

## MITRE News Center

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

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## MITRE People

Bedford: March 27, 2008

### Corporate Arts Program: Yes, it is LEGOs.



In front of the [Prudential Center](#), in LEGO Bricks, self-described "LEGO nut" [David Eaton](#) and MITRE's [Mike Ripley](#).

Yes, it is LEGOs.

Employees zipping through the K-Building Gallery are suddenly breaking to a halt to evaluate the huge mural of the Boston skyline thinking, "Is that what I think it is?"

It is.

Close examination reveals that the whole "picture," instead of being composed from film grains or pixels, is actually made up of [LEGO Bricks](#) - lots of LEGO Bricks. How many LEGO Bricks?

"Almost 100,000," answered [Mike Ripley](#), a associate department head for the [ISR for Military Operations \(G031\)](#) department and member of the [New England LEGO Users Group \(NELUG\)](#).

Formed in August of 1999 for the sole purpose of facilitating adults in the sharing of the LEGO hobby, NELUG gained fame when their members built a [model](#) of the [Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge](#) for the [New England \(NE\) Home Show](#). The [bridge](#) was made up of over 20,000 LEGO Brick pieces, was 17 feet long and 7 1/2 feet tall and took approximately 300 man hours to complete.

In addition to the NE Home Show, NELUG was a co-sponsor with the [LEGO Company](#) in the building of the [Milliard Project](#), a replica of the mills along the Merrimack River and town center in Manchester, N.H., circa 1900. This project took 2 1/2 years and 3 million LEGO Bricks to complete, and is a permanent display at the [SEE Science Center](#) in Merrimack, N.H. NELUG also displays regularly at the [Greenberg Train Show](#) at the Shriner's Auditorium in Wilmington, Mass.

Self-described "LEGO nut" and NELUG member [David Eaton](#) helped Ripley install the mural in the K-Building Gallery and noted, dryly, "Where ever we've shown it it appears to attract a lot of attention."

And attention the LEGO brick Boston Skyline does garner as it is 12 feet long, 5 feet high, and is made up five LEGO brick colors; black, white and three shades of gray, and was also produced for the [New England Home Show](#).

A software program broke up the original photo (see below) into forty 15" square sections which were finished by individual members of the club to the tune of about 160 man hours. Since each section does not fit flush, the spaces are filled in when the finished mural is mounted.

Art is generally defined as a product of human activity made with the intention of stimulating the human senses as well as the human mind; by transmitting emotions and/or ideas. By that definition, NELUG members have transformed LEGO Bricks from toys to art.

And this art is very good.

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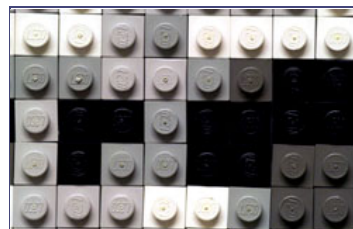
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Artist's statement:

*Boston Skyline (circa 1999)*

*"This mosaic was built by our group for the New England Home Show in 2002, and features a view of Boston looking at the Back Bay from across the Charles River.*

*"The mosaic is made up of nearly 100,000 parts and is 12' x 5'. Custom software was written to pixilate the image below and then calculate the directions for building the mosaic.*

*"There are 40 distinct sections to the mosaic, where each section took 5 hours to build. The final assembly is then done on-site to create a single picture."*



For more information about [New England Lego Users Group \(NELUG\)](#), contact [Mike Ripley](#) or visit the Web site at [www.nelug.org](http://www.nelug.org). NOTE: LEGO is a registered trademark of [The LEGO Company](#), which does not sponsor, authorize, or endorse this site.

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#### About the Bedford Corporate Arts Program

According to a recent article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, human resource experts believe that tomorrow's workers may benefit most from studying and participating in the arts. The article also stated, "critical thinking and problem-solving skills, teamwork, creativity and innovation, professionalism, and math are key components of arts and are considered vital to competing in the global marketplace."

Not surprisingly, Quality of Work Life and Benefits Director [Bill Albright](#) agrees, "We not only introduced the Corporate Arts Program to allow employees [and family members] to share more of their skills and abilities within our work environment, but if the creativity and innovativeness of the staff can be enhanced, the company is better able to support our sponsors."

The exhibit takes place in the K-Building Gallery, located in the hallway near the Credit Union and C-Building tie corridor. [Ellen Powers](#), lead software engineer with the [Information Assurance \(IA\) Industry Collaboration \(G022\)](#) department, serves as curator on the Bedford campus and organizes an ongoing schedule of art shows in the hallway gallery. Future exhibits will also feature the work of MITRE employees as well as artists from outside the company.

Albright asked Powers to lead a Bedford program modeled after the decade-old Washington Corporate Arts Program headed by Corporate Policy Specialist [Malinda Kerr](#).

Previous K-Building Gallery exhibits:

- [Corporate Arts Program hosts "Quilts"](#) (February 14, 2008)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts Dan Luke](#) (January 8, 2008)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts father-daughter team](#) (November 27, 2007)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts "On Land and On Sea" by Dianne Levine](#) (October 8, 2007)
- [A brush with the past: "Art in Illustration"](#) (August 23, 2007)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts "Luang Prabang, Laos" by Rod Holland](#) (July 16, 2007)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts "Peace on the Highway of Life" by Andy MacBrien](#) (May 31, 2007)
- [Bedford Corporate Arts Program hosts "Favorite Places" by Hilary Baldwin](#) (April 5, 2007)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts "Life's Moments" by Ann Marie Glenn](#) (February 26, 2007)
- [Corporate Arts Program hosts first B&W display](#) (January 10, 2007)
- [Bedford: Corporate Arts Program displays watercolor paintings](#) (November 30, 2006)
- [Exhibit: "Images of Distant Isles"](#) (October 2, 2006)
- [Photo of the Week: "In My Dreams"](#) (July 31, 2006)
- [Bedford: Photos from far and near](#) (June 1, 2006)
- [Photo of the Week: A world beneath the waves](#) (March 27, 2006)
- [A patient photographer finds wonder in nature, rustic sites](#) (January 25, 2006) - **Andy MacBrien's first exhibit.**
- [In "Getting Away," artist David Harris offers an invitation in oil paint](#) (November 28, 2005)
- [Bedford: Arts landscape in bloom](#) (October 4, 2005)

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For information about exhibiting work in K-Building Gallery, contact [Ellen Powers](#), ext. 1-3034.

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