

Model railroad club chugs into town

By HEATHER HOLM

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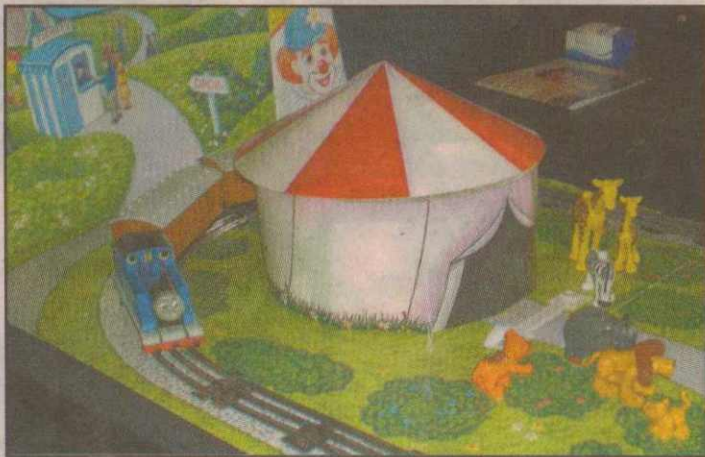
North Central O Gaugers, a model railroad club based at the Fremont Public Library in Mundelein, presented a circus/carnival-themed model railroad display Saturday at the Wauconda Area Public Library.

"We are here promoting the hobby and trying to get people involved," said David Groh, president and founder. "The older people come to reminisce and we enjoy putting smiles on the kids' faces."

At the event, model trains were set up and carnival and circus pieces were scattered around the display — 820 people came Saturday to view the trains.

Spectators also got the chance to see a special display of Thomas the Train.

"The kids always want to see Thomas," said Jon Krause, group webmaster.



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A model train runs around the track at Fremont Public Library.

Ryan Noonan attended the event with his 2-year-old son, Brecken.

"My son is addicted to trains," Noonan said. "We have some trains at home."

Cathy Davey and her son Robert, 5, came because they saw another display by the Gaugers at the Crystal Lake library.

"My son is a train fanatic," Davey said.

Aive Ghafoor brought her two sons as well—Eric, 6, and Zachary, 4.

"Both love the Thomas engine," she said. "We are all excited. It's the perfect way to spend a Saturday."

Children from the Bethesda Home in Marengo,

“My son is a train fanatic.”

-- Cathy Davey

a home for children with Down syndrome, came from 3 to 4 p.m. Friday, April 27 to view the same train display.

The event also was held at the Wauconda library and others interested came to view the trains that day along with those from Marengo. That event saw 50 attendees including 11 children from the Bethesda home and their eight chaperones.

It took 23 man-hours to put together this display, said Groh.

If a library or other organization wants to book a display, there's a two-year wait list, he added.

Places the organization has visited include hospices, libraries and the Art Insti-

tute of Chicago.

The group also runs trains the second Saturday of each month, excluding November, at the Fremont Public Library.

Other themes the club has created include a farm theme, wharf theme, Christmas and Halloween theme.

Groh said the group formed after the founders put out a sign-up sheet in the hobby department of Hannah's Home Accents in Antioch.

Bryon Carpender, vice president, joined the organization in 2001 when he and his son met the members at a chocolate fest in Kenosha, Wis.

Carpender has been interested in trains since he was a youngster. The group has about 30 members.

For more information and to see more photos, visit the North Central O Gaugers website at www.ncotrains.com.