



San Leandro Lego show wraps up today

By Jason Sweeney
The Oakland Tribune

Posted: 07/25/2010 12:00:00 AM PDT

SAN LEANDRO — Today is the last chance to check out Johannes Van Galen's Lego extravaganza.

For three summers, the show has filled an upstairs room at the Bay Area Family Church with Lego cityscapes, trains, helicopters, robots and other Lego contraptions.

The show, open since June 25, closes at 4 p.m. today. When it will return to San Leandro is anyone's guess. Van Galen's large display is booked for next summer at a National Model Railroad Association show in Sacramento.

Van Galen, 38, started collecting and building with Lego blocks as a boy growing up in the Netherlands. Today, the Hayward resident is a general contractor who shares his passion for Legos with his three children and fellow members of the Bay Area Lego Users Group — or BayLUG.

On Friday, Newark resident and BayLUG member Kenny Paul and his daughter Jillian, 17, were at the show, displaying their Lego cityscape and trains to wide-eyed children.

"I like the expressions of the kids," Jillian said. "It's fun."

Paul, 47, said, like most adult Lego enthusiasts, he loved Legos as a child but lost interest in them

when he became a teenager and "they weren't cool anymore." Then, when he had children of his own, he rediscovered the enjoyment of creating things with the little plastic blocks, ending a "no Lego" period that enthusiasts call the Dark Ages, he explained.

"Legos haven't lost their appeal after all these years," he said.

Fremont

resident Pam Lewis was at the show Friday with her three grandsons, Andrew, 10, Aiden, 7, and Nathan, 4, all of Livermore.

"I think it's amazing," Aiden said of the display.

Children at this year's show are handed a list of items to find in the display, including an elusive Lego Elvis. A Lego man holding a croissant has been one of the more difficult items to find, Van Galen said.

The show is open 1 to 4 p.m. today at the Bay Area Family Church, 2305 Washington Ave. Admission is free for children under 3, \$3 for ages 3 to 15, and \$5 for those over 15.

Van Galen said he is unsure if the show will return.

"In two years, I don't know what I'll be doing. Better hurry up and come down because it's not going to be here next year."

Jason Sweeney covers San Leandro. Contact him at 510-293-2469. Follow him at [Twitter.com/Jason_Sweeney](#).

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