



STAFF PHOTO BY RYAN MERCER

Celebrating the annual Winter Carnival at The Children's Museum of Portsmouth yesterday, Alexandria Harrod, 10, plays the violin with the Alryki Trio, which also comprises her sister, Rylie, 8, on cello and Kimberly Felber, 10, on violin. Below, Rose Ying Crowley, 2, of Newmarket, listens to Kimberly's violin playing.

# Carnival helps cure winter blues

Parents, children create own fun at museum's event

By KIANA MINKLE  
STAFF WRITER

**V**oices and footsteps echoed in stairways and across rooms as children and their parents discovered new ways to learn while still having fun at the annual Winter Carnival at The Children's Museum of Portsmouth yesterday. After reading about the carnival, Peg Tucker said, she decided to bring her grandchildren.

"There's enough variety to spend the whole day here," Tucker said. It's her first visit, and it won't be her last, she said.

"I like it so much. Different than any playground. Lots of activities, stuff you can play with," said Nicole Littlefield, 5.

Since opening in 1983, the Children's Museum has held a carnival every year in order to give parents and their children something to do in the winter, instead of staying home, according to Jane Bard, director of education. At first, there were indoor and outdoor activities, but during the years, more indoor activities have been planned, Bard said.

"It's a way to beat the winter blues and get out of the house," Bard said.

"The Children's Museum is an unusual resource in the Seacoast area for parents and their families," said Xanthi Gray, who often brings her 3-year-old daughter,



Lannon, to the museum. "We came to see (puppeteer) Martha Dana."

The museum scheduled various performers and artists to entertain throughout the day. At 10:30 a.m., Dana gave a show in the yellow submarine room with her handmade puppets. Dana said she's been in the puppet business for 11 years, six years full time. Each puppet takes about two weeks to make, according to Dana, and is intricate and lifelike. As Dana told a story with the puppets, the captivated audience sat on the floor or on the deck of the yellow submarine, watching intently.

Marc Sutherland, author and illustrator of "The Waiting Place," signed copies of his book, and talked with parents and children from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Arts Cafe on the second floor.

Entertaining the crowd with its gift of music from 1 to 2 p.m. was the Alryki Trio. Alexandria Har-

rod, 10, Rylie Harrod, 8, and Kimberly Felber, 10, have been playing together since September and have performed at various places. They played at Gov. Jeanne Shaheen's Christmas party, they said.

Alexandria and Kimberly have been taking violin lessons for seven years, while Rylie has been playing the cello for five, according to the trio.

From 3 to 4 p.m., magician Tom Benson entertained people with magic tricks, and Albert the Alligator roamed around the museum, saying hello to visitors.

"We'll probably have 600 people today," Bard said.

This is the busiest day of the year for the museum, according to Bard. It's winter, and there's not a lot of other things to do. So parents bring their children and spend the day. There was food for sale, and pony rides were offered for \$2.50 outside.

**“**  
*I can't drag (Anna) out of here. We might be here all day.*  
**”**

— Dawn Genes

Pat and Carol Meehan, and their daughter Catherine, 3, also heard about the carnival and decided to stop by.

"We'll be back, that's for sure," said Pat.

Dawn Genes said she had never been to the museum, though her baby sitter had taken her daughter, Anna, once.

"Her dad's away for the weekend, and we were looking for something to do," Genes said, making snowflakes out of paper with Anna, 3.

"It's definitely very hands-on. Seems really appropriate for her age," Genes said.

The museum has many exhibits and hands-on activities. Various exhibits include the yellow submarine, magicam, dino detective and space shuttle, and lobstering, among other things. Children can learn to be dentists and postal workers, play music and talk with others on computers.

"I can't drag her out of here. We might be here all day," Genes said.

Admission to the museum is \$4 for adults and children 2 and older; \$3 for seniors; and free for children younger than 2 and members. For details about the Children's Museum, call 436-3853.