the reaction of children versus parents when they saw it. Children said "It's Museum Center!" Parents said "It's Union Terminal!". Since the CUT shut down operation in 1972, and reopened some years later as the Cincinnati Museum Center, it was very interesting to note the responses based on age. We did get one comment of "why do you have train track in the back of the Museum Center?" I guess someone didn't know the history of the station. One of the most interesting items we got were people telling us stories, either about their personal recollections of it, or about the history of the station. I had enough stories in those three days, I could probably write a book. Two of the things that really got to me, were the number of people that asked to take a picture of me with the station, and the one that got me the most by far was having someone walk up to me and ask me for my autograph. That was something I never expected.

Rear of LEGO CUT, showing the concourse over the railroad tracks
Photo by Robin Werner

BJ: How did you build this? Did you do this alone?
Bill: I enlisted the help of several LEGO enthusiast friends.

BJ: How many people helped on the station?
Bill: There were four principal builders: Chris Seaton, Scott Lyttle, John Riley, and myself. My two sons and wife Betty were also a large part of the building and support group.
Scott: Betty served us dinner on many an occasion as well. We like to joke that she got two new boys in her family during the build.
Bill: Chris Seaton, a long time friend of mine, designed the station. I have to thank Gibson Youngblunt of the Cincinnati Railroad Club for copies of the CUT architectural drawings—those drawings were key in determining how the station was built. First, we worked to define a build scale—that took quite some time to figure out. From there, a decision was made to start at the back of the station, and work forward. Then, there was the issue of concourse height. It had to be to scale, but allow enough clearance for LEGO trains to pass under it. Chris and I did a test build, to determine if this could be done. Fortunately, it was at this time Scott Lyttle came into the picture. Scott took Chris' design and improved structural stability. He was also able to get more detail into the station using SNOT techniques.

Image of CUT, as seen through the Central Ohio LEGO Train Club layout
Photo by John Bucy

Scott: The build was very challenging, considering the rear of the station (the concourse) no longer exists. Coincidentally, Larry Pieniazek was in Atlanta on business at the time. I brought him over to look at the station. Discovering the initial track layout on the CUT test build didn't work, he helped us position tracks, requiring a complete rebuild of the station. Shortly after, I recommended John Riley to the project.
Bill: John was a big help. Among his work on the project, he was instrumental in the final stages of building. John designed and built the dome. Together with Chris, they created the front of the station. Todd Thuma helped us with some design ideas, and got us some brick from Billund. Mark Staffa made the LEGO mural of North America that stood at the station's rear wall.
Bill:. Frankly, I'd have a hard time totaling up all those who had some level of involvement in the project.

(continued next page)

Overhead image, showing the entire LEGO CUT model
Photo by Mike Gallagher

The model on display at Cincinnati Museum Center, Nov. 11th-Jan 23, 2006; note that Tower A (above the concourse) is lit
Photo by Bill Spurlock

The rear of the station is removed to show the detail inside the concourse, and is lit. Above the opening is a SNOT mural created by Mark Staffa. The creation is a replica of the mural that sat across the rear of the station's concourse when it existed
Photo by Mike Gallagher

BJ. How do you transport this?
Bill: It's built in sections. Fortunately, this was considered during the design of the model.
Scott: I built shipping crates for the station. 15 sheets of plywood, 3 solid days of construction, and a lot of sweat resulted in 8 shipping crates with internal shelves for each section. The team was concerned the project wouldn't arrive intact. The most critical crate housed the hollow dome. John was convinced the dome would fall apart during shipping, and would need to be rebuilt. Upon opening the crate at Cincinnati, only one brick had come loose. A very loud "Hallelujah"!! came from John. I think everybody in Cincinnati heard him!

BJ. Now that it's done, would you do this again?
Bill: If you are talking about if I was to do it all over again, Yes. But, using the knowledge that I gained, there's a lot I would redo. Keep in mind, this is the first [major] project I've ever built out of LEGO bricks. This is the type of project that could be considered a constant work in progress. The key thing is knowing when to say stop. All throughout the build, we had to keep saying "This is a LEGO model, we're not going to get it to 100%... maybe 98%". Just the fact we were able to do this, when, in the history of this building, there have been only 3 attempts at models, and this was the first model to attempt the interior, put us on uncharted ground. To do all this inside of a year, with 4-5 people, was a challenge, and quite an accomplishment, if you ask me.

BJ. So, What do you do for an encore?
Bill: It's not possible to top this. I have two projects in mind. One, just for myself, is a scale model of an old hotel I dearly love, The Wonderland Hotel, located in the Smoky Mountains National Park. Then, I'm going to do the Michigan Central Station for the NMRA national convention in 2007, coincidentally, designed by the same architect that did the CUT. But—that will be a much smaller model!

The LEGO CUT inside the dome of Cincinnati's Museum Center
Photo by Bill Spurlock

A History of the Cincinnati Union Terminal:

Union Terminal was proposed in the early part of the 20th century as a solution to the chaotic existing railroad system, consisting of seven lines operating out of five stations. Initial planning began in the early 1900's, but floods, inter-railroad squabbling and World War I delayed the plan until the late 1920s. New York architects Alfred Fellheimer and Stewart Wagner designed the terminal building. The station opened in March 1933. Unfortunately, this was completed just as the great depression was starting, when rail travel was starting to decline. The station never saw the traffic it was designed for until World War II, when it served as a major transfer point for soldiers across the US. During the 1950s, the sudden expansion of interstates and airlines led to the rapid decline of the railroad industry. The CUT eventually closed, with the last train departing in October 1972. Southern Railway purchased the land that the concourse was on, and demolished the concourse to make way for a rail yard—something SR finally admitted they now regret doing. The major artistic treasures of the station were the 20 x 20' glass-tiled murals on the walls around the concourse. Fortunately, there was a large local effort to save the murals, and they are now on display at the Cincinnati International airport. Following the destruction of the concourse, the idle station was turned into a shopping mall in 1980, failing due to the recession of the early 1980's. A few years later, the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and the Cincinnati Historical Society developed plans for a joint museum project using the CUT. In 1986, Hamilton County voters approved a $33 million bond issue for restoration of the terminal. The State of Ohio and the City of Cincinnati contributed to the restoration with grants of $8 million and $3 million, respectively. More that 3,000 Cincinnati individuals, corporations and foundations also contributed to the building's renovation. Amtrak returned to the CUT in 1991, bringing rail service back to the station. The museums merged operations in January 1995 to form Cincinnati Museum Center. The Children's Museum of Cincinnati joined the Museum Center in 1997. The old Cincinnati Union Terminal Railroad Station has a new life as the Museum Center.

What is NMRA?
NMRA is the **National Model Railroad Association--** the largest organization devoted to the development, promotion, and enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading. The NMRA was founded in 1935 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in order to provide a service to the hobby of model railroading!

The NMRA Headquarters building is located at 4121 Cromwell Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119. The building is open to members and the public, Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., EST. www.nmra.org

Websites
general information links:
http://www.cincymuseum.org
http://library.cincymuseum.org/uthisthelp.htm
http://www.cincinnatirrclub.org/
http://www.cvgairport.com/airport/murals/index.shtml

Websites
picture links:
http://www.daap.uc.edu/library/archcinci/9unionterminal.html
http://www.kmjaeger.com/unionterminalpage.htm
http://www.railstations.org
http://www.galenfrysinger.com/union_terminal,_cincinnati.htm
http://www.grohol.com/psypsych/Cincinnati_Museum_Center_at_Union_Terminal
http://www.waltlockley.com/cintiterminal/cintiterminal.htm
http://www.cincinnati-transit.net/daltontour1.html
http://www.trainweb.org/rshs/GRS%20-%20Cincinnati.htm
http://www.pbase.com/knight_errant/mosaics_at_union_terminal
http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/ohio/cincy/rrstation/union.html
http://www.cvgairport.com/airport/murals/m_history.shtml

Cincinnati Union Terminal Timeline:
1900's CUT plan conception
1920s CUT plan started
1929 CUT construction starts
1931 CUT cornerstone laid
1933 CUT station opens
1937 Cincinnati floods
1941-45 highest traffic point
1945 New Roof on Dome
1950-60s Railroad decline
1968-70 Cincinnati Science Museum Operates Concourse
1972 (October) Last train out
1973 Cincinnati votes to designate CUT as historic landmark
1974 Murals moved
1974 Concourse Demolished
1974 Murals on display at Airport
1975 Cincinnati purchases CUT
1978 Shopping Mall project
1984 Shopping Mall fails
1985 Museum of Natural History and Cincinnati History Society choose CUT as site for their Heritage Center
1986 Bond issued for renovations
1990 --new tenants--
Cincinnati Historical Society
Cincinnati Museum of Natural History
1991 Amtrak Returns to CUT
1995 Museums merge—'Cincinnati Museum Center' forms
1997 Children's Museum of Cincinnati joins Museum Center

The CUT's concourse as it existed until the early 70's. Photo by Scott Lyttle

and how it appears, as done in LEGO bricks Photo by Robin Werner

Welcome to LEGO World 2005!

The largest LEGO event in the world took place in the Netherlands. BrickJournal *has an exclusive report from Sybrand Bonsma.*

Photos by Dirk Plug

Panoramic photo by Philippe Hurbain

Airport display by Fred & Freek Beijaard

LEGO World was held for the 5th consecutive year this past October 20-25th. Yet the preparations for this incredible event started a whole year earlier. While the organization still had to evaluate LEGO World 2004 (how the event went, what was good and what went wrong) many volunteers and exhibitors, like myself, started to create plans for LEGO World 2005. During the event there were many conversations with other exhibitors, volunteers and visitors, creating many new ideas to implement this year.

Before the exhibitors could show their creations and collections, many things had to be worked out. After the evaluation , the focus turned to 2005. For De Bouwsteen, the Dutch LEGO community, it meant arranging overnight stays, dinners, sponsors and of course, to insure that there were many exhibitors and volunteers.

LEGO World turned out to be a huge success again; so successful, in fact, that Dutch newspapers reported the event reached its limits, because all

20,000 square meters at De IJsselhallen in Zwolle, the location of LEGO World, was used and all 48,000 tickets, a new record, were sold. Thus the only way to grow was to extend from the current six days for the public to visit the event.

An event of this scale can only work through the help of many people, and many people there were. Each day about 200 persons were present to show their creations, their collections or to help as a volunteer. They included not only members of De Bouwsteen, but also LEGO fans from Belgium (BeLUG), France (FreeLUG), Italy (ItLUG) and Germany.

For the organization, a lot of work was involved. Everyone was given a LEGO World T-shirt, and needed drinks and food during the day. In the evening they joined a group dinner in a restaurant and/or stayed overnight in one of the many bungalows arranged by De Bouwsteen. As these bungalows were about 20 kilometers away from the event, transportation was provided by one of our sponsors, a Dutch public transport company, so we could all relax on the way to the bungalows.

The exhibitors showed their creations and collections on an area of about 4,000 square meters, and there was much to see here. Some people brought their collections, such as an overview of (almost) all Technic sets, Bionicles, and Scala, from the past and the present. But there were also collections of other themes, like fire department sets issued by LEGO from different years. Of course, many individual creations were shown - too many to mention and all in different varieties and scales, such as: A huge castle, Mindstorms walkers and a pinball machine, the Great Ball Contraption, Moonbase, working clocks, Miniland zoo and airport, beautiful train layouts from different eras and so much more.

All these collections and creations were not only appreciated by the other volunteers and exhibitors, but also by the visitors of the event. The exhibition areas stayed crowded continuously and after just one day some people had already lost their voices from so much talking with visitors.

Model by BELUG, Belgian guests of LEGO World (www.belug.be)




Foreground: display by Nico Hoogerbrug Background: Fabuland display from Sybrand Bonsma

Many volunteers helped with the building contests and other activities for children. For example, children could make their own train and then let it run on different tracks, or to drive themselves in small electric LEGO carts, have their hair done with Clickits and much more. It was a full-day event for most visitors and the children weren't the only ones who had a great time!

Of course there were also some record attempts this year. Five Bouwsteen members tried to break the world record, set during Bricking Bavaria just a few days earlier, of building set 8421, the Technic Mobile Crane. They were able to build more than fifteen minutes faster and brought the record time down to 1 hour, 19 minutes and 2 seconds.

A second record attempt was the largest LEGO mosaic, with a size of 5 by 6 meters. The picture made showed the main figures from a cartoon series shown on Jetix, a Dutch television channel that was also present at the event.

Putting the last brick for the mosaic was broadcast on Jetix and featured in a number of Dutch newspapers, so we had a good share of media coverage.

In addition to the appreciation from the visitors, there was also much appreciation from the organization (which organized also a nice party for all volunteers and exhibitors during LEGO World), and also from the people of LEGO in Denmark. Jan Beyer, the community liaison for Europe, spent a couple days at the event, including hosting a Question-And-Answer session along with 2 people from the LEGO

Models by Rick Zonneveld

8421 in 1:19:02

Five Bouwsteen members attempted to break the world record, set during Bricking Bavaria just a few days earlier, of building set 8421, the Technic Mobile Crane. They were able to build more than fifteen minutes faster and brought the record time down to 1 hour, 19 minutes and 2 seconds.

From left to right standing, Paul Wolters (manager events), Maico Arts (Builder), Martijn Boogaarts (Builder), Erik Gusting (Builder) and Jan Beyer (LEGO Germany). Sitting, left to right, Ben Frater (Builder) and Dirk Plug (Builder)

Company Quality Section.

The best, however, was the visit of Kjeld Kristiansen on the last day. He spent a lot of time talking to volunteers and exhibitors.He expressed much appreciation for their involvement and showed great interest in their personal stories.

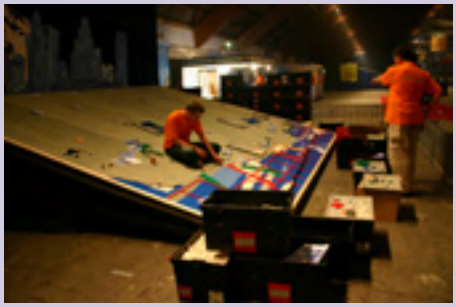
Finally, there was a sad moment as we realized it was over. Everything was repacked and cleaned up and we all received a special minifig of De Bouwsteen. Then we started our journeys home, thinking of all the new ideas and inspirations and already looking forward to 2006.

Model of Bob The Builder by Marc Bult and mark van der Horst. They set a personal record building Bob 8 times in one day, thus a number 8 on his hat.

Sport display

5 x 6 meters

Another record attempted was the largest LEGO mosaic, 5x6 meters. The picture is of the main figures from a cartoon series shown on Jetix, a Dutch television channel who were also present at the event. The placement of the final brick was broadcast on their station.



Frank Wanningen and Silvio Fontaine working on the initial panels

Frank Wanningen and Silvio Fontaine continuing to work on the initial panels

Silvio Fontaine continuing to work on the initial panels

Finishing the mosaic - Builders in the picture from left to right: Silvio Fontaine, Sybrand Bonsma, Onno Ponsioen

Photo by Brian Reynolds

NorthWest BrickCon

In the fall, there is a convention in Washington. BrickJournal *went to this year's con to see what went on - and it was a lot of fun!*

Article by Geoff Gray

This past weekend, the Seattle Center played host to an annual gathering of AFOLs known as NorthWest BrickCon. I had the great fortune to attend, and the following is this good old boy's thoughts about the gathering. I hope you enjoy.

I got up at 5:30 AM (EST) on Friday October 7, drove to the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, got checked in and boarded the Airbus A320 for the five and a half hour flight to SeaTac airport. By the time I had gotten my rental car and was on I-5 heading into Seattle, it was about 10:30 AM (PST), and the weather was typically cool and cloudy October. I was already excited. I love the Pacific NorthWest, and adding that to spending a weekend with other AFOLs, I was going to be in heaven. I got to the show, quickly registered, and was soon chatting with old friends...and making new friends!

Friday consisted of setup and informal gatherings with the opening remarks, Dirty Brickster Game and Pirate Game taking place that evening. I rose early on Saturday (still acting on East Coast time) and made it to the Seattle Center by 8:15 AM. Many people were already there and activities were in full swing. The convention had use of 2 rooms with a hallway in between. Room One held the MOC layouts and public activities while Room Two hosted seminars, competitions, the Brick Bazaar and general gatherings. Room 2 was not open to the public. I found this idea really good since it allowed all the different themes to be shared in one location but also provided an escape from the public if we needed some downtime.

Photo by Dean Husby

Morning activities included a speed build contest (using the 4884 Wild Hunters set), a Master Builder contest (create a MOC with pieces from 4884 within a set timeframe) and a couple of roundtables on Track Modification and Packing MOCs. At noon the doors were opened to the public and we viewed the looks of amazement on both kids and parents faces as they discovered the wonders presented... and we didn't start out lightly. The first thing visitors saw when entering was the classic display, featuring kits and LEGO toys dating back to the 1940s (from the collection of Wayne Hussey) and Matt Chiles' now famous roller coaster. After watching the coaster make about 5 or 6 runs, the kids would then drag their parents into the main exhibit room where they were greeted by over 5,000 square feet of MOCs, dioramas, sculptures, robots, castles, space ports, city blocks, bison (remember buffalo did not ever exist in North America), moonbases, haunted houses, and everything else imaginable.

Photo by Robin Sather

Once the people made it to the back end of the exhibit hall, they found some activities they could enjoy. There was a LEGO RC track set up where kids could try their hand at racing the cars around. Right beside that was a build section with several tables setup for families to play. This section was especially popular and

Photo by Brian Reynolds

Photo by Brian Reynolds

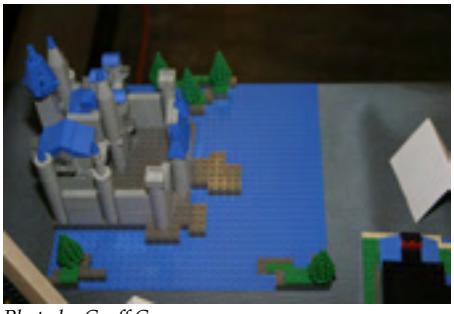


Photo by Geoff Gray

Photo by Caylin Feiring

Photo by Geoff Gray

Photo by Dean Husby

was packed every time I looked over there. The public expo closed around 4 PM, but I don't think the last of the people left until a couple of hours later. Meanwhile, back in the activities room, participants were starting a new speed build contest that took us back into the realm of Star Wars. This time the build team had to assemble the Death Star II model, using 10 people and starting with a sealed box. The record set was 1 hour 30 minutes and 30 seconds. As with BrickFest PDX's ISD build 2 years before, the "unassembly" took substantially less time (see the "DSII Destruction" sidebar).

The evening consisted of several events, kicked off by the keynote speech and the awards ceremony. This part also included the prize raffle, hosted by Gary McIntire and his Cy Young pitching arm, which was used to hurl keychains and several black Xpods which hit people in the heads, took out ceiling tiles and generally had everyone hiding for fear of personal injury. I haven't laughed that hard for a long time. There was a draft of parts from the 4884 set, which I think set a record for efficiency. The kit contains 160 unique elements which were sorted into clear plastic mushroom containers and laid out on 4 tables. The 14 participants lined up in order and steadily rolled by the tables in buffet fashion, returning to the back of the line for their next pick. The line just kept moving and the entire draft was completed in less than 20 minutes. I think I finally left the Seattle Center at about 11 PM, feeling very tired but very happy.

Photo by Brian Reynolds

Sunday continued the festivities with the Wacky Race, several roundtables, some Show and Tell sessions, and of course the obligatory space invasion of Robin Sather's castle. Once again at noon, the doors opened to the public, and as on the previous day, we were greeted with enthusiastic kids and loud cries of "Just Look, Don't Touch" from the parents. At 5 PM precisely (well, really it was 5:15, but Wayne promised it would start at 5 sharp) the closing ceremony and final awards were handled, followed by teardown and the

Northwest BrickCon Awards

Art
- **Best 3D:** Tonari and Totoro "My Neighbor Totoro" by Todd Kubo

Best 2D: Cat in the Hat Mosaic by Terri Landers
Best Miniland: Skeleton Angel by Joseph Sibilia-Young

Castle
- **Best Medieval Detail:** Castle Drachenschlaf by Robin Sather

Best Medieval house: Medieval House by Tom Rafert
Castle Best in Show: Castle Drachenschlaf by Robin Sather

Space
- **Best Ship:** Republic Attack Cruiser by Todd Kubo

Best Diorama: The Crevasse (no builder credited)
Best of Show: The Crevasse

Mecha
- **Best Military:** Mountain Diorama by Mark Neumann

Most Fluid: Venom by Nathan Proudlove
Best of Show: Mecha Hanger by Fradel Gonzales

Moonbase
- **Most functional:** Spaceport by Jeff Pelletier

Most Humorous: Moonbase Arena by Daniel Brown
Best Macro: The Quarch by Daniel Brown
Best of Show: Crevasse

Micro Moonbase
- **Best Detail:** Crystal Moonbase by Amanda Forbes

Best Movement: Spaceport by Mark Neumann
Best of Show: Blacktron Attack by Jeff Pelletier

Microscale
- **Best Past:** Island Fortress by Justin Major

Best Present: 40's Main Street by Ashley Glennon
Best Future: 2 Space Warships by David DeGobbi

Train/Town
- **Best Rolling Stock:** Conjuncton Junction

Best Train Accessory: Turntable Layout by Nick Ostrom
Best Town Detail: 3 City Blocks by Jeff Pelletier
Best Town Vehicle: Nissan Xterra by Chris Pasco

Technic
- **Best of Show:** Tower Crane by Bob Kojima

Most Mechanical: Tower Crane by Bob Kojima
Best Engineering: Tower Crane by Bob Kojima

Historical
- **Most Humorous:** Pirate Seawall by John Langrish

Wild West: Wild West Display by Vancouver LEGO Club

final goodbyes. I left the Seattle Center about 7:30 PM, feeling very happy about the trip and glad to see friends, both old and new. As I prepared for the rest of my trip (I actually had another week in the area), I was thankful that I had a chance to attend. I think I will be coming back for the next one.

Photo by Robin Sather

Wild Card: Pirate Seawall by John Langrish

Public Best of Show
Castle Drachenschlaf by Robin Sather

Haunted Mansion

Hall of Heads by Amanda Forbes

BEST OF SHOW
Castle Drachenschlaf by Robin Sather

Speed Build (4884 set)
Justin Major 13 minutes 30 seconds (adjusted for mistakes)

Master Build (4884 set)
Sean Forbes "Man and Dog"

RC Race winner
Nick Ostrom

Wacky Races
Best Crash: Jeff Pelletier

Farthest Pilot: Dan Herrmann @22 paces

Farthest Vehicle: Nick Ostrom @25 paces

UCS Death Star II Speed Build
1 hour 30 minutes 30 seconds

Photos above by Geoff Gray

Team: (not in order) Nathan Proudlove, David Gagnon, Kelly McKiernan, Bob Kojima, Mark Neumann, Justin Major, Brian Mclean, Jeremy Rear, Zack Lovett Dave De Gobbi

Death Star II Roll

Photos above by Geoff Gray

Photos above by Geoff Gray

As we gathered around the Wacky Racers ramp Sunday to watch the destruction of various sized MOCs, we saw the Death Star II model that had been built just the day before come walking into the room...and toward the ramp. All I could think was, 'No Way!' Well, I was wrong. Amidst great cheers and laughter, Dan Herrmann let the beast loose. Needless to say, it did not win for distance, and it did not win for most outrageous stunt. That honor went to Dan after the DSII roll, when he picked up all of the pieces and REASSEMBLED it. Oh, the things we AFOLs do!

Now available in stores:

Event: BrickFest® 2005

Larry Pieniazek and Felix Greco

Ashley Glennon and Tormod Askildsen of the LEGO Group

Only a few of the people that came for the public expo

Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen at BrickFest

Christina Hitchcock (Event Director), Janey Cook (Micro/Vignette Theme Coordinator), Lenny Hoffman and Dan Rubin (Space Theme Coordinators) and John Branes (Mindstorms Coordinator) all set up before a meeting

Every August, in Washington, DC, the largest LEGO fan convention in North America takes place. BrickFest, as the event is known, has grown from a small regional event to an internationally recognized convention, with over 350 attendees (and over 3000 public visitors) coming from around the world! With that, representatives of The LEGO Group also joined the fans in celebrating the brick, including the owner of the LEGO Group, Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, and the CEO of TLG, Jørgen Vig Knudstorp,

BrickFest 2005 was also the first convention that *BrickJournal* was able to cover with correspondents and photographers, so we are proud to present the event in words and images. We got reports from some of the staffers that were involved in the event, and some articles from unexpected places.

So for those who went to BrickFest 2005, here's an album that hopefully holds some memories. For those who haven't gone to an event, hopefully this will give you a hint to all the fun things that happened...

Janey and Christina at the wrapup meeting

Event: BrickFest 2005

Photo by Joe Meno

Photos by Phil Moyer

Bionicle: Bugs and Bots and Bunnies, Oh My!

Theme Coordinator: Marc Reinhardt

The Bionicle Room grew from a few models to a full room in BrickFest this year, with a extensive collection of Bionicle sets displayed, including masks and accessories.

Creations of many types were displayed, from custom characters for the always growing Bionicle storyline to insects and even a bunny!

The contests for the theme were just as diverse, with set speed building and a Bionicle creation contest for not only models brought by builders, but built at BrickFest!

All of these activities and displays, from the set displays to the speed builds proved to be a great introduction of the Bionicle theme to attendees and the public!

Bionicle Awards, voted by attendees of BrickFest

Photos by Marc Reinhardt

1st Place (Turaga Award)

Title: Lobo Nui
Builder: Marc Reinhardt

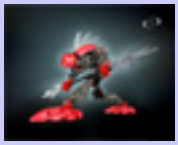
2nd Place (Turaga Award)

Title: Sajuuk
Builder: Eric Christenson

3rd Place (Matoran Award)

Title: Zero the Dragon
Builder: Lee Magpili

Bionicle Speed Building



Rahkshi (Set # 8592)

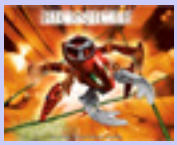
Winner
Nick Iaconis
Time: 2 Minutes

Toa Metru (Set #8602)

Winner
Nick Iaconis
Time: 2 Minutes, 5 Seconds

Vahki (Set # 8614)

Winner
Richard Roth
Time: 1 Minute, 53 Seconds

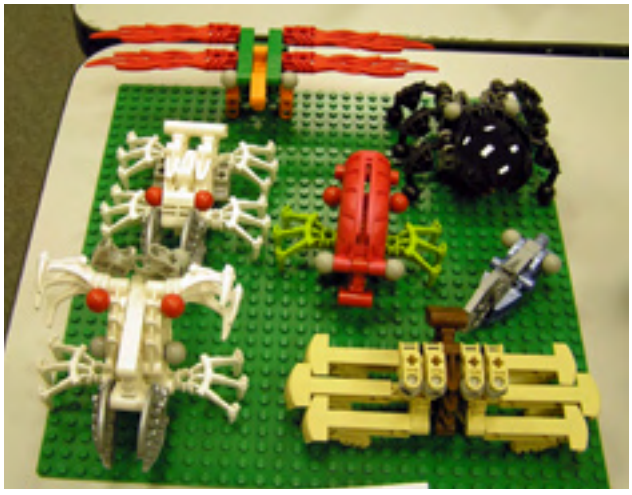


Visorak (Set # 8744)

Winner
Nick Iaconis
Time: 2 Minutes, 6 Seconds

B.Y.O.B. - Build Your Own BIONICLE
Original BIONICLE creation made during BrickFest

Winners
Shilo Parker & Richard Roth
Rohtuka Spinner Watch



Some of the models that were displayed can be seen at the upper left and above, from large figures (top) to the Easter Bunny! (above middle)
On the right side are only a few of the many Bionicle items that were displayed.
Photos by Phil Moyer

What makes Bionicle Different from Other LEGO Themes?

As a LEGO theme, Bionicle was the first to have a unique storyline. While there have been criticisms of the storyline limiting creativity, Bionicle has become very popular for older children (ages 8 - 11). This was also the first theme to introduce collectible items, initially masks, but extend out to other accessories.

In terms of building, Bionicle models use Technic parts and were first to use a ball and socket, creating articulated joints. Parts are also more organic in form, so building a model in Bionicle is in many ways more complex than building in other themes.

Event: BrickFest 2005

Build the Trust

NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST GATHERING OF LEGO® FANS CONNECTS, COMPETES AND CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF THE LEGO SYSTEM

Above - (left to right) Steve Gerling, Erik Varszegi, Sharon Park and Dwight Young
Photo by J. Carrier/U.S. Newswire

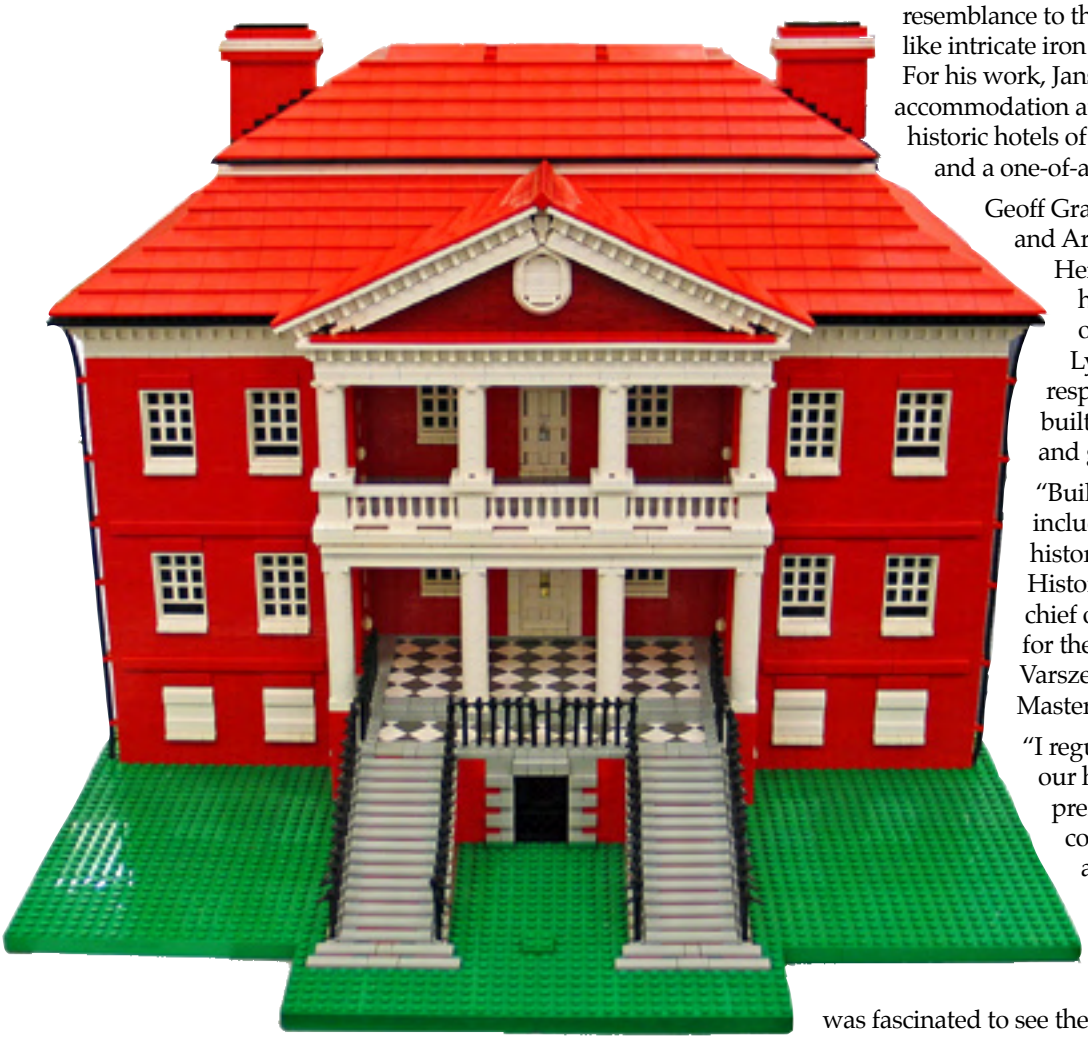
Below: Drayton Hall, by Paul Janssen
Photo by John Bucy

"Build the Trust" Contest Winners Preserve History Through Creative Play

History, design and a flair for "bricklaying" converged this past weekend as toy hobbyists preserved some of the country's most renowned National Trust Historic Sites in LEGO® form. Replica models were unveiled at BrickFest – the largest LEGO fan gathering in North America celebrating LEGO building as both hobby and art form – which took place at George Mason University August 12-14.

Responding to "Build the Trust," the first-ever building challenge issued to adult enthusiasts by the LEGO Group and National Trust for Historic Preservation, 35 hobbyists showcased the power of LEGO building, using bricks and elements to recreate the charm and detail of more than 40 historic structures, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House in Chicago, Cliveden in Philadelphia and the Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois.

Paul Janssen of Dublin, Ohio, received the Champion LEGO Preservationist title for his LEGO interpretation of Drayton Hall, located in Charleston, South Carolina. Constructed from more than 16,000 LEGO elements, Janssen's model had a striking resemblance to the real structure, featuring details like intricate iron railings and dentil moldings. For his work, Janssen receives a weekend accommodation at one of the National Trust's historic hotels of America, $500 spending money and a one-of-a-kind LEGO trophy.



Geoff Gray of Fort Mill, South Carolina and Arthur Gugick of Highland Heights, Ohio earned first-place honors for their creations of the original "Sand Hills Hotel" and Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York, respectively. They received custom-built LEGO medallions, LEGO sets and gift cards for their effort.

"Build the Trust" contest judges included Dwight Young, architectural historian for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Sharon Park, chief of technical preservation services for the National Park Service and Erik Varszegi and Steve Gerling, both LEGO Master Builders.

"I regularly travel the country to visit our historic sites and encourage preservation among local communities; this weekend I was able to visit more than 40 historic sites in one room and see a wealth of architectural styles, all artfully preserved with LEGO bricks," says Young. "I was fascinated to see the beauty of America's landmarks, constructed in such detail, with something as simple as a

LEGO brick. It's no wonder that generations of children have been inspired through building to explore their potential as architects, engineers, preservationists and artists."

LEGO Group owner and grandson of its founder, Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, upon his first visit to BrickFest says, "I am constantly amazed by what children of all ages create from the LEGO system. The fact that so many adults are still celebrating their inner child and building their imaginations only proves that creative play materials foster a lifetime of learning. I know that like me, my father and grandfather would be so proud to see how LEGO play has evolved in the last 50 years."

50 Years of Creative Play

This year, LEGO Group celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its world-famous System of Play that introduced an original and exciting kind of play to inspire generations of young builders. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Town Plan, the inaugural range of LEGO System construction sets launched in 1955, the National Trust issued an "historic" designation for the very first time to a toy.

Together, the Trust and LEGO Group are celebrating preservation, architecture, history and good design through the "Build the Trust" competition for adults, and with the "Brick to the Future: 2055" building challenge for children ages 5-14. Official rules and entry form can be found at www.LEGO50th.com

The LEGO Group, a privately-held, family-owned company based in Billund, Denmark, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of creatively educational play materials for children. The company is committed to the development of children's creative and imaginative abilities, and its employees are guided by the motto adopted in the 1930s by founder Ole Kirk Christiansen: "Only the best is good enough."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, D.C. headquarters staff, six regional offices and 26 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org.

Above: Dwight Young, architectural historian for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, judges more than 40 LEGO replicas of historic sties created by hobbyists for a national building challenge celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the LEGO System of Play, Saturday, August 13, 2005, at BrickFest in Arlington, VA
Photo by J Carrier, courtesy of U.S. Newswire

Right: Geoff Gray's Sand Hills Hotel
Photo by John Bucy

Event:
BrickFest 2005

Castle, or Going Medieval!

Castle Coordinators:
Magnus Lauglo
Edward Kohl

For the first time the castle theme got two rooms this year, a last minute, but very welcome surprise. We would certainly have been hard pressed to fit everything into just the one, as the castleheads had brought more MOCs than ever!

Highlights included four large castles and a great Minas Tirith from Lord of the Rings; lots of impressive fantasy creatures including a large articulated dragon; some truly great civilian type buildings; an array of siege machines for the Evil Engines Catapult Competition; a small but impressive sprinkling of non medieval historical stuff; and some wargaming displays. The modular Classic Castle City display, which dominated the castle room last year was actually much smaller this time around.

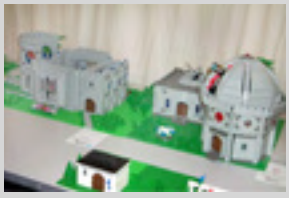
We ended up with one predominantly medieval/historical room and another room with more of a fantasy theme, which seemed to work well for the most part.

The "Castle-themed building techniques" session on Friday turned into a marathon two hour plus show-and-tell session and was well attended. Later, over half a dozen builders took part in the Evil Engines Catapult Competition, which was won by Cale Leipart's fearsome trebuchet. Lenny Hoffman lead a successful wargaming session on Saturday and we (and our MOCs) all came through relatively unscathed from the public expo on Sunday. Which I should add, I personally really enjoyed too.

Castle Awards *(photos by Lauglo and Kohl)*

Best Small MOC

Title: Old Miller Gustav's Post Mill
Builder: Anthony Sava



Best Medium MOC

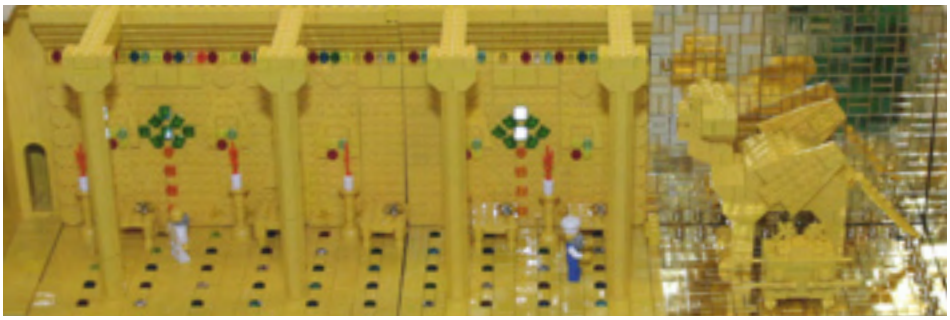
Title: The Red Observatory
Builder: Cyndi Bradham

Best Large MOC

Title: Tourney Castle
Builder: Josh Levinson

Most Realistic (Judged)

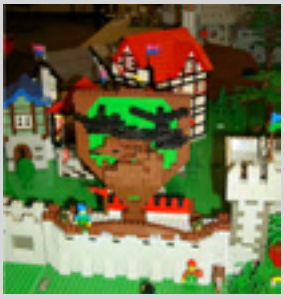
Title: Lord's Mill
Builder: Ben Ellermann



Perhaps the most impressive thing about BrickFest this year compared to last was the presence of The LEGO Company executives all the way from Denmark. Some lucky builders got the opportunity to show off their MOCs to these special guests, who were very friendly and seemed genuinely impressed.

I'd like to congratulate the award winners, and thank everybody who contributed to the Castle Rooms this year, especially Ed Kohl, who helped me with running the rooms. And thank everyone else who stopped by to check us out.

Magnus Lauglo – Castle Coordinator
BrickFest 2005



Best CCC Wall

Title: Ye Olde Computer Shop - Forestmen's Triumph
Builder: Joseph Evangelista

Best CCC Building

Title: The Shearing
Builder: Ed Kohl

Most Humorous (Judged)

Title: Trailer Park
Builder: David Eaton

Master Evil Engineer

Title: God's Hammer
Builder: Cale Leiphart

"Heck," by Steve DeCraemer. Photo by Joe Meno

Dark Room: Something Different

Coordinator: Steve DeCraemer

"Backdraft," by Robin Werner. Photo by Philip Moyer

When Paul McCartney wrote the song "Yesterday," he had the feeling he was putting his words to a already used melody. Fellow musicians later convinced him otherwise. Paul's idea was his own. This is kinda how I felt suggesting the idea for the "Dark Room". Surely someone out there had to have done a room or exhibit like this before.

The idea was simple enough: a "dark" room lit with blacklight to bring out those cool transparent neon colors and glow in the dark pieces that always get left behind. I bounced the idea off Christina Hitchcock (Event Coordinator) and she said go for it if there was enough interest. So, I posted it on LUGNET. The reception was lukewarm at best. Adrian Drake (Space builder) commented on not really liking the trans-neon pieces. My reply that he now has a reason to use them. As BrickFest approached, only a few models popped up. The future looked grim. Thursday night during setting up for the event I wondered if there was even enough models to warrant a room.

It was a nice house, but nobody was home.

I put together a marginal little model called "heck" which was really nothing more than a bunch of trans-orange flames and a Grim Reaper in a rowboat on a orange river. Throw in a few skeletons impaled on neon spears, and well, you get the picture. I figured if I didn't put together anything for my own room I'd be in trouble. Robin Werner brought a vignette called "Backdraft" featuring a fireman running from flames and a collapsing floor. Nik Pienaczek was nice enough not only to bring his dad again, but to bring along a spacecraft with a Sea Monkey hanging on for dear life. One of my favorites was a UFO, which incorporated a chasing lights system done using LEGO fiber optics.

"UFO." Photo by Rob Doucette

Then there was Joe Meno.

Months before BrickFest, when I pitched the idea, I told Joe that he had to bring something for the Dark room. I said I didn't care what it was.

So Joe brought a fish. Yep, no typo here. Joe brought a fish, and I have to admit it was pretty cool. Glow in the dark teeth and all.

So after reducing the size of the room down to that of a walkin closet, we opened it. I felt like the majority of the BrickFest attendees thought it was a neat idea but we didn't get our just rewards until Sundays public day.

It seems it was the "mouse that roared". I didn't actually get to see it but I'm told that the room had a small line for a good part of the

"Coelacanth Deep Sea Beast, "Model and photo by Joe Meno

day. I think sometimes we forget how cool some of our stuff is to the public and I'm under the impression that for alot of kids this was the first time seeing certain elements under blacklight.

I had a few people tell me that they thought it was worth doing again. I think they are right - I would like to do this again. But next time I'm leaning towards a theme and I think Joe nailed it. I see Fish!! But not just fish- I see coral reefs out of trans flames and jellyfish out of X-pod cases. Underwater vessels, sunken treasure, and mermaids. If any group of people can pull this off I know the AFOL community can.

The possibilities are endless.

Just Imagine.

Event:
BrickFest 2005

David Winkler's sculpture, "Angel." reaches skyward at BrickFest
Photo by John Bucy

First Visit, First Win

First Time BrickFest Attendee Wins Best Sculpture Award

Article by Ashley Glennon

For those who have never been to a large-scale LEGO Convention, it's an incredibly rewarding experience. For first-time BrickFest™ attendee David Winkler, the experience was literal.

A software engineer by trade, Seattle resident Winkler expected to arrive at BrickFest to talk about the mathematical and logistical attributes of his five-foot tall angel sculpture and to admire the works of others. Before the fest was over, however, Winkler would take home an award for his sculpture and a collection of experiences he will never forget.

BrickJournal caught up with Winkler shortly after his BrickFest debut to find out what it was like to be a first time visitor, winner and presenter at BrickFest 2005.

"I was at an academic convention in Montreal the week before," said Winkler. "There were similar elements: The rigid adherence to themes was common as was the same use of clothing almost as a uniform (at BrickFest, mostly previous BrickFest shirts). "

"Before Brickfest I had only attended one day of one LEGO conference which was NWBrickCon 2004. So I only saw the preparation for the public and the public displays. I hadn't been to seminars, or witnessed the intense rivalry between castle and space." "I hadn't seen how much train is distanced from most other groups, with their intensity, preparation, attention to detail, and their slightly obsessive but positive desire for realism."

NWBrickCon2004 was the first time as an adult that Winkler had ever seen a large, LEGO sculpture up close: Wayne Hussey's retro rocket ship. Winkler admits that he was inspired by Hussey's ship and wanted to build something

bigger, but the concept for the angel arrived in a circuitous way.

"I wanted to experiment with different ways of producing mosaics," Winkler said. "This turned into a mosaic generator. Then I realized that sculpture was just stacked mosaics. But nobody in the graphics world will take you seriously unless you do the Stanford Bunny, and nobody in the LEGO world will take you seriously unless you do something big. I kept building the same sculptures over and over, larger and larger, fixing bugs in the software. This lead up to the angel."

The angel almost did not make it to BrickFest. Winkler packed his angel and three other sculptures in custom-fit foam and packing peanuts but there was a mishap at the airport.

"The TSA opened and unpacked the box containing my sculptures. I think that they didn't remember which of the custom-formed foam blocks went where. So they just threw them randomly into the box. They couldn't get the lid closed on the box, so they duct-taped it closed. My dragon sculpture didn't make it, and I couldn't repair the damage. I ended up having to rebuild about three inches of the angel at her knees, and about an inch at her waist." Despite the perils of traveling with his sculptures, Winkler was amazed by what he saw at BrickFest.

"I was completely unprepared for the quality and size of the models that were brought to BrickFest. I was assigned to the large models room, so the first creation I saw was Steve DeCraemer's, POV3, the eventual best in show winner."

Winkler is particularly proud of this photo in which a family poses for their own photo in front of his sculpture.

"This makes me endlessly happy since it means that they considered it worth photographing, wanted to remember it, and wanted to remember them in front of it. It's validation from strangers, but I enjoyed it."

Photo by David Winkler

DeCraemer's sculpture, a towering, room-filling creation of over 65,000 pieces, was part castle, part skyscraper and part art.

In addition to viewing creations large and small, another highlight of attending BrickFest, according to Winkler, is the ability to attend in-depth seminars on subjects ranging from packing your creations for travel, to debating if LEGO is a worthy art form.

"I attended a few seminars," said Winkler. "One of the LDraw seminars was quite good, but what I really liked was going to the castle show-and-tell. There's so much detail in so many models that doesn't get discussed. I wish that moonbase and sculpture had something similar."

While at BrickFest, Winkler hosted his own presentation titled, "Automated Brick Layout," which explained how software can slice a three dimensional object into manageable pieces, deduce the parts needed to build the object through the use of a mathematical lattice, and then turn this complexity into friendly building instructions.

To all future BrickFest attendees, Winkler offers this advice: Think and build big.

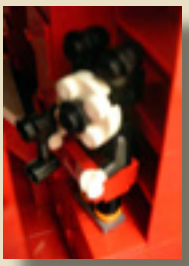
Winkler's presentation and a variety of photographs of his winning angel can be found at http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=140589.

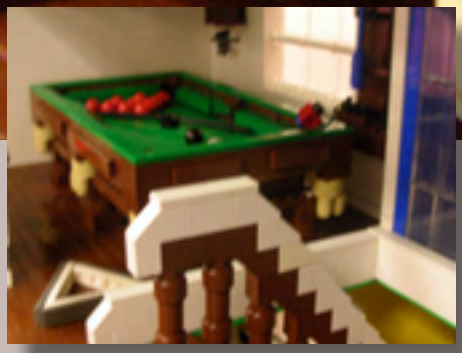
House Building Brick by Brick

Photos by Joe Meno and Calum Tsang

One of the outstanding models that was displayed at BrickFest this year was a doll-house that is being built by Janey "Red Brick" Cook. Every room and item in the house is made of LEGO elements, including cups and decorations.

The scale is not minifigure scale, but miniland scale, which is the same scale as the models that are built and displayed in the LEGOLAND parks. As a result, each room has a wonderful level of detail - so take a look at a few of the rooms !






JANEY
RED
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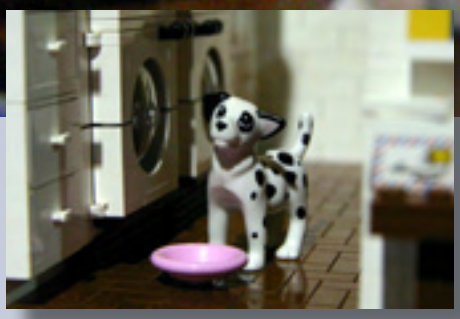
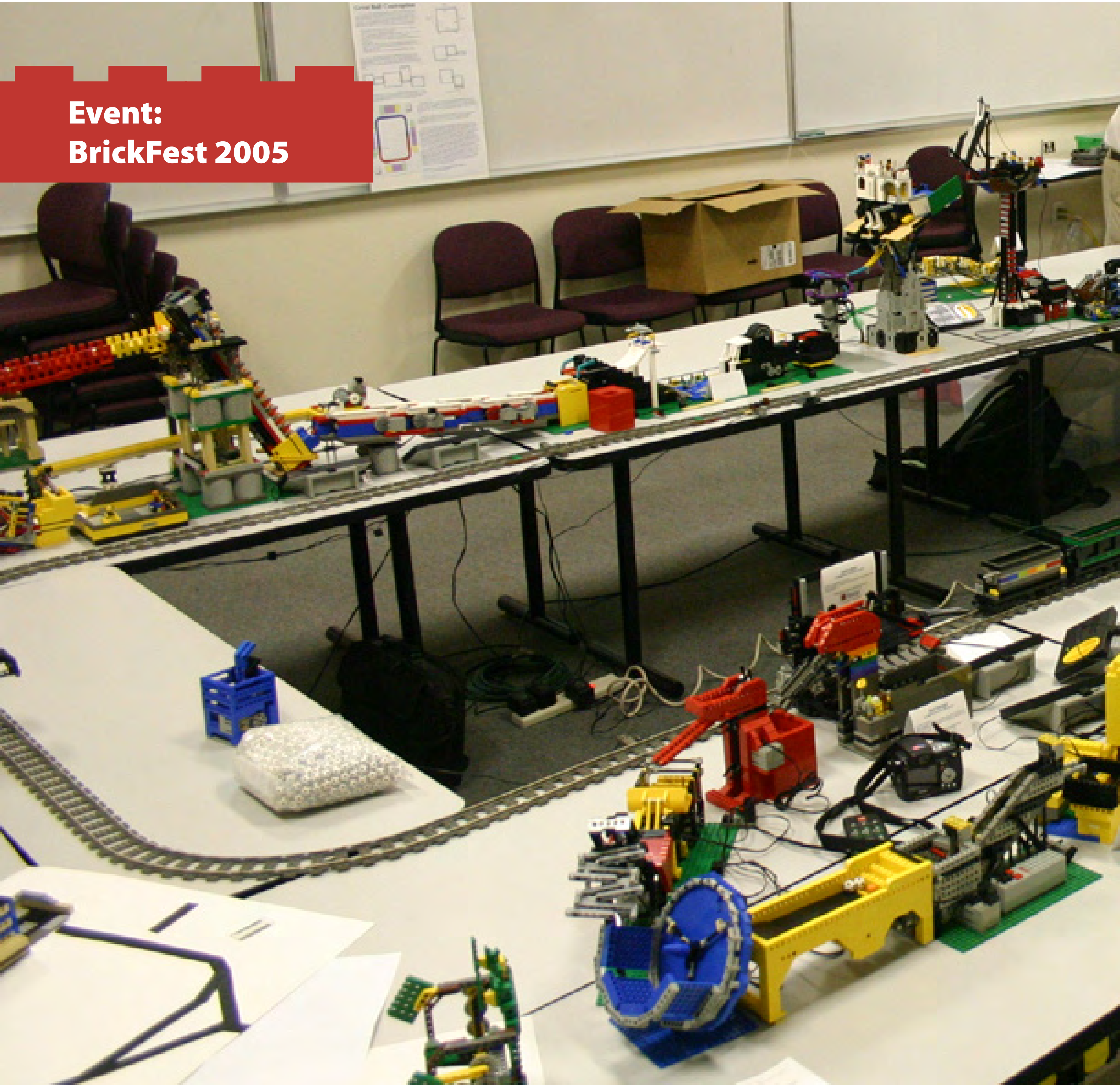




Event:
BrickFest 2005

It's Loud, It Moves, It's the Great Ball Contraption!!

Article by:
Bryan Bonahoom (aka – GBC Slave #2)

Technical Editors:
Steve Hassenplug (aka – GBC Coordinator) & Brian Davis (aka – GBC Slave #1)

Photos by Steve Hassenplug except where noted

Introducing the Great Ball Contraption

The Great Ball Contraption, or GBC as it is known to many, began in December 2004 as the brain child of Steve Hassenplug from the Lafayette Lego Robotics Club (LafLRC) of Lafayette, Indiana. But if you talk to Steve, you will find out that its roots lay farther back than you would think.

It all started with the Ping-Pong ball handoff, which was a LafLRC event where ping-pong balls were passed from one module to the next. Then, the Seattle Mindstorms and Robotic Techies (SMART) created their Cooperative Cybernetic Crate Contraption. The Crate Contraption had some pretty vague requirements that defined the machine.

GBC Setup at BrickFest

Builders could create very unique areas, and then define an interface which best suited that area. This created different interfaces between sections; however it didn't offer much flexibility. The wide open design keeps the Crate Contraption from looking segmented, because there are no clear dividing lines between sections, but, it also makes it difficult to change which sections interact, and almost impossible to add or remove sections, without redesigning the whole machine. Because of that, all of the sections must be very well-tested and reliable.

After BrickFest 2004, Steve wanted to create a community project that Mindstorms & Technic builders could participate in, which wasn't a competition. He didn't want to limit participation. He didn't want to have a "defined" machine. He didn't want just

(continued on next page)

the Mindstorms "experts" to participate. He envisioned a reconfigurable machine that anyone of any skill level could build and showcase their creation (or module as they have come to be known).

First GBC module ever made, built by Steve Hassenplug

Thus, the Great Ball Contraption was born.

In December 2004, Steve began work on a standard, or set of rules, that defines how modules can be combined together to form a GBC. He got input from other members of the LafLRC and began working with the club to refine the standard. Over the next several months, the GBC caught on with the LafLRC and was featured in the monthly meeting several times with modules created by builders from 8 to 50 years of age.

A GBC module simply moves Lego soccer balls (or basketballs) from its inbox to the inbox of the next module at an average rate of at least 1 ball per second. Usually, a GBC module consists of an input bin, at least one lift mechanism and at least one drop mechanism. There are constraints to ensure module to module interconnectivity. But, there is no limitation on how to make the balls move within a module. That is the "secret" of the GBC. Anyone can create a module that does anything.

What we haven't quite pinpointed is exactly when the GBC broke free and really gained a "life of its own". We think it happened sometime in April 2005 at a gathering of adult Mindstorms enthusiasts in Denmark. That's when the specification (now posted on the internet) was spread around and translated into other languages for people to see. Or, maybe it was when GBC was announced as an arm of BrickFest. Now, just like castles, trains, space and all the other themes, GBC was going to be a theme.

Brian Davis with a GBC at House of Bricks
Photo by Joe Meno

Was GBC really ready? Had there been enough experimental setups with enough modules to make it meaningful? Would there be enough participation to make a GBC worth seeing?

The GBC Team worried about all of these things. So, Brian Davis took the lead on making the first public participation GBC. This was hosted in May 2005 at the House of Bricks (HoB) show in Chicago, Illinois. While participation was limited, it gave Brian Davis and me, Bryan Bonahoom (the unsuspecting future GBC Slaves) a chance to run modules for longer than 15 minutes to an hour with a handful of balls. The GBC was set up and ran for hours with modules simply added to the end of the machine as they arrived. Plus, with more modules running and the GBC "loop" closed by a train delivering balls from the end of the machine back to the start, we were able to run with several hundred balls in the machine.

The knowledge gained by doing the HoB display was invaluable to the Team in preparing for what would turn out to be a much larger challenge than any of us ever imagined in August 2005…more on that later…

The knowledge gained at HoB was that reliability was the key to everything. Reliability issues included dropped balls, ball jams in the input bins, jamming of the lift mechanisms, ball jams in the drop mechanisms, RCXs that automatically shut off, and more dropped balls. We concluded we needed higher reliability in the modules or we would go crazy if we ever set up a larger display. So, several modules went back to the drawing board after that day.

Setting Up The Great Ball Contraption's First Big Public Display

Even though the GBC had shown its face at LafLRC meetings and at the HoB show, participation was limited. GBC was going to have the opportunity to shine or flop at BrickFest 2005.

The first thing the team considered in BrickFest preparation was there needed to be some amount of infrastructure. The problem we faced was that infrastructure was just that – structure. And, the more we had, the less flexibility there would be with the

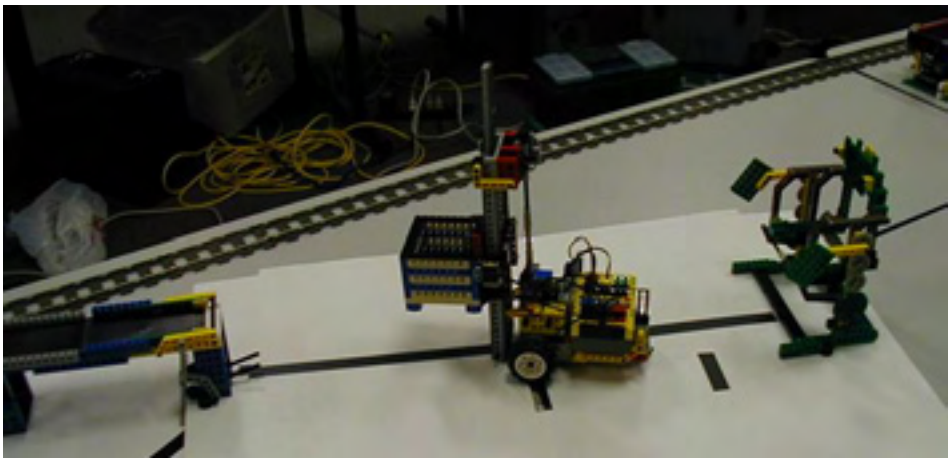
GBC. So, the team agreed on four things:

1) The GBC would run in a circle

2) A train running in a loop inside of the GBC would be the "backbone" to move balls between the GBC sections.

3) Though the GBC was set up as a loop, it would be divided into sections so that a section could be bypassed by the train if a major breakdown occurred.

4) We would need a lot of power strips to power the GBC modules

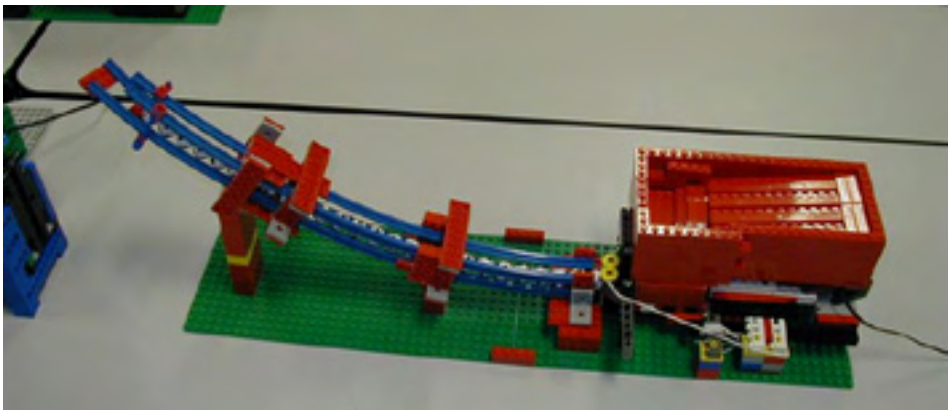


Brian Davis' GUS; a GBC forklift

Most of the infrastructure was pretty simple to set up. The train, however, was a challenge.

Running the train to move balls was not a new concept, but significant modifications were required. First, the train had previously acted as a GBC module. Now, it needed the ability to bypass sections of the GBC. Plus, the track would be significantly longer than it had previously been. Thus, a single train operating on the track was unable to meet the throughput rate of 1 ball per second. So, the train setup was complicated further by the addition of a second train on the track. We'd need to electrically isolate the track and keep the two trains in separate electrical sections of the track. With both trains running with two hopper cars each, the train would be capable of meeting the 1 ball per second requirement with an 80 foot length and bypass capability.

Later, Steve and Brian developed multiple train control programs in their RCXs to run the trains. Sensors were added to detect when a train would enter or leave an isolated section of track. So after another weekend of testing, the GBC train was deemed ready to support a large scale GBC.



Ondrew Hartigan's module from BrickFest

GBC at BrickFest

So on August 11th we all hit the road to BrickFest. Two full SUVs, a minivan and a full size van were needed to haul the BrickFest equipment from Indiana alone. After 10 hours in the car driving to Arlington, Virginia, the team met at George Mason University. The BrickFest organizers had provided a 30 by 60 foot room (the size of a 9 car garage) and we were all excited that there would be plenty of space to set up and run the GBC.

Most of the infrastructure was set up Thursday evening with the remainder completed early Friday morning. Tables were set up in a 100 foot oval. 100 feet was plenty of room for the modules, right?

The team set up power strips that amounted to about 40 outlets. 40 outlets would be more than enough plugs, right?

There were 10 feet of open space around every side of the GBC. 10 feet was plenty of space, right?

Satisfied with the setup, we brought in the modules. Then on Friday, the rest of the BrickFest participants showed up. And, out came more modules. Then on Saturday, some stragglers showed up. And, out came more modules.

By the time ALL of the modules were assembled on the tables, the GBC was no longer a simple line of modules that was obviously divided into sections. Sections melded together. The modules zigzagged back and forth so they would all fit on the tables. The outlet strips were all full. And there were still some modules that weren't in the lineup.

Kevin McClure's Space Shuttle; a very popular module from BrickFest

The final tally included 30 different people with 45 modules. The team was thrilled with the participation. What we didn't know was just how much work it would take to run the GBC for the 3 days of BrickFest . Luckily we had a dozen people that were willing to volunteer their time to keep the GBC running, not to mention picking up balls that got on the floor somehow.

Throughout Friday and Saturday, different sections of the GBC ran. Some parts could run more than others as we attempted to group the higher reliability modules in a section and higher maintenance modules into their own sections. The team was having a lot of fun and the spectators seemed to get a real charge out of seeing the GBC in action.

On Sunday, the gates opened to the public at 10:30 AM and the fun really began. We turned on the GBC at 10:30 AM. By 11:00 AM, word had started to progress around BrickFest and the room began filling up. At the 12:00 PM show, the room was filled with a line at the door. At the 1:00 PM show, you could no longer move in the room. At 1:45 PM, the room filled up for the 2:00 PM show.

The air conditioning system was overwhelmed by the number of people in the room. It is probably a good thing that the Fire Marshall didn't show up. We tried to keep the GBC running, but it became so hot in the room that we had to shut it off to let motors and RCXs cool down (not to mention the team). It is hard to describe in words the mesmerized looks in people's faces as they watched the GBC. Some were looks of awe. Some were looks of "I can do this too". Some looks revealed that there are still many ideas and concepts for GBC modules that have yet to be realized.

A crowd of people watching Rafe and his award winning module at BrickFest

The Great Ball Contraption made a great debut at BrickFest. Not to take away from the many amazing displays in the other areas, but the GBC seemed to come alive with thousands of soccer balls and moving parts. And yet, so many modules grabbed attention with their simplistic elegance. The GBC has truly been born to a life of its own. It doesn't take Steve Hassenplug to make it work. Anyone can put together a set of modules in a circle and they have a GBC. Clubs can create them. Individuals can create them. GBC has something to offer anyone that wants to use their imagination.

We hope that you can make the time to create your own module(s) and feel the excitement of the GBC for yourself.

GBC Awards *(photos by John Barnes)*

Best Module

Title: GBC Module
Builder: Rafe Donahue

Best Themed Module

Title: Pirates
Builder: Jordan and Graham Bradford

Most Extreme Module

Title: Stargate
Builder: Jean-Marc Détraz

Acknowledgements

The credit for GBC is rightly given to Steve Hassenplug. But Steve wouldn't feel right unless we tried to acknowledge all those that helped make GBC a success. Credit for the GBC success goes to:

All those people that were willing to spend time creating modules.

The LafLRC for their help in working out the GBC kinks (in particular, Greg Dykstal, Andrew Dykstal and John Brost)

John Barnes - Mindstorms & Technic Room Coordinator at BrickFest

Christina Hitchcock and the BrickFest organizers

All those that helped keep the GBC running at BrickFest (Rafe, Kevin, Greg, Andrew, Ben, Tom, Heather, and Kathie to name a few)

The GBC Slaves: Bryan Bonahoom and Brian Davis – especially Brian Davis for his long efforts in making the train work as well as it did.

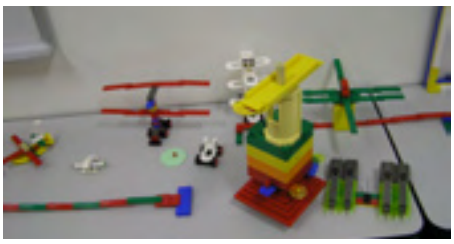
More information is available at http://www.teamhassenplug.org/GBC

A long line of people watching a long line of GBC modules at BrickFest.

Mark your calendar.

August 25-27, 2006
Washington, DC

Details coming soon.



Event: BrickFest 2005

Free Build Room

Coordinators: Augie Thiesing and Patty Van Dyke
Photos by Philip Moyer

Janey Cook asked for volunteers and we answered. She gave us the Free Build Room to moderate. We kept the room open all weekend and there was always someone there building. There were some great MOCs.

On Sunday, the public expo started and soon the room filled with children playing and their parents relaxing around the periphery. They stayed for over an hour and the room started to get crowded. We instituted a time period at the end of which we asked them to see other exhibits and let other people in the room. I also made sure that every child's MOC made it onto a table. It made them part of the exhibit and they were not upset when they had to leave. Boys and Girls gleefully played with the bricks while Augie put down some Duplo which was enjoyed by young children and their parents alike.

The entire public expo was spent in a relaxed atmosphere of creative building. No crying, screaming, or throwing. The tables in the room were completely covered in MOCs from the public.

Some comments were:

"This was not here last year, it's a good idea."

"You've got the best job in the whole show."

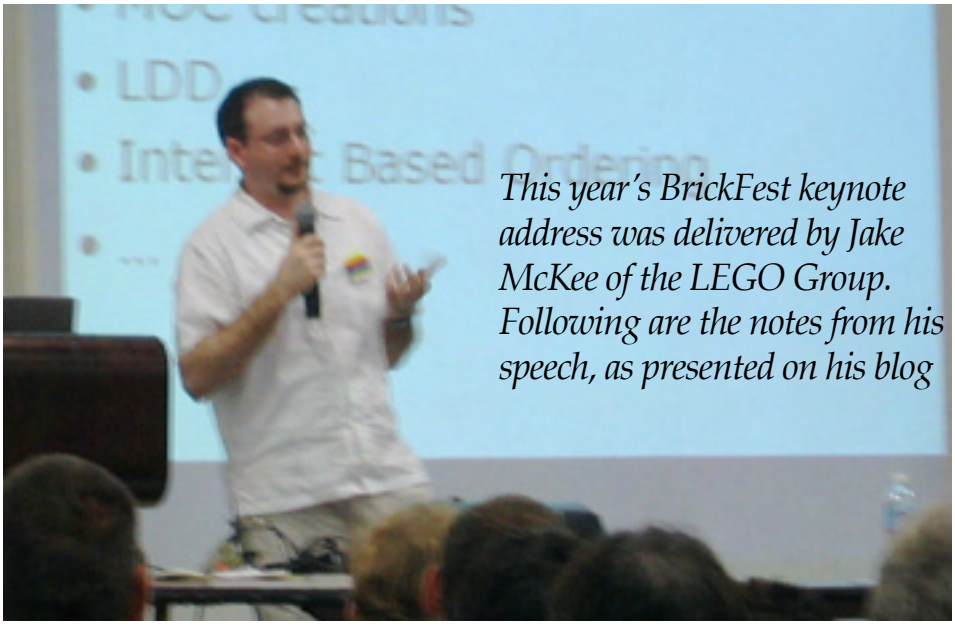
"It's great that the kids can come in here and play when they can't touch the Displays."

"We came last year, do you always have BrickFest here?"

Editor's note: There were awards given for best models, unfortunately, the builders were not documented.

Event:
BrickFest 2005

Jake McKee's Keynote Notes



This year's BrickFest keynote address was delivered by Jake McKee of the LEGO Group. Following are the notes from his speech, as presented on his blog

Photo by Rob Doucette

It's only been recently that I've started writing real speech notes. I still rarely follow them exactly, or even all that close. I really use the notes as a way of organizing what I really want to make sure gets across. Below is the notes I used for this year's keynote. If you're interested in hearing how this translated to the actual speech, you can download the podcast of the actual keynote audio at Bricksinmypocket.org. Thanks to Steven [Combs] for podcasting that!

Wow, six years! I can't believe that BrickFest has been going on for 6 years. It really does seem like only a few months ago I attended my first, and here we are 5 years later. Once again, Christina [Hitchcock] and the BrickFest team have pulled off an incredible event.

I know that each year I say that things are getting better and better for the relations between the community and the company, but the fact that Jørgen Vig and Kjeld both came from Billund specifically to attend BrickFest for the first time should truly show how far we've come.

Before I dive into the Community Update, let me first give a few quick updates. Since we're tight on time, please feel free to grab me afterwards to ask about details.

Vikings

I'm happy to announce that Vikings will be hitting TRU (Toys R' Us) stores in North America in early October. Around the end of the year, Shop At Home will also be shipping them in North America.

New Team Member

I'm happy to announce that I've been able to hire AFOL team member number 3 – Steve Witt. Steve has been interning with me since May, and will go full-time on the first of September when his internship ends. Together with myself and Jan Beyer, we have built a solid team to increasingly support the AFOLs inside and outside the company. Be sure to say hi to Steve while you're here. Just be nice – he's still new!

Jake's Blog

If you haven't seen it yet, be sure to check out my LEGO blog – www.bricksonthebrain.com/blog. I've been trying to share the behind-the-scenes story of what's happening with the AFOL group, as well as with the company. I'm updating mostly daily, so check in often.

Now, on with the program!

Breaking down the walls

When I first started with LEGO Direct, and was being trained on the mission of the business unit, we had a goal to "blur the lines". Part of the LEGO Direct mission would be to break down the walls between the "outside" and the "inside" to the point where you couldn't really tell where the community stopped and the company started. When the LEGO Community Team was formed in late 2002, our mission was to formally implement that vision.

Connecting the Players

But with all successes comes questions. Now that the walls are being torn down, what's next? What does it matter if the lines between outside and inside are blurred if we're not doing anything with that new found interaction?

2005 has been dubbed the year of "Connecting the Players". Our mission this year has been to:

Create connections between adult hobbyists and the appropriate colleagues to begin to fully integrate the fan community with the internal community

We're doing this in three ways:

- Formalize
  Create a number of official LEGO programs that help provide a solid, trusted platform for interaction.

- Strengthen
  Continue to help build and grow existing relationships between adult hobbyists and TLG employees who have already been working together
- Expand
  Find new ways to connect adult hobbyists and TLG employees, as well as working to expand the product offerings for adult hobbyists

Since we have so little time today, I thought the best way to discuss these activities in further detail would be to outline in them on my blog in the coming weeks.

But this idea of blurring the lines doesn't just apply to company > AFOL community interaction. It also applies to product design.

More than 6 years ago, we started down a path that will reach a realization, and a beginning, at the end of this month - turning the factory over to consumers of all ages.

At the end of this month, the LEGO Factory Web site will re-launch, with the ability to create, share, and buy your models as well as models from other consumers.

While it's taken many steps to get here, this is far from the final step in this process. In fact, this is just the kick off to what will be an amazing future of consumer generated content and empowerment.

The History

Before we start talking about the future, let's reflect a moment on the past. As I mentioned, there have been many steps taken to get to the point we're at now.

With the creation of LEGO Direct at the end of 1999, there was a task to more deeply integrate the consumer into the LEGO Company. From a product perspective, the goal was to empower consumers to be able to create what they wanted, and share it how they liked. But we had to prove certain assumptions, and test certain theories first.

With LEGO Mosaic in 2000, we established the theory that consumers wanted to, and were able to design things on their own, and that we could fulfill based on a "bagged" concept.

With the My Own Train in 2001, we showed that chunks of customization, as well as "personalized" models were of interest to the consumer base.

With the MOC series, like the Blacksmith Shop and the Santa Fe train cars, we saw a consumer demand for interesting sets built by other consumers. We also were able to work through Legal issues involved with working on designs from consumers.

With the introduction of LEGO Digital Designer, we were able to prove that kids and adults alike were not only willing, but able to build virtual LEGO models.

Heck, even the creation of the LEGOshop.com site was as much a test of Internet commerce as anything.

And interestingly, most of these steps had AFOL involvement along the way – whether from Eric Harshbarger's design of the Mosaic software, or James Mathis and Dan Siskind's model design, or the group of 10 fans who helped the team sell the micro city concept internally last year.

LEGO Factory - http://www.legofactory.com

At the end of this month, we'll be launching the new LEGO Factory site – a true revolution in our product platform. Users will be able to use LDD to build and upload their models, which can then be purchased by the creator or other consumers.

The key here is the concept of a "product platform". Being able to allow consumers, or LEGO designers alike the ability to create models in a quick, relatively free-form fashion is a powerful capability that will create amazing possibilities.

The best thing about this platform is that it no longer locks us into having to choose between a few major, mass market product lines each year. We literally now have the ability, with your help, to deliver a wide array of themed content through LEGO Factory.

LEGO Factory at a Glance
Basically there will be two different ways to approach LEGO Factory – buying other people's models, or uploading your own, and then purchasing them too if you like.

August Launch
Here's a quick example of what this will look like.

Trains in Europe
As an example, let's look at the LEGO Trains product line. Clearly this is a popular theme with AFOLs, and as such it's extremely important to ensure that the line continues to live on well into the future.

But market influences pushed us last fall to look at the trains line and how to keep it competitive in Europe, where both LEGO and the LEGO trains were loosing major ground to our competition. All of our market research and consumer feedback was telling us that consumer demand was for products skewed closer to 5-6 in age, something we unfortunately haven't had in our assortment. Modifying the product line to be 5+ friendly would require some reimagining of the line, including switching to the more common R/C control standard, as well as increasing the contents of the items in the box.

With a Play Train, a train for young children, the desire is to have a self-contained unit. With a Hobby train, the type of train that the current 9v system is, the concept is focused more on modularity.

The question became – how do we address two needs at once?

LEGO Train Factory

Until now, the reality has been that we've had to make hard choices – our single design platform was the themed sets you're all familiar with.

In this case we would have had to choose whether to support the younger kids market, or to support the adult market. The problem would have been that no matter which direction we went in, we'd be coming up short somewhere.

But with the introduction of the LEGO Factory platform, we have the ability to deliver to both audiences.

Next summer, we will introduce new trains products targeted to kids 5+. This line won't be a "new" line, but rather an extension of the existing 9v system. Unlike the transition from 4.5v to 12v and from 12v to 9v, this extension has been through considered, and has included AFOLs in the process to make sure that we end up with something that's good for both kids and adults.

Preliminary Wagon Design
This is just a test shot of what one of the models might look like. As you can see, the overall system is highly similar to what you're familiar with. The key here is that we didn't want to develop something complete foreign to the LEGO system, rather we wanted something that was familiar to the LEGO System.

Since we're nearly a year away from launch, I can't share anything but this preliminary model shot, but there'll be more coming in the future.

Non-Powered Track
A very expensive part of the 9v production process is the metal rails. Combining that fact with a desire to move to an R/C system for controlling the trains, it was clear that we needed to create all plastic rails in order to remain competitive.

But as you can see, we've actually made sure the non-powered rails continue to work with the existing metal rails. And, to be clear, the metal 9v rails will continue to be produced and sold through our official channels.

Remote Baseplate Sensor

In order to control the trains since they won't be picking up power from the rails, we needed a R/C solution. As you can see here, with some minor additions to the standard LEGO Train baseplate, we've added a R/C IR sensor. Specs are still being worked on the remote device, and how many channels will be on the R/C controller.

As you can see, we've gone to great lengths to develop something interesting to kids, but usable by adults as well.

Now, all that said, I know you're probably asking "what happens to the 9v system". Let me be clear that we're not moving away from the 9v electronic system – quite the opposite. It will continue to be sold much in the same fashion it's sold today. The powered rails, power leads, and controller are all here to stay.

In fact, we've been working with a small group of AFOLs under non-disclosure agreements since October to get feedback and input into the process to make sure that AFOL input was included from the early stages of development. We've been calling the group "Signal".

The most creative hobby train system in the world

In fact, when we first started talking

about the best way to balance two related but separate train lines, we quickly latched onto the idea that we wanted to create "The most creative hobby train system in the world".

The key is that we've started differentiating the two implementations as the Play Train and the Hobby Train. Rather than trying to balance the line between kids and older enthusiasts, we thought it would be better to address each specifically.

And when we talk about a Hobby Train System, we weren't satisfied simply doing more of what we'd done in the past – we wanted to help to move the overall hobby forward.

And that's where LEGO Factory comes in.

LEGO [Train] Factory evolution
Like I mentioned before, LEGO Factory isn't just a product theme – it's a product design platform. It allows us to easily create incredible support for a theme or concept without having to rely on the slow and expensive infrastructure of the standard product development process.

Next year, we will launch a customized version of LEGO Factory specifically designed for trains. LEGO Train Factory will allow for an unlimited number of train designs to be created, shared, and purchased by fans of all ages all around the world.

The 9v system will never have had this many products out at once. And of course, it doesn't end at a LEGO Train Factory – there's no reason this concept, once established and proven couldn't be used in similar ways for other themes.

As I mentioned earlier, there was a series of steps that lead us to where we are today with our customized product concept. We've been working on this for at least 6 years. Imagine what happens when we look six years ahead of where we're at now…

LEGO Factory Launch Details
As with all of the many steps that brought us to where we are today with LEGO Factory, we'll be taking a series of steps to get to LEGO Train Factory as well.

Obviously, we don't want to rush into LEGO Train Factory, until we've learned lessons from main LEGO Factory launching in a few weeks.

Additionally, the next big learning we need to find, through LEGO Train Factory, is how to best choose the parts palette. We've been working with the Signal group to help select the first palette to be used, but that palette will likely morph over time as we see which parts are truly crucial to building trains.

Early next year, we will launch a contest, similar to the micro building LEGO Factory contest from earlier this year. The challenge will be to build the best locomotives and train wagons you can – with one of each being produced as an official LEGO set late next year.

In addition, we will also be launching a set we've been calling the Ultimate Train Builders set – a bulk brick set based on the trains palette used for the initial rollout of the LEGO Train Factory.

LEGO Factory – LEGO Fan forum
http://www.legofan.org

I'm sure there's going to be a great many questions about all of this, and I'm working with the LEGO Fan team to get a LEGO Factory specific forum setup on legofan.org. This forum will allow you to ask questions not only of me, but of the LEGO Factory program manager as well.

I'll also be blogging quite a bit about all of this in the coming months, so stay tuned.

Questions
Certainly there was a potential for disaster as the discussion of creating a Play train started a year ago. But through work with and for the AFOL community, we were able to turn something potentially harmful to the community into something with a great deal of promise.

Reference Links
LEGO Factory - www.legofactory.com
LEGO Fan - http://www.legofan.org

MECHA

Theme Coordinator: Jeff Stembel
Photos by Jeff Stembel, Philip Moyer and Joe Meno

An extension of the Space theme, Mecha models are most commonly giant robots. Inspiration for these are predominately from Japanese animation (anime), such as the Gundam series of videos and movies.

Mecha at BrickFest diversified, which was reflected in the models that won awards - some were minimecha (power armor), and one a transformer, and one in particular had a very humorous take on Thomas the Train. There were also walkers and more organic appearing models.

Best of Show

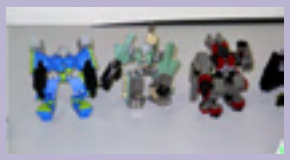
Title: Multiped Mecha
Builder: Patrick Bunn

Best Large Mecha

Title: Voltrain
Builder: Adrian Drake

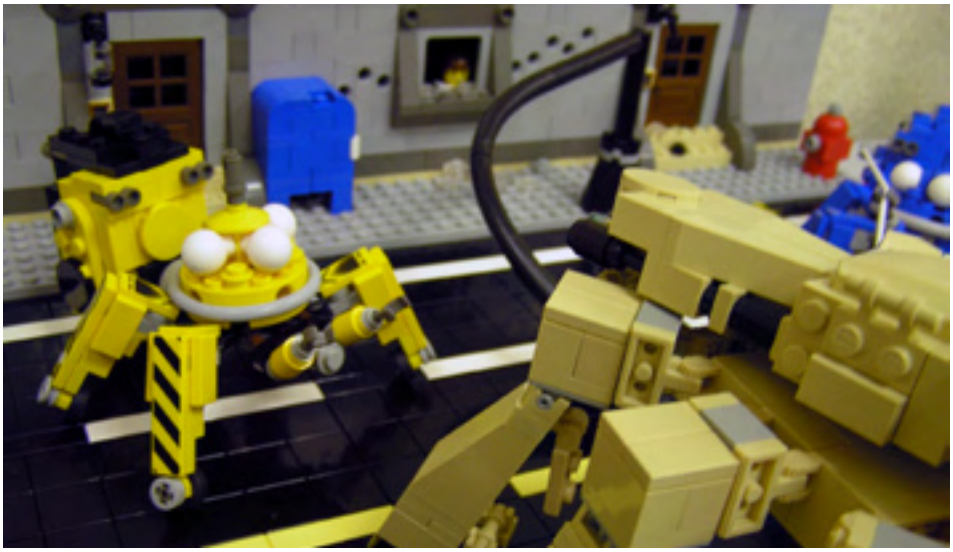
Best Medium Mecha

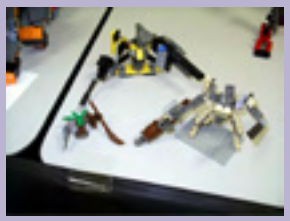
Title: Voltrain
Builder: Adam Silcott



Best Small Mecha

Title: Power Armor
Builder: Kyle Vrieze



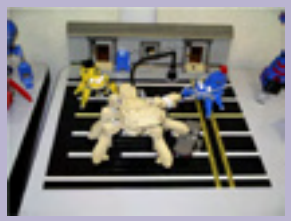


Best Micro Mecha

Title: Bots
Builder: Lee Magpili

Best Mecha Support Model

Title: The Aggressor
Builder: Kyle Vrieize



Best Diorama

Title: Tachikomas vs. Spider Tank
Builder: Jeremiah VanderMark

Event:
BrickFest 2005

Good Things in Small Packages: Micro and Vignette Building

Micro and Vig Coordinator:
Janey "Red Brick" Cook

This year, the Micro and Vignette Room demonstrated without a doubt, that old phrase "Good things come in small packages!" is indeed very true. The creations displayed were outstanding and the growth and development in both of these categories is astonishing.

There are many benefits to building small. It allows builders to get very creative without destroying their hobby budget and invites participation from those builders that do not have an overwhelmingly large collection of bricks to build from. Size restraints can allow builders to practice, develop and showcase new building techniques or delve into a theme that is new for them. Both Micro and Vignette are perfect for builders to still participate in the displaying aspect of BrickFest when they are limited to space constraints due to flying or travelling great distances. Both offer different kinds of building challenges, such as selective compression, wise use of parts and experiments in techniques such as SNOT (studs not on top) building.

Micro building covers any theme and is typically built in any scale that is noticeably smaller than standard minifig scale. For the sake of continuity, the BrickFest Micro Display encourages, but does not limit builders to construct in scale where a real person is represented by the size of a mere one by one round brick. There was a excellent selection of MOCs (my own creations) presented this year, from every theme possible including replicas of famous buildings and landmarks. The room boasted a large Micro moonbase, inspiring Space creations, detailed Historical and Castle buildings, layouts, and vessels. As well as many Town themes, from modern city scapes to traditional and not so traditional farm and country life. Some of the layouts even incorporated moving elements such as cable cars and operational two stud wide trains.

The Micro room hosted the second annual "Micro MOC OFF!" Contest which was judged by popular vote. The voting was tight as there were many outstanding contributions. The winners of the "Micro MOC OFF!" contest are as follows; Judy Miller won 'Best Building' with her colourful and beautiful rendition of St. Basils. Bram Lambrecht transported Micro moonbase to new heights, literally and figuratively, with his amazing contributions to the display, notably taking the 'Best Space' award two years in a row. Edward Kohl won 'Best Castle' with his extremely detailed representation of Tower of London complete with elaborate grounds. Scott Quirk was voted 'Best Vehicle' with his well designed pirate ship. Jason Allemann was awarded 'Best Layout' with his humourous farm complete with home, barn, train, and of course, crop circles and a pathetic cow being abducted by a space ship. 'Best of Show' was awarded to Douglas Brod and Summer Sheng for their extremely impressive and expansive Future City, which used many unusual and uncommon parts in very interesting ways.

Micro Awards, voted by BrickFest attendees:

Micro Scale Best of Show

Title: Future City
Builder: Douglas Brod and Summer Sheng

Best Space Micro Model

Title: Micro Moonbase
Builder: Bram Lambrecht

Best Castle Micro Model

Title: Tower of London
Builder: Edward Kohl

Best Medium MOC

Title: Stargate
Builder: Kelly McKiernan

Best Building Micro Model

Title: St. Basils
Builder: Judy Miller

Best Vehicle Model

Title: Pirate Ship
Builder: Scott Quirk

Vignettes also cover any theme but builders are limited to keeping their design to a small sized baseplate. Typically Vignettes are eight studs by eight studs (although this can vary to some degree) but the builder is not restricted to any height requirements. These little Vignettes, or "Vigs" are a perfect way to show a small slice of life, a sculptural photograph or a moment in time. Often they display elements of humour or other emotions. The Vignettes at BrickFest varied in design and style and covered many interesting topics such as the LEGO hobby itself and real or fictitious moments from television, movies, novels or great works of literature. Many of the Vignettes featured the builder themselves, in LEGO format referred to as "Sig Figs". Sig Figs, or Signature Figs, is a LEGO Minifig that is sometimes referred to as a Minifig avatar or the alter ego of the builder. They often look like or in some way are a representation of the builder.

Vignettes made their debut at BrickFest this past year and the room hosted a contest named "Vig This!" which was also balloted by popular vote. There were five awards given out for this contest. The themes and winners are as follows; Jude Beaudin won 'Most Humourous' for his rendition of a not so humourous situation called 'Burning Sensation'. Scott Quirk was awarded 'Most Contemplative' for his entire collection of 'BrickBard Vignettes'. Magnus Lauglo won 'Most Intricate' for his castle Vignette named 'Under Siege!' Curt Werline was awarded 'Best Sig Fig' for his MOC titled 'Shades of Grey?' and Adrian Drake won 'Best of Show' with his collection of James Bond Vignettes called 'Death of a Super Agent'.

Over the last two years, fans have seen both Micro and Vignette not only grow in popularity but also grow in complexity and style. As the caliber of each of these small MOCs develop, only time will tell us just how far the talented builders that have embraced these themes will push the limits as they discover, adapt and progress within the constraints and rewards of building small.

Vignette Best of Show

Title: Death of a Super Agent
Builder: Adrian Drake

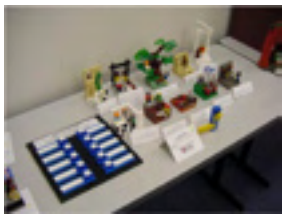
Vignette Awards, voted by BrickFest attendees:

Best Significant Figure

Title: Shades of Grey?
Builder: Curt Werline

Most Humorous Vignette

Title: Burning Sensation
Builder: Jude Beaudin

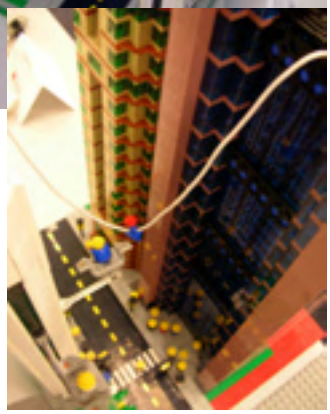


Most Contemplative Vignette

Title: BrickBard Vignettes
Builder: Scott Quirk

Most Intricate Vignette

Title: Under Siege
Builder: Magnus Lauglo



Event:
BrickFest 2005

Sculpture & Mosaic: Making LEGO Art

Sculpture/
Mosaic Coordinator:
Felix Greco
Award Photos by Joe Meno

BrickFest has been, for many themes, a benchmark from which the standard of building in the community is continually improved. Sculpture and mosaic, likewise, are experiencing rapid growth as new challenges and advances have been made. New pieces, colors, and building techniques have increased the pallet with which one has to work with. Sculpture and mosaic are two themes in which the limits of this new pallet can be tested without constraint to theme or subject.

Among the crowd favorites was William Hutchison's coral reef, an outstanding display of how color can be used to maximum effect. David Winkler used his 'Automated Brick Layout' to create astonishing sculptures. His sculpture *Angel* won the Best Sculpture award. Tommy Armstrong, well known for his brick engraving skills, has pushed the limits of brick modification. This year at BrickFest, he revealed a new modification technique in which he used his new WoodStitches® which are LEGO bricks with real wood veneer. One mosaic created with these new bricks was a portrait of Kjeld Kristiansen, owner of LEGO, which Kjeld happily autographed during BrickFest.

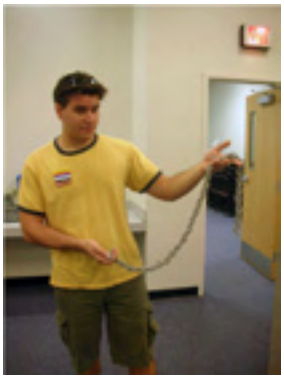
Capturing the 'Best of Show' award for the second consecutive year was Steve DeCramer. His sculpture, *P.O.V. 3*, dominated its own room at BrickFest. Skillfully placed in the room, the casual observer at the entrance might have thought they were seeing a somewhat normal townscape. Moving to different points of the room, however, revealed dramatically different perspectives and environments. Steve's creation was not only an outstanding exercise in great building, but an exquisite example of LEGO as a legitimate artistic medium.

Sculpture and Mosaic has for some time been the 'etcetera' of LEGO building. When an AFOL dedicated to another theme ventured outside of minifig building, the result was often a creation that fell under the broad category of sculpture. Artists such as Hutchison, Winkler, Armstrong, DeCraemer, as well as Judy Miller, Felix Greco, and Jason Wolfson are embracing sculpture and mosaic and showing the limitless potential these themes have to offer.

Awards, voted by BrickFest attendees:

Best Detailing Model

Title: The Seduction
Builder: Felix Greco



Most Intriguing Model

Title: Multiplicity
Builder: Michael Harrod

Best Sculpture

Title: Angel
Builder: David Winkler

Speed Build Mosaic

Winning time: 1 hour 1 minute 1 sec
Winning team: Barbara Ciesinski
Susan Michon

Best Maxifig

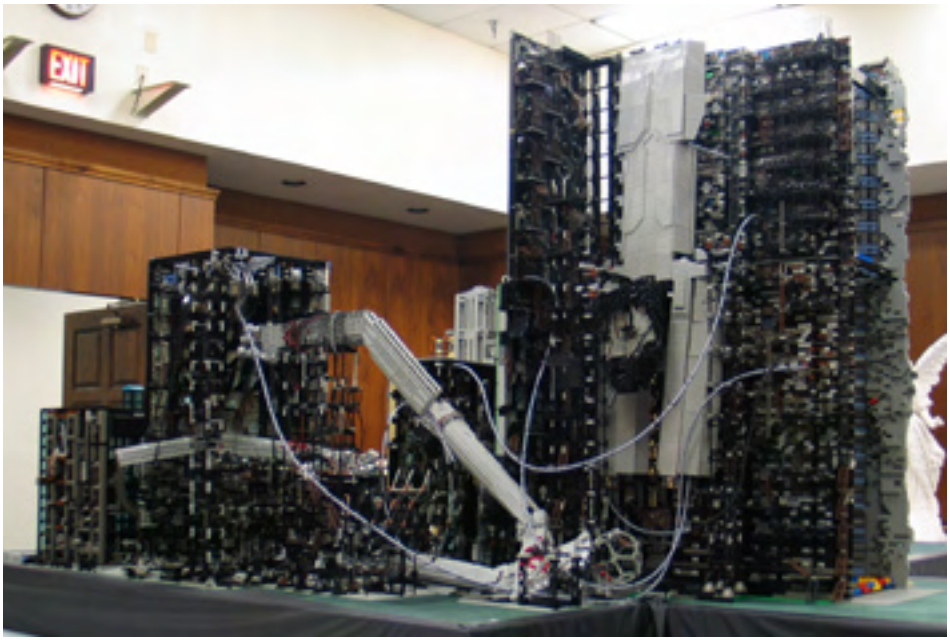
Title: R2-D2
Builder: Mike Boder

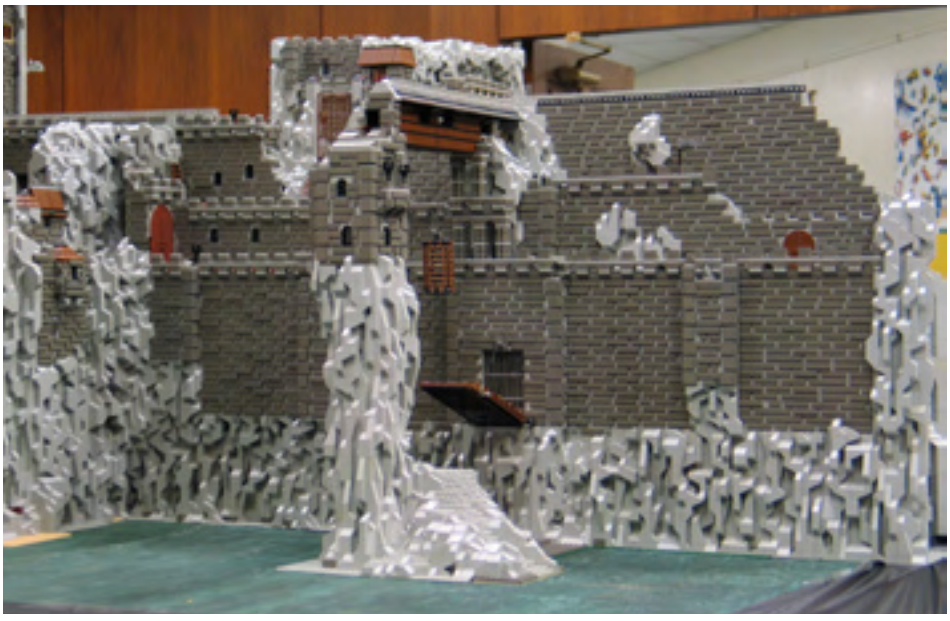
Honorable Mention

Title: Coral Reef
Builder: William Hutchinson

Best Mosaic

Title: Blue Man
Builder: Michael Roberts





Best of Show

Title: P.O.V 3
Builder: Steve DeCraemer
Photos by John Bucy

SPACE!

Coordinators: Lenny Hoffman and Dan Rubin
Report by Dan Rubin. Panorama by Phil Moyer. Photos by Lenny Hoffman, Dan Rubin, and John Bucy

This August, George Mason University (GMU)'s Arlington campus was invaded by the forces of LEGO space. There was no doubt 2005 was a big year for space. The space experience started the moment you entered the first floor of the building and saw LEGO Master Builder Erik Varszegi's eight-foot model of the Venator-class Republic Star Destroyer. But the third floor was where things got really "spaceified". Not limited to a single room any longer, the denizens of space boldly went where no theme had gone before – the third floor lobby of GMU.

At this year's BrickFest, the third floor lobby was transformed into the surface of the moon. Spacers came together to assemble a moonbase layout of four by twenty-three 48x48 stud baseplates—that's five feet by nearly twenty-nine feet! From the bustling spaceport, Soylent Jar-Jar Factory, and two concerts to the zombie-infested Meridiani Planum Nuclear Facility, the moonbase was teeming with life, both live and undead. Spacecraft cruised over the modules and rovers as long as eighteen inches cruised over the surface.

If you think a single lobby and a 92-baseplate moonbase was enough "SPACE!", you underestimate the spirit of the spacer (space builder). The spacers managed to over-fill another room with space creations, spilling Star Wars dioramas and huge spacecraft from the movie "2010", overflowing into the hallways. Within the space room were all manner of MOCs, from bots and Martians, to five-foot long spaceships and a rover that could double as a child's riding toy.

As is the case with any fest, MOCs (My Own Creation(s)) are only half the story, What makes a BrickFest event truly great is the community. Would any get-together of AFOLs be complete without the battlecry of SPACE! being sung from every corner? Without a sphleem or a fleebnork on the badge of a passing attendee? Would a BrickFest be complete without the classic LEGO space logo of the little red ship swooshing around the yellow planet, everywhere from the tip of a MOC to thumbtacks on a session room wall? I submit to you that it would not, that the siren call of space calls to us all, and so, the Fest over, we build.

SPACE!

One of the outstanding models was the Venator, *the Republic attack cruiser that was seen in* Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith. *This was built by Erik Varszegi, a LEGO Master Builder at LEGO America's office in Enfield, Connecticut.*

Over 8 feet long, this was put up for auction on eBay, with proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity's Hurricane Relief Efforts. The final bid was $31,602!

Photo by John Bucy

Event: BrickFest 2005

Awards to models generally less than 50 studs in any direction, voted by attendees of BrickFest

Best Small MOC

Title: Disc Racer
Builder: Bram Lambrecht

2nd Place Small MOC

Title: TA-10 Starhawk
Builder: Fradel Gonzalez

Awards to models generally between 50 and 100 studs in any direction, voted by attendees of BrickFest

2nd Place Medium MOC

Title: Violet Violence
Builder: Patrick Bunn

Best Medium MOC

Title: Stargate
Builder: Kelly McKiernan

Awards to models generally larger than 100 studs in any direction, voted by attendees of BrickFest

2nd Place Large MOC

Title: P.A.R.V
Builder: Dave Eaton

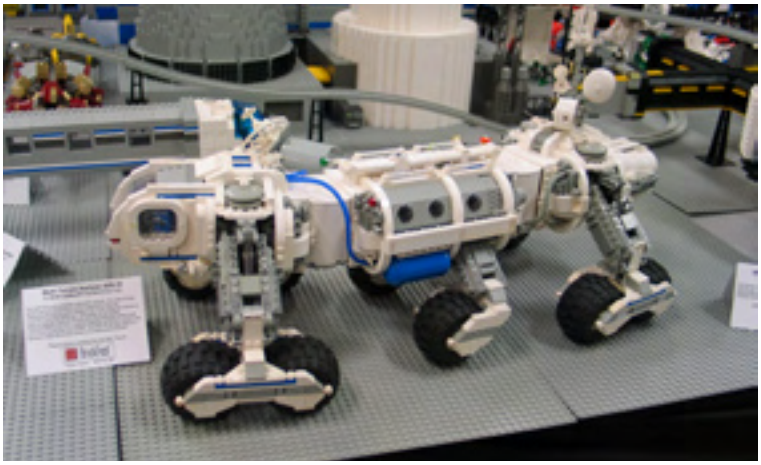
Best Large MOC

Title: Espoir de Lyon
Builder: Daniel Rubin

The History of the Term SPACE!!!!

At BrickFest 2003, Chris Giddens attended BrickFest for the first time. Chris swept the Space awards, winning best small ship, best medium ship, and best large ship. When he won his first award, a few people from the audience shouted "Speech!!". Chris' reply for a speech was simply "SPACE!" Upon winning his second award, his "speech" was a second "SPACE!!" cheer. From that point forward, the "SPACE!" cheer was born. Chris Giddens , a LEGO Ambassador, is well-known in the LEGO Space community, for his creation of fan-based themes, such as "Pre-Classic Space (PCS)", The Star Rangers, and the character of "Captain Fazoom!", who is a contributor to *BrickJournal*.

—Scott Lyttle



An all-terrain vehicle by Bram Lambrecht. Photo by John Bucy

A scene from Revenge of the Sith, *by Galen Fairbanks. Photo by John Bucy*

Space beasts, by Erik Varszegi. Photo by Phil Moyer

Awarded to Moonbase Modules on a single 48 x 48 baseplate, voted by attendees of BrickFest

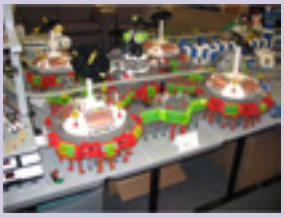
2nd Place Small Moonbase

Title: Sector 9
Builder: Ben Davis

Best Small Moonbase

Title: Rocket Base Phoenix
Builder: Phantom Spaceman

Awarded to Moonbase Modules on two or more 48 x 48 baseplate, voted by attendees of BrickFest



2nd Place Large Moonbase

Title: BrickJournal
Builder: Jim Foulds

Best Large Moonbase

Title: Meridani Planum Nuclear Facility
Builder: Adrian Drake

Awarded to best Moonbase Module endcap - a submodule that covers an open module connector, voted by attendees of BrickFest

Best Moonbase Endcap

Title: Outhouse
Builder: David "Fuzzy" Gregory

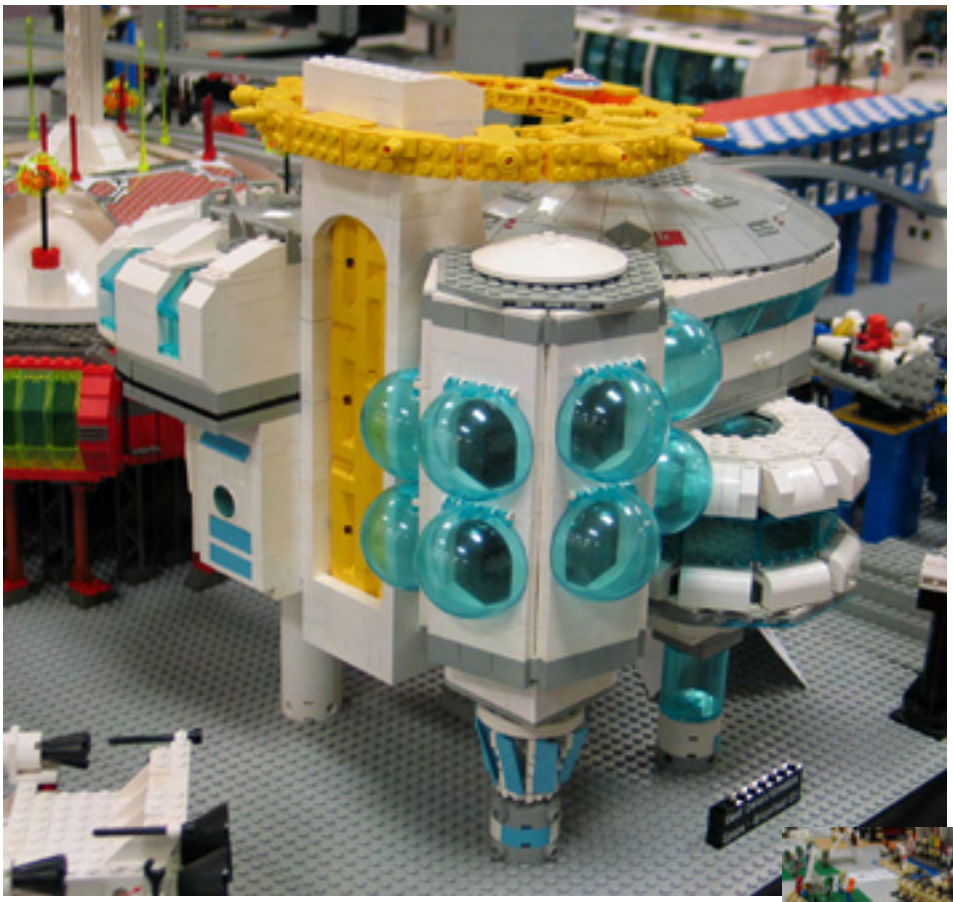
An attack group of 3vil spacecraft, by Mark Sandlin. Photo by John Bucy

The Blacktron Intelligence Agency, a Moonbase complex by Brian Darrow. Photo by John Bucy

A small asteroid field was spotted at BrickFest (Monastery by Dan Rubin). Photo by John Bucy

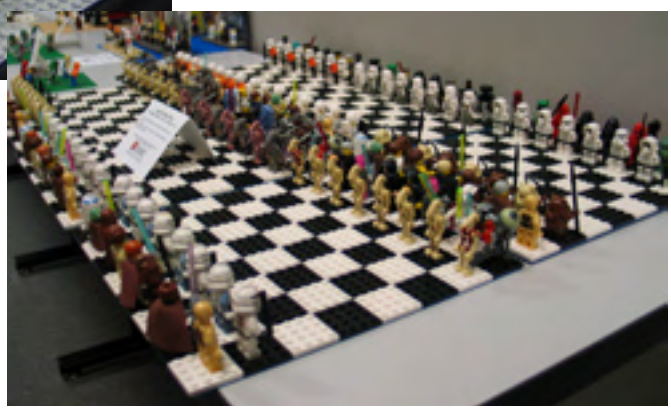
Chris Giddens' Vanguard.
Photo by John Bucy

A closeup of Adrian Drake's award-winning Moonbase Module.
Photo by John Bucy

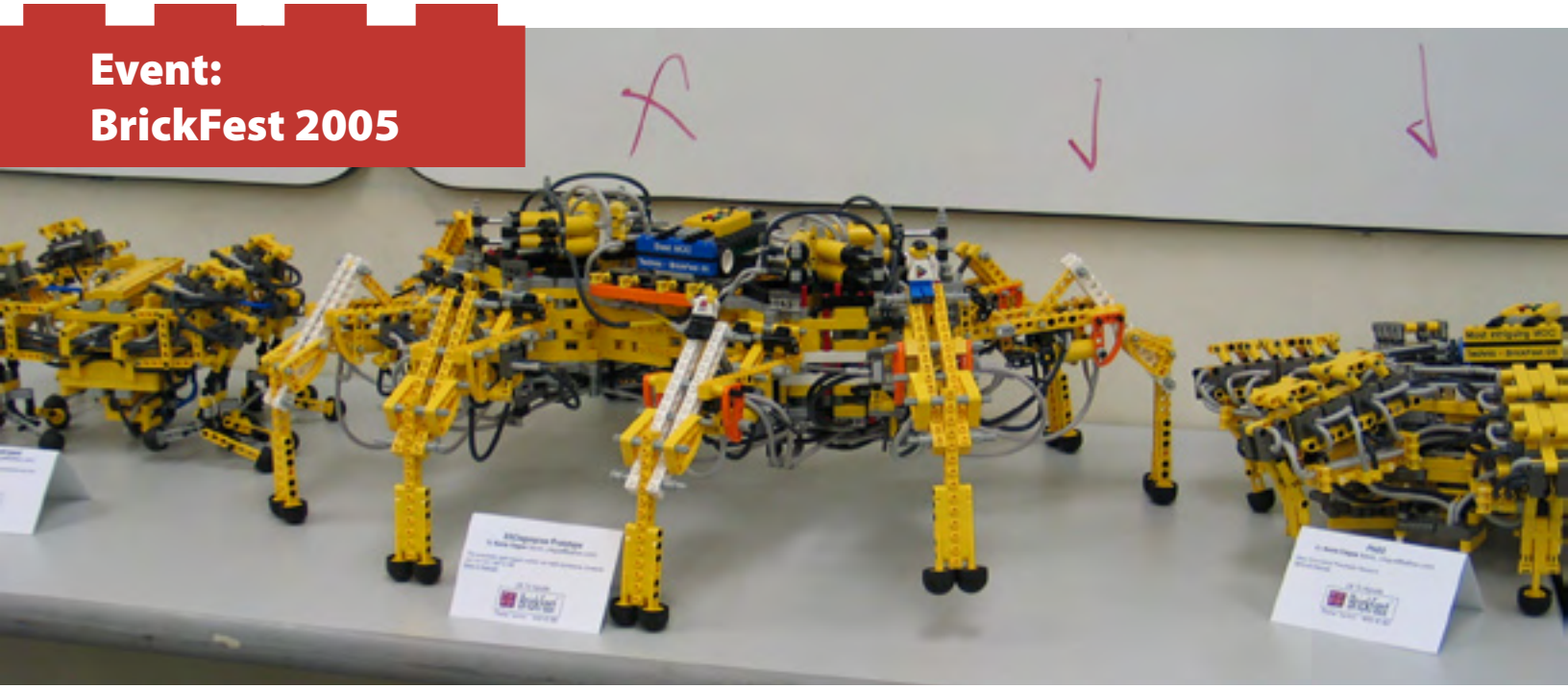


One of the many Moonbase Modules, "Heaven's Kitchen," by Kevin Heckel.
Photo by John Bucy

Dan Rubin's Sword of Michael.
Photo by John Bucy



Star Wars: The Chess Games?
Photo by John Bucy



Technic:
Old and Pneumatic

Mindstorms Challenges Coordinator: John Barnes

This year, the Technic Room was populated by creatures...creatures with two legs, four legs, and more! There was also an inchworm that slinked on the central table. All of these had two things in common: Kevin Clague built them, and they all are powered by pneumatic LEGO elements. By using small hand pumps with each model, a person could have a model crawl, walk, or as in the inchworm's case, bob up an down, all in a creepily lifelike way. He also took the time to show how the models worked to everyone who asked.

Other models included the equipment models of Nathan Bell, which included construction equipment.

Technic also had Mindstorms competitions, which included:

• Mine Rescue - Robots had to 'rescue' a group of minifigs at the bottom of a 30 inch 'mine shaft.' With two identical mines side by side, the competitors were working against each other as well as against the clock.

• Super-Mega Sumo - Robots - Sumo Robots - were put into a ring to push the other off..and there was a MINIMUM size restriction. Size did matter!

• Tag-Team Sumo - Instead of two big Sumo Robots, imagine four small Sumo Robots, entered as pairs to coordinate the defeat of the other team.

Awarded by attendees of BrickFest

Best MOC

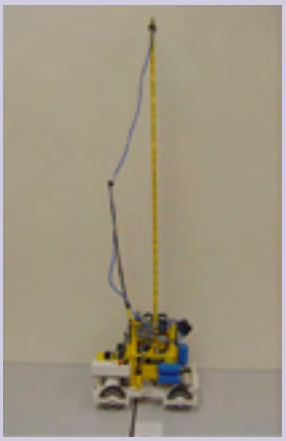
Title: SSGlagorpian
Builder: Kevin Clague

Most Intriguing MOC

Title: PHD2
Builder: Kevin Clague

Tag-Team Sumo Competition Winner DRAW

Title: Flatliner
Builder: Steve Hassenplug
&
Title: Virus
Nate Eckerson



Mine Rescue Competition Winner

Title: Pneumatic Extractor
Builder: Jean-Marc Détraz

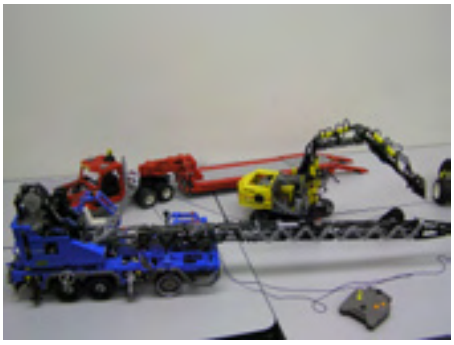
Super-Mega Sumo Competition Results

Melee winner:
Title: Macgyver
Builder: David Schilling

Second Place:

Title: Flatline
Builder: Steve Hassenplug

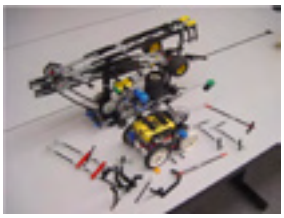
Overall Winner:
Creation: Flash
Builder: Bryan Bonahoom



FIRST LEGO League (FLL)

Coordinator: Bill Duggins
Photos by Rob Doucette

Five teams competed at BrickFest in a FIRST LEGO League competition. Each team built a robot that took on various missions, each with a point value, such as putting a CD away, moving balls to a basket, going up stairs, feeding 'pets,' opening a gate, moving in chairs to a table, move 'food' to the table, and move a pair of glasses...all on a playing field.



FLL 2004 Challenge Competition Winner

Title: BrickBreaker
Builders: Michael Tighe
& Benjamin Tighe

Event:
Brickfest 2005

Train/Town

Coordinators: Pierre Normandin and Steve Barile
Award Photos by Pierre Normandin and Steve Barile
Other Photos by John Bucy

BrickFest 2005 had LEGO train clubs from around the country and Canada converge at George Mason University to show their train and town models, from the vehicles of Pierre Normandin to the layout of the Indianopolis Speedway, built by Brian Darrow, which included full spectator stands.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation also held a contest where over 30 builders built models of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater and other historic landmarks. *(For more information about this competition, you can go to page 62)*

Participating clubs in the layout were QUELUG (Quebec), WamaLUG (Washington, DC), COLTC (Central Ohio), MSLTC, (MidSouth) NCLTC (North Carolina) and IndyLUG (Indiana).

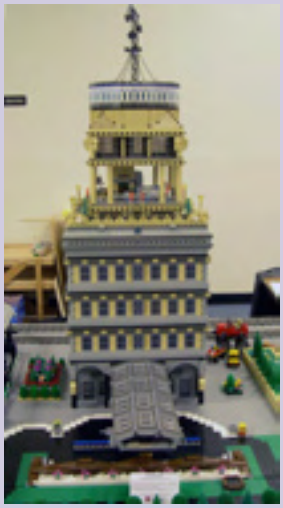
Photo by Philip Moyer

Photo by Philip Moyer

Awards, judged

Best Small Building

Title: Galidor Diner
Builder: Tony Perez



Best Large Building

Title: Sand Hills Hotel
Builder: Geoff Gray

Most Detailed/Realistic

Title: Urban Landscape
Builder: J. Michael Collaco

Best Trackside Structure

Title: Interrail Metro
Elevated Station
Builder: Thomas and David
Michon

Best Small Vehicle

Title: Cement Mixer
Builder: Pierre Normandin

Best Large Vehicle

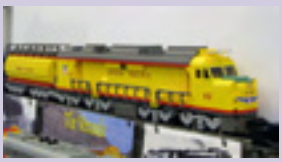
Title: Fire Truck
Builder: Mark Bader

Best Freight Car

Title: Piggyback Flat with
30 foot trailers
Builder: Robin Werner

Best Passenger Train/Coach

Title: O-Train
Builder: Jason Allemann



Best Diesel/Electric Loco

Title: UP Veranda
Builder: Daniel House

Best Steam Engine

Title: Norfolk & Western
Builder: Paul Vastano

Photo by Rob Doucette

Photo by Philip Moyer

Photo by Philip Moyer

Photo by Philip Moyer

Photo by Philip Moyer

Other Awards

Build The Trust:
Honorable Mention For Attention to Detail:
Title: Pope Leighy House
Builder: Todd Thuma

Honorable Mention For Best Reproduction of a Building no Longer Standing:
Title: Drayton Hall
Builder: Ken Rice

Honorable Mentions For Original Concept implemented in LEGO Media:
Title: King Island, Alaska
Builder: Marlise Edwards

Honorable Mentions For Best Use of Gold Bricks:
Title: Gaylord & Co. building (I&M canal scene)
Builder: Larry Pieniazek

Second Place
Title: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Builder: J. Michael Collaco

First Place (tie)
Title: Lyndhurst Castle
Builder: Arthur Gugick

Sand Hills Hotel
Geoff Gray

Grand Prize
Grand Prize Winner, and title of "Master LEGO Preservationist"
Title: Drayton Hall
Builder: Paul Janssen

Overall Awards

Best Name Tag (Judged)
Builder: Nick Kappatos
Honorable Mentions: Thom Anderson, Chris Masi, Janey Red Brick

Best Brick Mods (Judged)
Stargate
Kelly McKiernan

Honorable Mentions:
Tommy Armstrong, Rob Hendrix, John Barnes, Fineclonier.com

Best Military (Voter's choice)
Heavy Cruiser Takao
Lindsay Braun

Best Use of Color (Judged)
Jarod's Garden
Cale Leiphart

Honorable Mentions: Lenny's Bots, Gaylord & Co (roof), Sea Turtle sculpture

Most Artistic (Judged)
Felix Greco
Honorable Mentions: Dave Winkler, the Darkroom

Best Multi Theme Builder (Judged)
Dave Eaton

Honorable Mentions: LBB, Paul Janssen, Brian Darrow, John Barnes

Best of Show (Voter's choice)
POV 3
Steve DeCraemer

Honorable Mentions: The Dollhouse, Takao, Blacktron Intelligence Agency, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, GBC room!

Sea Turtle, by Judy Miller . Photo by Geoff Gray

Felix Greco's whimsical sculptures. Photo by Geoff Gray

The Takau, *by Lindsay Frederick Braun. Photo by John Bucy*

LEGO® Fan

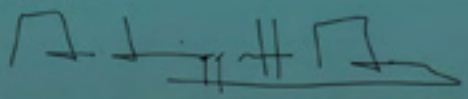
HTTP://www.legofan.org

As 2005 comes to a close, I want to take a moment and thank all of the people who have helped out with our continued success in spreading the word about the wonderful community and hobby that we know and love. This site, just like so many others in our community, is operated and maintained solely by volunteers, and I wish to regognize these people. The following list is hopefully complete, but I apologize in advance if I have overlooked anyone.

Ashley Glennon
Jake McKee
Jamie Bliss
Janey Redbrick
Jim Foulds
Joe Meno
Kirsten Lynch
LEGOLand California
Mark Bellis
Mike Gibney
Richard Morton
Ross Crawford
Scott Costello
Shaun Sullivan
Steve Witt
Steven Combs
Yun Mi Antorini

As we move into 2006, we will continue to rely on the help of people like you, and will continue to be inspired by the wonderful community we are a part of.

Sincerely,



Geoff Gray - President, BrickPortal Inc.

Building a New Direction:

A Talk with Jørgen Vig Knudstorp

Article by Geoff Gray

Photo courtesy of the LEGO Group

During BrickFest 05, some of the staff of BrickJournal *had a chance to meet the new CEO of LEGO Systems, Inc. Jørgen Vig Knudstorp. He was a very engaging and warm person to talk to and showed very clearly his commitment to the company and to the customer, most especially to the AFOLs. We asked him if we could have an interview, and due to time constraints, arranged for an e-mail interview to take place. The following is that interview (while the replies are direct from Jørgen,* BrickJournal *has edited a few phrases solely to clarify his responses).*

BrickJournal: It was a pleasure to see you and many of the other executives at BrickFest this year. Now that you have attended, what did you think of the show, and the people attending?

JVK: BrickFest was to me one of the biggest experiences as a LEGO person. I was simply genuinely excited about the models and constructions, and I was thinking that if I could, then I would probably have been one of the fans, had I lead a different life and career and then fallen out of my "dark ages" to return to the LEGO building and role play that I loved so much as a kid. So I felt very much at home with the people. You know it is the kind of feeling where you are thinking that you wish there were more people like that. I was deeply impressed with the skills of the people there. The fans are surely among the best builders in the entire world, including all professional LEGO staff.

BJ: What was the most amazing moment and most amazing thing you saw at BrickFest?

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Almost all eyes and ears are on Knudstorp at the Question and Answer session at BrickFest
Panorama by Joe Meno

JVK: That has to be my Q&A with the attendees. It was a great experience for me to get all the feedback during the 2 hour session but certainly also afterwards. I really appreciated the many questions and comments, and I learned a lot from it. I am a space and train guy, so the most impressive things I saw were in those areas. However, I was also really surprised by the enthusiasm for Bionicle among the attendants, and was impressed by the great ball contraptions as well as the castle, and National Heritage displays. I wish we would launch much bigger castle sets than we do, but I am not sure there is a market. A young guy also showed me some really, really impressive Technic models.

BJ: I know it is a lot easier to attend festivals in Europe, so what made you decide to come all the way to BrickFest, and do you think it was a successful trip for you and the company?

Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen and Knudstorp - "Jedi and Apprentice"
Photo by Geoff Gray

JVK: This was a great trip for the LEGO Group. When Kjeld (LEGO's owner) and I attended, it told the entire company that this is an important event, and I believe that is an important signal to send, despite the fact that the event takes place in the US. The American fans are as important as the European ones, and I believe BrickFest is an event for fans all over the world as well.

BJ: You joined TLG in 2001, working in the financial side. Later you took over for Kjeld as the CEO. How did you get involved with the company in 2001, and how does it feel to be in charge of this company now?

JVK: I joined to head up the company's then strategy and business development. My major tasks were around starting up brand retail stores, restructuring the business, improving the supply chain and the innovation strategy. Not all of that was successful but it taught me a lot about the company's strategy, culture and people. In march 2003, the CFO left for the interim job of running LEGO in the Americas, and I was then asked to be the interim CFO of LEGO Group. In late 2003, there was a major management reshuffle, Kjeld stepped into daily operations, and I was effectively made Kjeld's deputy. By then a new CFO was onboard and last October I was made president and CEO as Kjeld left daily operations to me. So it has been quite a ride for me. I love this company and its products, so there is nothing I would rather do than what I am doing. I feel it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a huge difference in this crazy but lovely world.

BJ: There were a few rumblings in the community when it was announced that the reins were going to someone who is not a part of the Kristiansen family. Have you been accepted in the eyes of the employees and the residents of Billund?

JVK: Yes, that is my own understanding. I value the LEGO values and heritage, and I think that means a lot to the family and community here in Billund. I also aim at a basics and firmly rooted leadership style, which means I am very approachable and in contact with all levels and kinds of employees. On a global scale this is not a big company and it should not feel like it is to all of our employees and communities, including yourselves.

BJ: There has been a great shift in the thinking of TLG as far as the future of the company. We are seeing the selling of the LEGOLAND parks, fewer gadget type toys, and a return to the basics of the System of Play. During one of your speeches, you mentioned how TLG is cutting the number of unique elements available and will continue to cut until you can get around 7000. How does this change help the bottom line for TLG and what message do you hope this will send to your competitors?

JVK: We are about building and role playing and highly dedicated to creative development through building in a systematic fashion that allows for the construction of all the things you can – and cannot – possibly imagine. Therefore the system must be protected and that means a limited number of elements. That drives consumer satisfaction with LEGO. Those who really are into LEGO, get what they love. Those who really don't care about LEGO are put off, but so what? I aim for being right for those who are right for us. Also our investment costs and manufacturing complexity goes down, along with better supply service because replenishment is easier with fewer available components. So our economics will improve dramatically from this decision, for a number of reasons.

BJ: There has been a push to reduce the number of colors as well, which makes us wonder; does cutting the number of colors used in a particular element (say the 2x4 brick) save any money in manufacturing or just in management/inventory costs?

JVK: The savings are primarily in inventory costs and in improved supply service (we can replenish demand faster). There are also savings on coloring costs but they are smaller.

BJ: We are starting to see old classic concepts come back to life in such areas as the town theme in World City and the castle theme in Knight's Kingdom II. We're also seeing continued support for trains and a return of the really cool Technic kits. We have heard several rumors and other gossip about why the generic Space theme has not come back, including that the license TLG has with LucasFilms prohibits the sale of other space related sets. Is there a reason why TLG has not brought back Space recently, and can we expect it to return in the future?

JVK: The Star Wars license has restricted us in certain ways, especially in years where there was a SW movie release. Now as we approach the future we are looking for

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I love this company and its products, so there is nothing I would rather do than what I am doing. I feel it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a huge difference in this crazy but lovely world.

Knudstorp answers a question at BrickFest
Photo by Geoff Gray

ways to increase our degrees of freedom and I feel comfortable that we can do that. Our relationship with Lucas is characterized by mutual respect for our two brands, and equal levels of excitement about our two kinds of products. Most of us here are Star Wars fans, and the Lucas people are big LEGO lovers. So we have a great relationship, and I feel good about our future collaboration.

BJ: What can you say about what is in store for The LEGO Group over the next several years?

JVK: More and more true to our values and roots while we also aim for providing something that is truly LEGO but never seen before. The next 2-3 years are about restoring our health and product strength. You can expect to see more of the LEGO Factory that we recently launched.

BJ: What is/was your:

- Favorite Set - currently it is Vladek's dark fortress, set 8877 along with 4888 Sea Explorers
- First set as a child – Not sure but probably Trains of 1976. I probably got something earlier but nobody remembers anymore. I remember having all the train sets and buildings of the 1970s and having them on a table tennis table, so it was an entire community, a bit like the train displays at BrickFest albeit on smaller and less professional scale of course. For some reason my parents did not take me to LEGOLAND very much. I will never forget the x-mas of '79 with all the space sets. It is one of the most magical memories of my childhood.
- Favorite moment with the company – clearly April of this year. I delivered my first annual report and a very difficult and personal letter to all employees about the results achieved and the road ahead. The feedback was overwhelming and for the first [time I] started feeling like we had momentum with what we were doing and a clear sense of direction that reached beyond immediate survival.

BJ: Now that you are a CEO, you must keep a busy schedule. How much time do you have for just building or playing with LEGO kits or pieces, and what type of building do you like to do?

JVK: Frankly, 90 percent of what I do is DUPLO with my three kids (Sebastian 4, Filippa 3 and Zacharias 11/2). Filippa is very much into Belville and Clikits but really not old enough for that. Sebastian loves pirates and castle but is also a bit too young yet. At night with a good friend, we build most new models but in particular all the Make and Create, Racers and Star Wars.

BJ: Thank you again for a chance to interview you. Are there any final words you would like to share with the readers?

JVK: Thank you, sincerely, for all your support through the years. I look forward to many years of interaction!

AFOLs
by Greg Hyland

A New Year? Already?

It's the new year already?

Wow.

Only one year ago, I was looking at starting what became BrickJournal. And in that time, there have been three issues, and over 200 pages of articles and hundreds of photos used from thousands submitted.

From each story, there have been e-mails and phone calls, sometimes letters, and photos requested and interviews granted...so many things zipping along, it's hard to believe things can come together.

But they do, and not just from here. *BrickJournal* now has writers in France and has received articles from Italy and Germany, not to mention Australia and Canada, and has released articles for translation to Russian and French.

All in a year.

In this year, the magazine has been recognized by The LEGO Group (TLG), and has been able to get interviews with project managers and even the CEO of TLG.

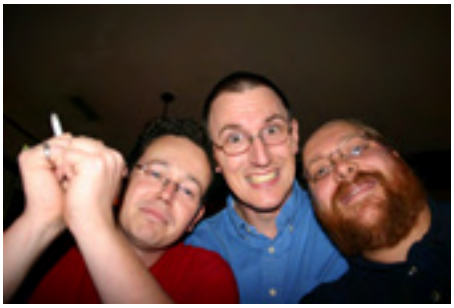
This was only the beginning, as there were AFOLs who have written articles for the *Journal*, spotlighting all the people who make the community so special.

So it's fitting that this issue closes with all the smiles and laughs from the past year as we look to what lies ahead...

'Til next issue!

Joe

PS. Next issue will feature LDraw and renderings - and also be a little 'batty!'



Many thanks to Geoff Gray, Dirk Plug, Ryan Wood, Jamie Berard, and Ashley Glennon for all of these photos - these simply were too fun to leave out!

NOT YOUR TYPICAL BRICKS.

If you have seen THE engraved Brick Badges at BrickFest™ and other LEGO conventions, you have seen the work of Tommy Armstrong, the Brick Engraver. He can engrave names and line art directly to a brick, making it a unique item for things like keychains, badges, and models.

A new innovation from Tommy is WoodStitches®, where a wood veneer is bonded to LEGO® elements. These elements can be used with other LEGO bricks and also to create beautiful mosaics (such as the one at left) and desk nameplates.

If you're interested in seeing the wide assortment of brick engravings and finishes that Tommy offers, you can go to **www.brickengraver.com** and browse through his catalog.

You'll see that his work is not typical.

And neither are his bricks.

HPT

the Brick Engraver.
tfa@brickengraver.com