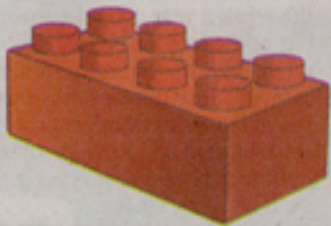


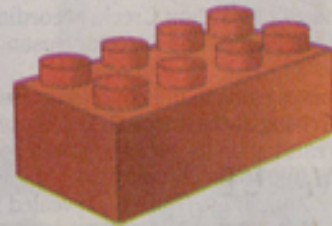
Local

SATURDAY
January 5, 2008

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BLOCK



HEAD



MIKE LUCIA — Staff

JOHANNES VAN GALEN of Hayward stands in the middle of a giant LEGO city he built. The project, which is on display at Bay Area Family Church in San Leandro, took thousands of LEGOs and several months to build.

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By Jason

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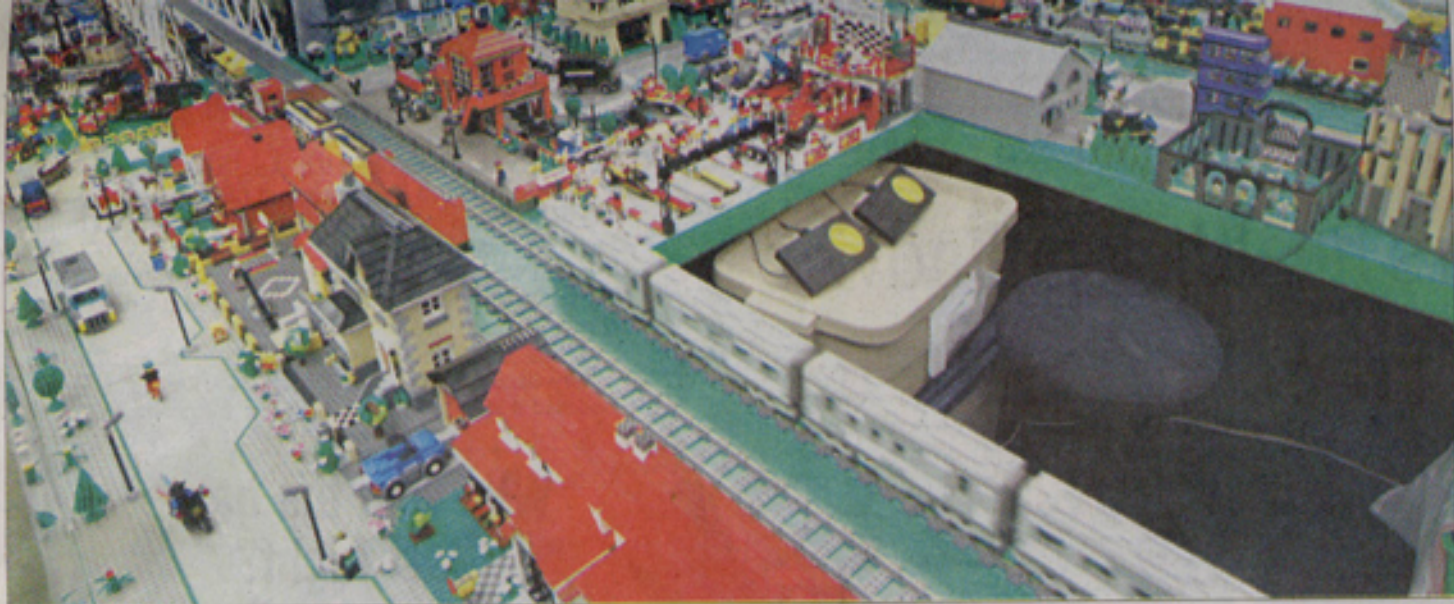
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MIKE LUCIA — Staff

JOHANNES VAN GALEN of Hayward stands in the middle of a giant LEGO city he built. The project, which is on display at Bay Area Family Church in San Leandro, took thousands of LEGOs and several months to build.

Hayward contractor creates LEGO cityscape

By **Martin Ricard**

STAFF WRITER

SAN LEANDRO — It has a police station, a train depot, a race track, a fire station, a skyscraper, a bus stop and even its own bay.

Anything you could probably imagine — or not — to be in a city has been recreated, miniaturized and included in a LEGO display created by Hayward resident Johannes van Galen. He has put the 10-by-25-foot creation on display at Bay Area Family Church for the public's viewing pleasure through Jan. 13.

Why? Because he can.

Van Galen, 36, said he has enjoyed his LEGO hobby since he was a boy growing up in Holland. But it wasn't until his 7-year-old son recently took an interest in the toys that he decided to build something this huge.

It doesn't hurt, either, that he is a general contractor by trade. But that's only half the reason why van Galen decided to embark on this project. It's purely hobby, he says.

"I like building with LEGOs," van Galen said. "I just enjoy it."

Visitors who check out the LEGO metropolis today will easily get lost in the treasure hunt of pieces.

Besides all the common city structures included in the display, van Galen also has plenty of quirky creations in the mix — many of them the result of his own imagination.

Take, for instance, the medieval castle that overlooks

Please see **LEGO**, Local 2



If you go

What: Johannes van Galen's LEGO display

When: 12:30 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Jan. 13

Where: Bay Area Family Church, 2305 Washington Ave., in San Leandro

More info: 510-483-4712

"If I didn't have LEGOs (as a child), I wouldn't have had the ability to do what I do."

Johannes van Galen
LEGO enthusiast

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LAS attorneys are available for brief legal consultations monthly —

or an interesting Hayward-area senior, important issue or effective organization, please e-mail ksan-tos@dailyreviewonline.com; call 510-293-2468; write us at 22533 Foothill

► Tuesday: Romaine salad with cucumbers, red onions and cottage cheese; stuffed cabbage roll with Creole sauce; peas and carrots; biscuit; apricot cup.

LEGO city has it all and then some

► **LEGO**, from Local 1

the old Western village, complete with its own tepec, cowboys and Indians.

Then there is the Batmobile, the Star Wars X-wing fighter, the dinosaur clan and the gothic-looking apartment building — which van Galen aptly calls Dragon Tower.

Russell Clark, president of the Bay Area LEGO Users Group — of which van Galen is a member — said displays like this one are, and especially the trains, are always a big hit with crowds.

When the club holds its annual Christmas show at the Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto, Clark said, it draws record numbers. He said he expects the same for van Galen's

display.

"It has a large impact," Clark said.

Van Galen said he hopes the display will make the most connection with children who come to see it. While kids these days have a variety of toys to choose from, he said he hopes LEGOs

will continue to hold a special place as the building blocks of childhood — and, he added, they're good development tools, too.

"If I didn't have LEGOs (as a child)," van Galen said, "I wouldn't have had the ability to do what I do now."

Hayward Area Historical Society
 22701 Main Street
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 Hours: Tues. thru Sat.
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 www.haywardareahistory.org
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