



Photo by Natalie McMullen

James Stark, with his nephew Jackson Stark, 3, attend Quinte's 18th annual Christmas Model Railroad Show. The event, which was sponsored by the Belleville and Brighton model railroad clubs, took place Saturday and Sunday at Quinte Secondary School in Belleville.

Train show offers timeless classic

By Natalie McMullen

There's something timeless about trains. But older hobbyists say competing for kids' attention these days is a challenge.

"It's getting harder and harder to get the young people. Everybody likes to text now and (play) Xbox," said Klaus Gonschior, a 14-year member of the Belleville Model Railroad Club.

That's one of the reasons the Belleville and Brighton clubs partnered to put on Quinte's annual Christmas Model Railroad Show, which took place this past weekend at Quinte Secondary School.

Reaching out to kids is important, explained John Turner, vice president of the Belleville club. "That's the grassroots

'I find it's kind of a never-ending hobby because new technologies come up and you're always learning something new.'

Belleville member Klaus Gonschior

right. You've got to keep the hobby going."

The 18th annual event, which ran from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, is one of the biggest in eastern Ontario. It boasts 11,000 square feet of vendors and

displays, and attracts modellers and families alike.

There are many different facets to model railroading. "Some people like to build; some people like to run trains; some people like to look at trains and some people like wiring and building scenery. Everybody's got their niche," said Turner.

According to Gonschior, many people attend the annual show out of a sense of nostalgia.

"They still think about the trains running around their Christmas tree."

"I used to go to school and the train depot was right there," recalled Turner. "Instead of looking at the teacher, I'm looking out the window watching the trains go by. That's how I got hooked on it. Just

close proximity to the tracks."

The love for locomotives was instilled in 18-year-old modeller Lucas Jeffrey at age three, when he received his first toy train. He said he owes his passion to his grandfather, a fellow train enthusiast. Jeffrey, who builds displays from Legos, has been travelling to shows across the province for the past four years.

Exhibitions take place year-round, but Turner who calls model railroading a cold-weather hobby, said the timing of the Belleville show adds to its popularity. "You're naturally more interested in gifts and things like that. You're more in the spirit."

While the hobby may be sentimental for many, it isn't old-fashioned, insisted

Gonschior.

"I find it's kind of a never-ending hobby because new technologies come up and you're always learning something new. It just keeps your interest going. It doesn't go stale. That's the biggest draw for me."

Turner said he hopes advancements like iPod-controlled model trains will be enough to attract kids to the pastime.

"You think, well is that going to be interesting for the future generation, because it's electronic and digital and all that good stuff?"

While the future of model railroading may be unclear, looking around at this year's show, there was no shortage of awe and wonder among both young and old.

One of a Kind Show a Toronto tradition

Picton potter showcases work with her trademark dragonfly

By Mary Barber

The 38th annual One of a Kind Christmas Show has returned to Toronto transforming Exhibition Place into a flood of shop-

pers carrying trinkets and goods from the hands of over 800 artists, designers, makers and crafts people.

Picton potter Melanie Mena and her husband Mark showcased dozens of white ceramic mugs and pots with her

trademark dragonfly on the front at the show. It is Mena's third year at the Christmas show. Her participation in this year's Makers Hand shown in the Quinte Region prepared her for this year's One of a Kind Show, she said.

Port Hope couple Terry and Beverly Thornton display their handcrafted wood work for the seventh year.

"There are some really great artists here. Craft markets are a fantastic place to showcase work," said Beverly Thornton. "I work with my husband. He crafts — I do business. We've been married 20 years. It started as a hobby and then went from there."

Terry Thornton began his love of woodworking over 40 years ago. His creations include furniture, clocks as well as restoration. The real art of his craft is in the fine woodturning that helps create Terry's birdhouses. The birdhouses have found homes across Canada and in the U.S., England, Finland, South Africa and the West Indies.

Mena's passion is pottery. She is the CEO and chief potter at Mena Dragonfly Creative. Her style includes uniquely crafted functional pottery that can be used every day.

Mena's passion became a reality after she walked away from working a desk job in 2009. She decided to pursue previous ambitions.

"I was blindsided and it took me a while to recover. But I saw the silver lining to that cloud and decided this was my opportunity to make my dream." Mena wrote on her webpage, "In the spring of 2011, my husband and I decided to make another big change: we decided to move back to Ontario.

In 2011, Mena and her husband Mark moved from Victoria, B.C. to Prince Edward County. A year later, Mena opened The Black Licorice Tree Bed and Breakfast, setting up a new studio located behind the house.

"I grew up in Ontario. It's nice being back. We have a beautiful bed and breakfast not far from the Sandbanks where I can work," said Mena.

Mena and Thornton plan to return to the One of a Kind Show in the spring.

The Toronto craft show has become a Canadian shopping tradition. In 1979 the craft show expanded to include The One of a Kind Spring Show. Annually, the show attracts over 200,000 visitors. The One of a Kind Show was built out of the simple desire for something more.



Photo by Mary Barber

Picton potter Melanie Mena showcases for the third year with husband Mark, dozens of white ceramic mugs and pots with her trademark dragonfly on the front at the 34th annual One of a Kind Christmas Show and Sale in Toronto last weekend.