

LEGOSTAR GALACTICA

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by D.M. Jeftinija PH.D.

About nine years ago, during a period of my professional life when I worked in shifts, I discovered LEGOSTAR GALACTICA through a link on the famous blog The Brothers Brick. And though I had accumulated two years of comics to read, that did not discourage me and I started from the beginning, as it should be. It became one of my required readings during night shifts, seduced by the irony that already prevailed in those early years. I did not know how to express my thanks for all these years of daily effort, so here's my little tribute in the form of an interview with its creator D. M. Jeftinija Ph.D.

HBM: To start off, tell us a little about yourself and how your relationship with LEGO® bricks started.

LG: My parents started buying LEGO sets for me when I was 4 years old. When I was little my mother would build the set (6073 Knight's Castle primarily, I'm pretty sure that was my first set if not one of the first) and then I would destroy it and we'd repeat that pattern until I started building on my own. I always liked building expansive things, cities, castles with villages nearby, I had a lot of space in the basement of the house I grew up in and spent a lot of time building various things as I gained more and more bricks.

HBM: How did Legostar Galactica start?

LG: Since around the summer of 2000 when I first discovered webcomics I wanted to do one of my own, but I've never been very good at drawing and never had the time I wanted to practice. By summer 2002 I began to realize that I didn't have to be able to draw well, there were lots of comics that found ways around that and I had a huge collection of something I could use. The very first comic I made was intended just as something to make a friend of mine laugh. He found it very amusing and so I made another one for the next day, and it just kinda kept going.

HBM: What is your method when creating a story? How long does it take you?

LG: My methods have matured over the years, but the writing has always come first. I used to plan out comics one week at a time and write the text directly into Photoshop, since then I've put it into a program called KeyNote that helps me keep everything organized and gives me a chance to actually spellcheck (though I still miss things). Once I start writing it usually doesn't take me long to come up with a full 15 comic storyline. I have ideas stacked up for a couple of years in advance but I get the writing done anywhere from a year in advance to a week in advance when I get behind on things. Once the writing is done I pull out the sets or build new ones as the plot dictates. Building new sets is probably the most time consuming part, but once that's done I can get the pictures taken pretty quickly, imported into the proper Photoshop files and then adjusted and the pacing set up. I add the text and special effects once that's done. I tend to do things in stages. For example I'll do the writing for a couple of storylines one day, then a few days later I'll do all the photography, and then

over the course of a couple more days adjust the files as needed. When I first started I had no problem getting 5 days of comics done in an hour or two on the weekend, I doubt it takes me much longer now, it's just more spread out.

HBM: Where do you find inspiration for the stories?

LG: EVERYWHERE. TV, Movies, Books, Real life, games, anything and everything. My wife has inspired quite a few of the Second String comics with rather strange conversations we've had. Sometimes weird ideas pop into my head and try desperately to find ways to put it in the comic. I'm always looking for new things to inspire comedy or drama for the comic.

HBM: Although there have been many turns in the story - parallel stories, jumping in time, etc. - in 11 years of daily stories, how would you describe the main storyline in the comic?

LG: The lives of a starship crew that seem to be magnets for trouble.

HBM: Over the years there have been comic references to all adventure and science fiction movies imaginable. IS there any movie you have "pending issues" with?

LG: Well I don't want to give away too much, but I have plenty of ideas for things I haven't done yet, Dune for example, the Magnificent Seven, and I've done "episodes one two and three" so obviously I'm going to do "four five and six" and I guess since Disney is moving on with the franchise I'll have to come up with some kind of humor around the new episodes. I'm not sure how I'll manage.





HBM: What is your favourite character and why?

LG: Probably Belinda because I feel like I've done the most development with her and she's the most conflicted and complicated member of the crew.

HBM: The main characters have been in the series since the start 11 years ago. Have you ever been tempted to give any of them a "Game of Thrones" like exit?

LG: Please, I've given Red a "Game of Thrones" like exit on multiple occasions. It's not my fault he keeps coming back. Actually I'm very attached to my characters. I've only recently read the first "Game of Thrones" and while I feel it's very well written I'm a little jarred by the exits. I like my fantasy and sci-fi to be less like real life where anyone can die. I wondered for a long time how so many show and movie and book characters could get into so much trouble and survive until I realized something important. That's why the stories are about them, if they didn't survive every time (or most of it anyway) they

wouldn't be the heroes at the center of the story. Besides, there's worse things than death that you do with a character and still keep them around.

HBM: Why did you decide to create two comics that are (more or less) independent from the main one to publish on Saturdays and Sundays?

LG: Summer 2009 I managed to finish a year's worth of comics ahead of time so that I wouldn't have to go on another hiatus when I moved back to the States from Canada. It only took a few months to get settled back in and I found I had nothing to do for the comic for around 8 months, which was when I realized I had so many one-off jokes that wouldn't really fit all that well into the main comic. That's where Sunday Second String comics came from. I was also approached by Star Pirates earlier that year about add space. Since it went so well for both of us I suggested a more permanent add campaign and when they agreed I also decided to do a regular Saturday comic with crew members playing Star Pirates for added advertising and fun. Like everything else once I started doing that, along with the vote incentive comics I just can't seem to stop.

HBM: What does your family think of all this?

LG: My mother and wife are very supportive (both of the comic and my LEGO® purchasing habit), my father doesn't exactly understand it but he's gotten more supportive over the years. I think his initial response when I told him how many readers I had was if he could sell some of the fish he was raising over the internet via my site. So, if you or your readers are in need of carp...

HBM: How many times have you felt you couldn't go on? What has helped you to continue?

LG: There have been times I've considered cutting back, but I don't think there's ever been a time where I didn't feel like I could go on. I've still got stories to tell and I want to tell them. The only reason I can think of right now to stop would be if I decided to do a different comic, several of which I have in my head and just don't have the time to do. I would really like one day to do a comic that is already written from beginning to end by the time I start it. If you think I plan out things now, imagine if I had it all planned out from the beginning.

HBM: What future is in store for Legostar Galactica?

LG: More of the same, really. Comedy, some drama, I've got some big storylines planned, but obviously it's more fun if you see them unfold rather than me blabbing about them. I would like to expand my reader base and I'm constantly trying to do that, I've not fully figured out how to go about making social media work for me just yet. Ultimately I just love telling stories and I love telling them to as many people as will listen. I would like to continue to do that in any way that I can.

<http://www.legostargalactica.net/>
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