

B&O train museum celebrates



(George Hagegeorge/For The Examiner)
Anne Chamberlain and her son Parker Francoise, celebrating his third birthday Sunday with a closeup look at Lego trains at the B&O Museum's Festival of Trains.

Laura Greenback, The Examiner
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BALTIMORE -

Children, parents and grandparents gathered at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum on Sunday to enjoy train models and memories.

The centerpiece of the weekend was a colorful installment of working model trains made out of LEGO blocks. The wide array of trains — including a Washington, D.C. metrorail — rambled through a colorful landscape of people, bridges, hills and buildings.

“The kids are just fascinated. There’s an amazing level of detail,” said David Shackelford, curator at the museum.

A large factory in the installment is modeled after Ellicott City’s Wilkins-Rogers Inc. Flour Co. factory. The entire structure was completed last week by the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area LEGO Train Club.

For some families, the event offered a chance to share history with younger generations. Bill McGovern, of Forest Hill, wore his late father’s red Jersey Central Railroad Company hat and belt buckle as he looked at model trains with his own son and twin grandsons.

“It brings back memories,” McGovern said.

About 20 percent of the museum’s yearly visitors come to the museum between Thanksgiving and New Year’s because trains often hold a special significance during the holiday season, Shackelford said.

“I grew up with model trains around the house. We would run them around the Christmas tree and the tinsel would make them spark,” said Edward Kohl, a club member from Catonsville who said he got his first model train for Christmas as a child.

The Holiday Festival of Trains, which began last weekend, will run every weekend with different exhibits until Dec. 30.

The museum, located on Pratt Street, is a 40-acre site complete with real and model trains. The main area of the museum is located inside an 1884 roundhouse, an airy, circular-shaped building where passenger cars are repaired. The building collapsed on President’s Day 2003, and was rebuilt, reopening to the public on Nov. 13, 2003.

A similar festival at the Ellicott City Station, a train museum located on Maryland Avenue in Ellicott City, is scheduled to run until Jan. 28.

lgreenback@baltimoreexaminer.com

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