

The Magazine for LEGO® Enthusiasts!

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Brick Journal

Issue 6, Volume 2 • Summer 2009

people • building • community

SPACE!

**LEGO Space Sets,
Old and New**

**Brandon Griffith's
STAR TREK Models**

BrickFest 2009

Reality Check

Reviews

Instructions

AND MORE!



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Editor in Chief

Joe Meno

Photography Editor

Geoff Gray

Business Manager and Proofreader

Carin Proctor

Copy Editor

Allan Bedford

Proofreader

Eric Nolen-Weatherington

European Bureau Editor

Megan Rothrock

Japanese Bureau Editor

Nathan Bryan

West Coast Editors

Todd Kubo, Ashley Glennon

Layout Artists

Didier Enjary, Tommy Williamson

Contributors:

Joe Meno, Joseph Williams, Pam Wall, Tomoko Tamura, Regina Mateos Rodilla, Nathan Bryan, Tommy Williamson, Richard Kaponas, Ellen Wang, Hadley Scrowston, Mark Stafford, Niels Milan Pedersen, Christopher Deck, Geoff Gray, Megan Rothrock, Gaute Munch, Ed Diment, Jared Burks, Didier Enjary, Scott Lyttle, Jennifer Wagner, John Langrish, Chris Wunz, Bill Ward, Inge Aaen, Jette Orduna and Greg Hyland.

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About the Cover:

A model by Mark Stafford for the initial cover design. Art by Mark Stafford.



From the Editor:

This issue was planned out about six months ago. By then there was an interest in making a space-themed issue, and there were rumors of something coming from the LEGO Group in a space theme.

We found out for sure in February with the Space Police, and with that, we were able to start asking for information on the new sets. The result was far better than I hoped for: we have interviews with the LEGO

set designers about the sets and the minifigures designs. To take a look at the past, we got an interview with one of the Classic Space set designers and also obtained some photos from some of the ideas that were considered for space. On the fan side, there's an interview with Brandon Griffith, who built some spaceships from *Star Trek* — the classic show.

From the LEGO Group, we also got reports on the new Emerald Night set and the Power Functions elements for train use and also the first of a two-part look at the DUPLO line of LEGO products.

In the community, we have reports on BrickFest, Japanese LEGO builder Yoshikazu Saito, and thanks to Nathan Bryan of our new Japan Bureau, instructions on SNOT and Miniland building!

Funny thing is, for this space issue, we ran out of space! So we are going bi-monthly starting next issue....so there will be more stories, more photos, and more fun!

Joe Meno, editor

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

P.P.S. Yes, *BrickJournal* has a website — www.brickjournal.com! You can check out the news there or look at the event calendar and see what is happening near you!

P.P.P.S. *BrickJournal Compendiums 1 and 2 are 50% off through July 31! If you ever wanted the issues of BrickJournal that were online before it went to print, you can get them now — CHEAP! Go to twomorrows.com to find out more!*

Glossary

AFOL (Adult Fan of LEGO)

NLSO (Non-LEGO Significant Other)

MOC (My Own Creation)

TLG (The LEGO Group)

BURP (Big Ugly Rock Piece)

LURP (Little Ugly Rock Piece)

POOP (Pieces—that can be or should be made—Of Other Pieces)

SNOT (Studs Not on Top)

LUG (LEGO Users Group)

LTC (LEGO Train Group)

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Event

Discover KAUST 2009

*Article and Photography
by Joe Meno*



January was the beginning to the new year and also the beginning for some 300 graduate students to study at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). Coming from all points of the globe, the students would be working at the new campus, located by Thuwal, Saudi Arabia. With so many different cultures meeting together, communication was expected to be a big challenge. To introduce the students to KAUST, the faculty, and to each other, an orientation event was created.

Discover KAUST, as it was called, was a week-long session where the students learned everything about the new college (which was still under construction to meet its Fall 2009 opening date) and the setting from culture to people. And the students also were able to work together and begin building their own community, with the use of LEGO bricks and elements.

The idea of using LEGO building as a means to team building led to having a group of facilitators familiar with LEGO SERIOUS PLAY and MINDSTORMS building becoming the initial workshops to Discover KAUST. The facilitators had been brought together from as many places as the students came from, with members from the US, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Taiwan, Egypt, and France. Led by the Dubai based group Disruptive Play FZ LLC, a group which specializes in collaborative innovation programs and business transformational change. Disruptive Play worked with Strategic Play (based in Germany), and Brixplay (based in Taiwan) as well as Bashar al Safadi (based in Egypt) to co-innovate and develop the program for the first set of scholarship students at KAUST. Other co-developers included key LEGO community / Mindstorms members. Over the two days the facilitators the students were devoted to building and creating a student community for the first set of scholarship students starting at KAUST University in September 2009.

The community building began with the students placed into teams and, led by Jens Hoffmann of Strategic Play, proceeded with the team members building LEGO models to represent themselves, their ideal teammate and what **each individual** would contribute to their **team during the two day workshop**. From there, the teams created a group model, with the team members building and writing about how their community could service society. While the models were challenging to think about, the students all were creative in their models and bonded while building the group model, with groups getting more and more animated in their discussions and building. Building was punctuated by comments and laughs as teams built different models and items. With a common goal, the teams began to bond, regardless of language and culture, and by the end of the day, each table had a **shared model, a shared language and shared view of the world**.

The next day, the challenge changed significantly – instead of building with LEGO bricks, MINDSTORMS sets were on each team's tables, and instead of building models that were symbolic, the challenge was to make a functioning module/ engineering solution which would allow over hundred ping pong balls to move through an infinity loop track on the floor.

Leading this challenge was Eugene Tsai, from Brixplay. The modules were to be designed to a size constraint and be able to deliver ping-pong balls from one end to the other to be picked up by the next module. The path followed by the balls would follow an infinity sign when completed by all the teams.

However, building with MINDSTORMS elements is different from building with LEGO bricks, so a very quick tutorial was done to show how the NXT brick worked with other components.

The teams also became tighter-knit, with Eugene encouraging them to create cheers and team logos/values which became part of their team's motto going forward. Before long, what started only a day before as a quiet workshop became a loud center of activity, with the teams cheering themselves and each other and doing a human wave on the floor map of the infinity sign.

The MINDSTORMS parts were not the only things used to build modules. Cardboard, tape, straws and even chairs were used! The floor space for the modules was eventually covered with the models built by the teams, and the wall screens kept a countdown for each phase of the challenge, from design to testing and joining with other modules.

The large room began to buzz with the chatter of teams and the motors of the MINDSTORMS sets during testing. There were as many module designs as there were teams, with many different solutions to moving the ping-pong balls. One module had a car push the balls with a paddle. Another had an arm that spun to push balls away. Still another threw a ball to the top of a slope, which moved the ball to the next module.

The teams started to talk to each other to figure out how to join modules, which took the team building to a community building level. Adjustments were discussed and made, and by the end, many of the modules were working together. Success was not complete, though, mainly because a few non-showing teams left some holes in the infinity sign that could not be patched. Some of the teams also had some technical issues, but the success was in the community building, as everyone joined in and worked on getting the modules running! There was also another interesting effect that happened as the modules were getting completed...people came to see the creations. The student advisors and some faculty dropped in to see what was going and were impressed by the models.

Afterwards, there was a final session devoted to evaluating the lessons learned. Bashar Al Safadi of Omniegypt was the host of this session, where the teams discussed what they learned from all of their activities. From their discussions, the top points were determined and presented to all of the teams. And through all the differences the students had when they first met, they found they had a lot in common – and they all had learned to communicate and have fun with each other.

After the session ended, many of the students took pictures with their new classmates and now friends, but one team took some of the ping-pong balls they used and signed them as a group, as a keepsake of their first meeting. At Discover KAUST, the students discovered more than a college.

They discovered a community 

