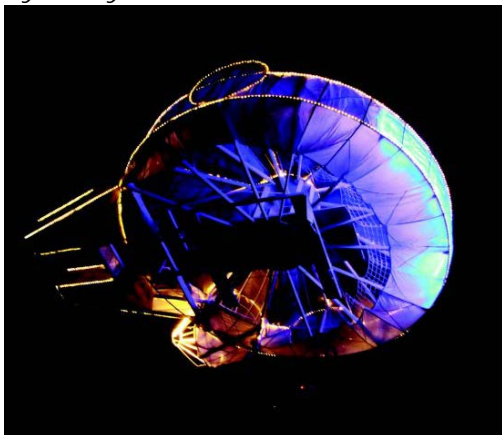


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## Up on the rooftop (...again!)

By *Cathy Dausman*



It's not a reindeer-its the ship that made the Kessel Run in less than twelve parsecs. Photo provided

blockbuster "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

Colby Powell's rooftop features something that flies this December, but it is definitely not reindeer or a sleigh. It is a 28-foot-long model of a Corellian YT-1300 light freighter, better known to Star Wars fans as the Millennium Falcon.

Powell, his family and neighbors assembled the starship on the ground, then it was lifted into place by a 70-foot crane. The lighted ship made its debut at Halloween. Powell says it will remain aloft until the premiere of the latest Star Wars movie, "The Last Jedi."

As elaborate as it is (a 28 by 20 by 5-foot replica, weighing 700 pounds, pitched at a 40-degree angle on an 11 by 6 foot stand to perfectly showcase the top of its iconic shape) this creation is not Powell's first space rodeo.

Two years ago, he and his family designed and built a replica Death Star ahead of the release of the 2015

This time Powell says there were lots more neighbors assisting - everyone from the youngest "Padawans" to enthusiastic adults. Still, he kept his neighbors guessing about what the finished project might be during the five weeks and 400 work hours it took to complete the assembly. And the project nearly failed before it began when Powell couldn't locate any to-scale drawings online.

His son solved the problem by suggesting they scale it after his LEGO Star Wars ship.

A last-minute design change during construction scrapped the use of some plastic in favor of wood to insure the necessary frame rigidity, but the Millennium Falcon was ready to fly in time for the Powell Halloween party.

Asked if he might consider a career change to full-time prop construction, the Lafayette contractor laughed. "It's pretty fun, actually," he said of his priceless rooftop projects.

Would Powell design a different model before the release of Star Wars IX in 2019? Possibly. There just might be one more light sabre trick left up his Jedi sleeve.

What it takes to build a Millennium Falcon:

630 feet of LED lighting

400 feet of conduit

1,000 wood screws

728 board feet of 2 x 4 wood

2 T-10 parachutes from eBay

What it took to assemble a Death Star:

162 geo hubs

18 cans of paint

2,000 feet of 1/2-inch PVC conduit, cut in six various lengths

Watch Death Star and Millennium Falcon construction videos online at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT0RH4EAnLY&feature=youtu.be>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHzesa5\\_ItY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHzesa5_ItY&feature=youtu.be)



Working on a classic: Powell's neighbor Michael Ferrif and friend Bob Christopher inside the framework.



Framework assembled, and filling up the driveway.



Ian (7), Drew (12) and Cameron (11) Powell.



Familiar faces, both human and humanoid, look toward the stars.

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