



The North County Model Railroad Society has called Boney's Marketplace in Oceanside home for the past two years. The society allows public viewing of the 1,500-square-foot train display, complete with 400 feet of track, on Thursdays and Saturdays. Sean Masterson | seanm@tlnews.net

LOCAL MOTION

North County Model Railroad Society lays down tracks in Oceanside

By Candice Reed | Special to Today's Local News

OCEANSIDE — On most afternoons, in the large attic of a local grocery store, a dozen men can be found spinning their wheels.

For almost two years the members of the North County Model Railroad Society (NCMRS) have called the 1,200-square-foot section of an upstairs warehouse in Boney's Marketplace in Oceanside their headquarters.

The model railroad club has more than



Richard Brown works on the train display at Boney's Market. North County Model Railroad Society members are in the process of creating oceans, rock quarries and redwood forests for the display.

Railroad

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400 feet of single-strand track curving through their 1,500-square-foot layout that utilizes the latest in digital cab control technology. But they're not even close to being finished.

"We have a master plan, a planning commission and many people working on it most days of the week," said Al Cuevas, president of the non-profit club. "It's not uncommon to find 20 people upstairs working on the trains. We would eventually like to burst through some walls and keep this thing growing."

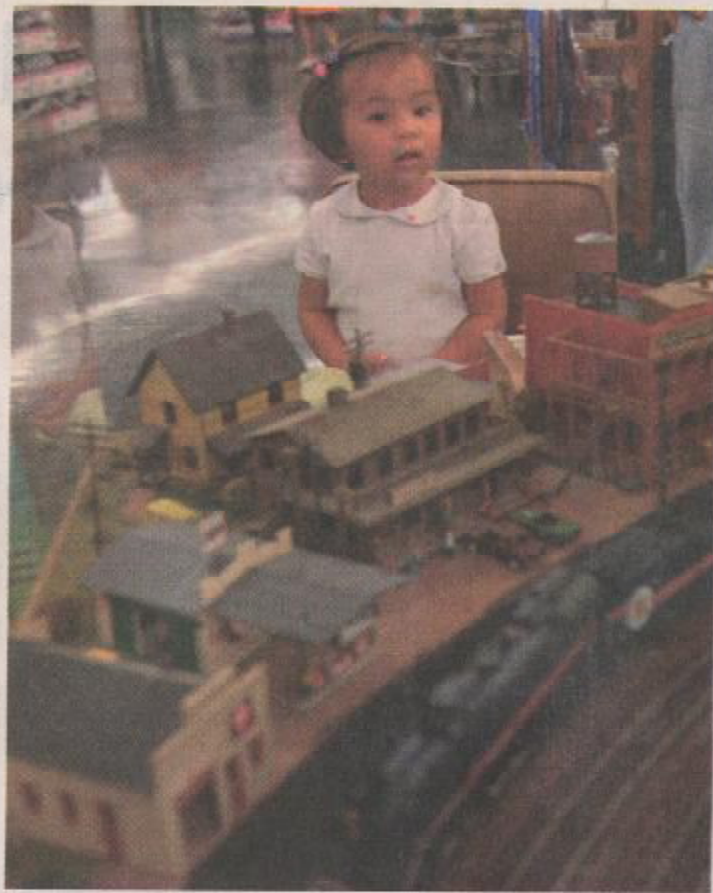
Visitors can take the elevator up to the train depot and discover a place where small trains chug around scale-model silos, steeples and suspension bridges. Locomotives speed though landscapes filled with farmland and small towns. Oceans are in the process of being created along with rock quarries, redwood forests and towns. Members, like Tom Brunner, spend time planting and trimming tiny evergreen trees and applying rocks to the model landscape with tweezers.

Camera monitors follow the trains as they snake through the unfinished countryside, through dark tunnels and underneath 100 feet of painted sky.

Train lovers may stop by Boney's, 1820 Oceanside Blvd., from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays and Saturdays.

"We had a man weeping once when he came in and saw the trains," said NCMRS member Tom Bernhardt, of Oceanside. "It reminds a lot of people of when they were kids. It's very heartwarming."

The cool sounds of a train and the whirling of the locomotive can excite just about



Two-year-old Olivia Schroeder, of Oceanside, enjoys the train display at Boney's Market in Oceanside. Sean Masterson | seanm@tlnews.net

all ages, and on Saturdays little boys can be found staring at the trains along with their dads, their grocery carts temporarily forgotten.

"This is so neat, I've never even seen trains like this," said Andrew Morton, of Oceanside, as his 5-year-old son, Tommy, sat on his shoulders, wide-eyed and silent.

"I always loved trains, but I didn't know guys still do this kind of thing. I might start spending some time over here."

As the completion of the Sprinter nears, club members will begin conducting Operation Lifesaver classes to inform the public about rail safety.

"When a train is coming at you, it's not easy to just jump

out of the way," Bernhardt said. "Railroad awareness is something everyone can benefit from."

Cuevas said model-train enthusiasts make model-train clubs the most popular hobby in the country, and last year the local club doubled its membership. But he does admit that the tiny trains are mainly a "man thing."

"The majority of us are guys," he said. "We're just a bunch of dedicated goofballs that like to go in circles."

For information call 760-722-7366.

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