

fischertechnik FAN-CLUB News - Issue 01/1996 - April 1996

English translation

Editorial - HELP US AND OTHERS!

Hi Fans,

In the past few weeks, our fingers have been busy hammering on the computer keyboard, dealing with the mass of reply cards containing your requests to renew your membership to our club.

The new club ID card is now valid for two years.

We welcome you all to the club, and in particular those who are receiving a copy of fischertechnik NEWS for the first time.

Well, what's new from our side? In future, NEWS will appear twice a year, once in spring and once in autumn.

From now on, NEWS will also have a new format.

This gives us more space for even more information, and we have more possibilities for the layout. You will also have even more opportunity to help in the production of your magazine. Letters and model suggestions from our FAN CLUB members will appear in greater numbers in NEWS.

For this reason, we should like to ask a small favour of you: carry on writing and telling us what you think about fischertechnik, about how and where you are making the models; keep on photographing your designs and sending the photos to us. We will then be able to produce NEWS with your help and for the benefit of everyone else in the club.

Just a final word: one of the main policies of our company is to be aware of our responsibility in handling raw materials and preserving the environment. For this reason, we have decided to print FAN CLUB NEWS on biologically processed paper in future.

Have fun reading and building,

The editorial staff

Page 1 and 2

fischertechnik bringt die Sonne ins Spiel - A ray of sunshine from fischertechnik

A super idea by fischertechnik: eco-friendly energy generation in the kiddie's room! For models in our new kits (Important: only in the shops from August 1996), you need no electricity from the wall socket or from a battery. Our solar cars "only" run on light and they can even operate in the dark (unlike any other solar-powered toy) for five to ten minutes depending on the load. The secret behind this trick is a three part drive set which contains a polycrystalline solar module (latest generation), a gold capacitor for storing the energy and a motor which starts very easily.

With this equipment, you don't have to wait until the August sun shines through the window. Even the light on a dreary November day is enough to set our fischertechnik models in motion. But if it gets brighter, the storage capacitor charges immediately. You can therefore call it a real "all-weather" system. The new fischertechnik solar kit (from our Profi line) is designed for children aged 9 and upwards. The detailed assembly instructions contain suggestions for building six models - two cars, a crane, a lifting platform, a helicopter, etc. - all driven by "free" energy".

Other experimental models are mentioned and illustrated and the booklet also contains general information on the basic functions of solar technology. Another concept behind the new kit is based on another fischertechnik principle: to explain technology through play - in this case, solar technology. The drive for the models runs in "backup mode". When light is weak, the motor is powered by the solar cells and the storage capacitor together. But even if there is no light, the energy stored in the capacitor keeps the solar car moving. The models are quick to move due to a motor fitted with a bell-type armature. It requires a fairly low start energy of about 0.15 V compared with 1.7 to 2.5 V for iron-armature motors. The second technical highlight in the fischertechnik kits is the gold capacitor which stores energy like a rechargeable battery. It charges very quickly, needs no charge sensor and contains no toxic substances such as cadmium or mercury. And you can also set your mind at rest since the supplied solar cells are embedded in plastic to exclude any risk of injury.

"Racing Car" Action Set

Now you can tell your friends who think that fischertechnik is "dead boring":

Here is a new entry-level model for all children who are not familiar with the construction kit system. It will show them how to have fun building and playing.

"Racing Car" is the name of the new action set for boys and girls aged from 7 upwards. It will be available in the shops from August (price below DM 20). You can build a racing car from more than 80 parts and it comprises integrated steering, a rear spoiler and wide slicks.

The "newcomers" will also be helped by an easy-to-understand assembly manual.

Aktuell = Latest news

Auf dem Highway - On the Highway

460 bhp, shining chrome front nudge bar, roaring horns: the enormous American highway road trains called Freightliner, Dumper or Peterbilt apparently influenced the fischertechnik team who developed the latest kit. Called "King of the Road", it will interest young truckers and will be available in the shops from August this year. The top model comprising more than 400 pieces is a tractor in US livery. The red and black 3-axle truck can be steered using the steering wheel in the cab (the doors also open) and using a rotary knob on the outside. It is not only fun to build (with detailed manual), it should also be fun to play with. One of the interesting details on the tractor is a set of new-generation tyres, a chassis with swing axles and a coupling for the semi-trailer (which is not part of the kit). You can also retrofit a motor and you can add a trailer later.

Two other models are also described in the manual: a dump truck (with steering and tilting functions) and a dragster. Of course, if you are a young designer, you can put the suggested designs to one side and use your own imagination to build a truck - as with all fischertechnik kits.

We recommend the new building kit "King of the Road" for children from 7 years of age. But even experienced fischertechnik fans will have fun with the King of the Road - which is associated with the dream of wide expanses, country music and powerful engines.

Technik Pur - Pure Technology

The most modern factory in the world - from fischertechnik

The most modern factory in the world is in Ulm, Germany. Nobody has ever set foot in the plant. All the machines only listen to the commands of other machines. With a rattle and a squeak, a warehouse robot empties the shelves. With horn blazing, a revolving platform sends parts in different directions. Milling machines purr, grinding machines scream, the press stamps, and robots rock to the rhythm of the work cycle. The plant is two meters wide and fifteen metres long (built on thirty tables). The high-bay warehouse measures 60 x 150 centimetres - less than the size of a shoe cupboard. The step press, normally a thousand-tonne monster, weighs as much as a bottle of lemonade. The entire superlative factory of the Ulm Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Transfer consists of parts which originate from a toy program - the construction kit by fischertechnik.

The magazine of the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" wrote an article in its November 1991 issue about a model costing DM 500,000 (!). Universities and colleges, as well as companies like Renault, Bosch, Siemens, AEG or Philip Morris, have used and still use fischertechnik to test mini-versions of machines which will later go into operation in their original size. Whereas our NEWS readers would rather see and build a superb crane, a bridge or a robot, everything happens the other way round. Engineers test on fischertechnik models to see whether, for example, a planned industrial plant can live up to its promises. To help with fischertechnik industrial model construction, we found a partner in Staudinger GmbH plan & simulation (with head offices in Loiching in Lower Bavaria) in the 1990s. Standard models were built there using 24 V sensors and motors, special industrial pneumatic systems and many thousands of fischertechnik single pieces (all in grey and red). The models range from the pallet lift and packet turning machine through to the high-bay warehouse. They also include special constructions which simulate conveying systems, fine section rolling mills or packaging robots. All the standard models are prepared for control by SPC or a special PC industrial interface. If you want to know more, write to the following address: Staudinger GmbH, plan & simulation, Mr. Peters, Schönbühler Strasse 5, D-84180 Loiching, Germany.

Report

Interview with Gunther Jauch

At the end of last year, Artur Fischer, the fischertechnik inventor, and Günther Jauch, the "Sportschau" moderator, committed themselves to a good cause. When the Zeppelin Youth Foundation awarded its promotion prizes to young people for the fifth time, one winner talked about his life whereas the other explained his program. The Youth Foundation was founded in Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance in 1990 in memory of the pioneering work of Graf Ferdinand von Zeppelin and with the aim of promoting talented schoolchildren and students. Every year, it awards attractive prizes for excellent work in the field of natural sciences and the prizes are worth a total of DM 50,000. The argument is that "Even today, it is very important to reward the creativity and commitment of young people in the fields of natural science and technology."

With this in mind, Professor Artur Fischer, ZoF producer Michael Jungblut and Professors Christiane Gotz and Hans Mohr turned up for the latest prize ceremony and answered questions such as "How to become an inventor" in an interview with Günther Jauch. The surprise after the ceremony: the well-known TV presenter was presented with two fischertechnik kits for his two children.

Erfinderstart - Budding inventors

Although not everybody can become an inventor straightaway, if an interest in "doing finicky work" develops at an early age, it may later lead to professional success. This realization does not stem from us, but from an inventors' club in the Saxon town of Freital, which announced a competition called "Budding inventors: a chance for children and young people" in autumn last year with fischertechnik's support. There were more than 60 entries and a fischertechnik kit for the three winners. The prehistory: during the second industrial fair in Freital, a town of 40,000 inhabitants located south-west of Dresden, the club organized a knowledge test on the subject of "Invention". The response was enormous and totally unexpected - especially from young people of your age. "Whereas many adults regarded the test more or less as a guessing game, the children and young people took answering the questions very seriously," says one of the initiators of the Freital Technology College (who is also one of the founder members of the inventors' club). Against this backdrop, young people no older than 16 were given the opportunity to describe and draw their ideas and make suggestions." Any subject was possible - school, home, garden, toys, traffic etc., and of course group suggestions were also welcome.

750 Besucher - 750 visitors

It all started with a small Ferris wheel. Nine years ago, the 5-year-old Wilhelm Brickwedde built his first fischertechnik model. In the meantime, the secondary school pupil from Steinfurt can do more. Recently he invited people to visit his model exhibition at the local history museum in Borghorst. All the 34 models, which the 14-year-old had designed himself, weighed several kilos, were motorized and remote controlled. Almost 750 visitors were determined not to miss this exhibition!

Portrait

Mit 91 noch ein fischertechnik-Fan - 91 and still a fischertechnik FAN

"Make yourself a sandwich; I've got to finish my model!" With these words, Mrs. Luise Maass has ducked out of making lunch for the whole family more than once. And if test persons were needed for the do-it-yourself alarm systems, relations "were allowed" to trigger the test alarm.

Her models ranged from a simple merry-go-round to the fischertechnik industrial model, and even engineers from the neighbouring electrical engineering company kept coming back to see and admire what Mrs. Maass had made from fischertechnik.

Everything started over 25 years ago with a START 100 basic kit. Since then, the collection has grown steadily.

When Mrs. Maass comes back from shopping and says "Just have a look at this. I just couldn't stop myself," then everybody knows that it could only be a new fischertechnik kit. But Luise Maass is neither an engineer nor a modern housewife. She is a pensioner and has now reached the ripe old age of 91.

She has now been living in an old people's home for a year and has asked us to help her dispose of her fischertechnik collection.

All the items in the collection are displayed in a specially built cabinet which contains everything which many a fischertechnik fan has long been looking for. If you are interested in this wide-ranging collection or parts of it, please contact:

Mrs. Elke Louwien
Dockenhudener Chaussee 231
0-25469 Halstenbeck (only for Germany available)