

All aboard

Wildwood Cultural Center hosts its first Train Day

By Marah Morrison

mmorrison@news-herald.com

The Wildwood Cultural Center in Mentor hosted its first Train Day, which brought a variety of historic train collections to the table.

The spearhead behind the event was Charlie Kluge, Wildwood's train enthusiast, said Linda Wintersteller, recreation coordinator at Wildwood.

"Who doesn't love trains? In the building, we have a beautiful train layout that (Kluge) and his friends have organized, and we're getting a lot of families," Wintersteller said.

In addition to the historic collection Kluge had on display and the layout put together by the Mod Squad, roughly seven vendors with different train items for sale were in attendance.

The Mod Squad, a local group, gets together to hook up train modules and run trains for shows. It's fun for someone who doesn't have train layout because it allows for them to bring a train module and run it on the layout the Mod Squad provides, said Ken Vendlinger, Mod Squad member.



PHOTOS BY MARAH MORRISON — THE NEWS-HERALD

Ed Mularz's train collection venture began in 1950 when he was just 7 years old.

"We love the history of trains and the culture of trains," Wintersteller said. "Being involved with both of those and having it open to the public is always great. It fits with us and it fits with the community."

Among the vendors in attendance was Frank Moritz, of Lakewood, who had Lionel O-Gauge three-rail trains on display, as well as freight cars, passenger cars and accessories. Moritz does 15 to 18 shows a season.

"About 30 years ago, my mother told me, 'Get your stuff out of the house or

I'm throwing it out.' She's a stout, German lady," Moritz said. "So, I went over there, and my daughter and I set up all of our trains on a pool table. It evolved from there."

Moritz ended up selling the pool table, bought wood and built a layout on the third floor of his colonial home in Lakewood.

From there, he started attending shows, met different people, and started to buy and sell.

"It's just a great hobby. The whole thing evolves over the years," Moritz said. "You start small and you have different manu-



Frank Moritz, of Lakewood, has been collecting trains for 30 years.

facturers, and you get excited about certain aspects of it and tinkering around. It keeps me home and out of trouble."

Ed Mularz's train collecting venture started in 1950 when he was just 7 years old.

"My stepfather decided that we wanted to get me a train, so he bought a Lionel train for me when I was 7," Mularz said, who has been a westside Cleveland all his life. "It's something that I really enjoyed as a hobby and as a way of learning about electricity."

When his stepfather

died, Mularz carried on the hobby.

"It's always meant a lot for me to carry it on from what he inspired me to do," Mularz said. "Having the chance to meet others, especially families, and introducing young kids to a hobby I've enjoyed for 70 years."

Also in attendance at Wildwood's Train Day was Jim Wendorf, the president of the Painesville Railroad Museum.

"We got our sales tent for the museum, and we bring our trailers full of railroad engines, cars, houses and



Wildwood Cultural Center in Mentor hosted its first Train Day event, which brought train enthusiasts and families together.

stuff like that," Wendorf said. "It was donated to us and we could sell it, and make restoration money."

Wendorf recalls when his dad would go out every Christmas and come back home with a brown, wrapped engine. From there, Wendorf was hooked, he said.

"I just loved it. It's the people and to find that item that I'm still missing from my collection," Wendorf said. "Everybody has to have something to fall back on and relax. This is relaxing whether you're running the trains or get lost in doing their scenery."