



by Tim Howell

Howdy from Houston Brick Club! We are a group of AFOLs located in and around Houston, Texas, USA. Many people think of all Texans as cowboys and cowgirls, and while boots and big hats may occasionally show up at our gatherings, we actually have a wide range of members including teachers, engineers, medical professionals, students, stay-at-home parents, artists, and mechanics. Many of our members are skilled MOC builders, while some just collect sets, and others like nothing more than to sit and sort loose parts. We are open to all who enjoy LEGO products in one way or another.

Houston-area AFOLs have been meeting and putting on displays since at least 2012. We originally gathered as part of the state-wide group called TexLUG. As more members joined in different Texas cities, local LUGs were formed. TexLUG-Houston officially became a separate LUG at the beginning of 2018, and we later changed the group name to Houston Brick Club.

Members of Houston Brick Club (HBC) are currently busy planning Brick Rodeo, a family-friendly LEGO convention and exhibition to be held in the Houston area on July 22-25, 2021. LEGO fans from all over Texas, the United States,

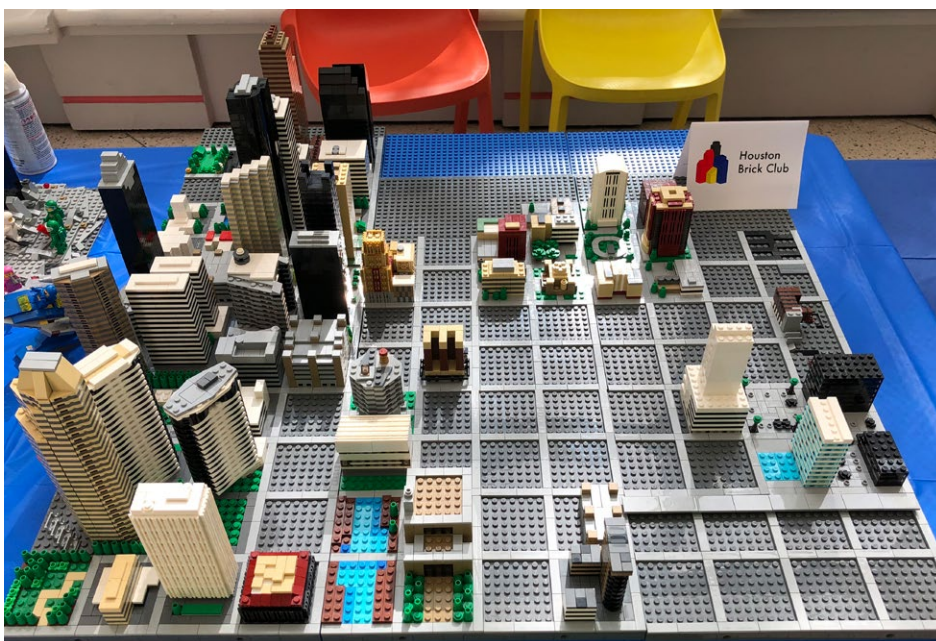
and even other countries will come and display unique models built from LEGO bricks, attend presentations and workshops, participate in games, and socialize with other fans of the highly sophisticated interlocking brick system. This is a non-profit, all-volunteer event. In addition to our members, AFOLs from TexLUG, DFWLUG, TexLUG-SA, and Texas Brick Railroad will also help run the show. While this is currently being planned as an in-person event, the pandemic situation is being monitored diligently, and we will adjust as needed. More information can be found at www.BrickRodeo.com, and by following #BrickRodeo on social media. All LEGO fans are welcome, and we hope to see you there!

HBC has always had strong in-person activities.

We enjoy getting together to talk about LEGO topics, share parts and building techniques, and to socialize. We have a lot of fun putting on displays for the public and talking with visitors. HBC members provide displays about ten times in a normal year at a wide range of events and venues. We have had 20-25 members display MOCs at an annual three-day pop culture convention which typically attracts around 50,000 public visitors, and we have had two members display for a day at a small library. We also display at Maker Faires, high school pop culture events, a children's museum, and a children's hospital.

HBC has taken part in a number of charitable activities over the years. Some of these have been building holiday wreaths from LEGO parts to be





donated to a hospital charity auction; collecting LEGO sets, other toys, and monetary donations for a children's hospital; and providing displays of MOCs at the children's hospital. These hospital displays are some of our most rewarding events. We set up in a wide pedestrian walkway for the day, and patients, families, and staff are excited to see the LEGO builds as they walk by. We are often told by hospital staff that there is a buzz in the air throughout the building when "the LEGO builders are here!"

We are currently working on a model of downtown Houston built from LEGO bricks. Led by a member who is a fan of microscale architecture, this model will cover at least twenty 32x32 baseplates and include roughly 40,000 parts. Individual buildings, parks, and other features are being built by many different Club members on a modular base so that everything can be easily



combined together. Although progress has been slowed by the current inability to meet in-person, we hope to have this completed for Brick Rodeo in July 2021.

Like for most of the world, 2020 required us to adjust to a new way of getting together. We shifted our summer convention to an online event using Zoom. Instead of in-person displays and activities, we had two days of presentations by video. While we missed interacting in-person, we did attract viewers from far more areas than we expected (including Costa Rica and Israel!). We were also thrilled to have four members of The LEGO Group join in from Connecticut and Denmark.

For most of 2020 we held our regular monthly meetings by video conference. For 2021, we look forward to in-person activities happening again at some point. More information can be found at HoustonBrickClub.com or search for Houston Brick Club on Facebook.

We hope that all of you stay safe, play well, and continue to find new ways to be entertained using LEGO bricks!

