

Exhibit rides on impact of trains on American culture

By [Kristofer Noceda](#) | Bay Area News Group

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HAYWARD — Kenji's eyes lit up the moment he saw rows of toy train models displayed at Cal State East Bay.

The 4-year-old, wearing a train conductor's hat, appears enjoyably overwhelmed at the sight of so many items related to trains.

What is this train called? Why is this train here? What is this for? Where did they come from?

Those were just a small sample of the questions Kenji asked during a visit with other children from his day care to the university's first-ever model train display.

The exhibit, "All Aboard! The Impact of Trains on American Culture," was put together by anthropology museum students, and opened for public display earlier this month.

Organizers began planning the train exhibit at the beginning of the school year after staff members came across a rare collection of antique tin-plate toy trains.

The 500-piece collection, a select group of trains loaned to the university by the family of Richard Wheeler, was gathered by Wheeler over 93 years. Wheeler, of Monrovia, is considered a model railroading pioneer, officials said.

"This is an unusual collection for our museum, but it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," said George Miller, anthropology professor and museum director. "Creating this exhibit has challenged the students to turn the anthropological lens on objects of their own culture, which has produced some insightful results."

Student Alvaro Almanza, 21, worked on a display featured in the exhibit about the 1899 Wilcox Train Robbery in Wyoming.

"It was a lot of hard work, but I am really satisfied with how it came out," Almanza said.

The exhibit is on display from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday until June 11 in Room 4047 at Meiklejohn Hall. It will be closed March 20-28, March 31 and May 29-31.

Campus parking is \$7 per vehicle per day. Permits may be purchased from machines in parking lots.

Cal State East Bay is located at 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.

For more information, call 510-885-7414 or visit www.csueastbay.edu.

If you go

- WHAT: “All Aboard! The Impact of Trains on American Culture” student exhibit
- WHERE: Room 4047 at Meiklejohn Hall at Cal State East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.
- WHEN: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday until June 11. Closed March 20-28, March 31 and May 29-31.
- COST: Free
- PARKING: \$7 per vehicle per day. Permits may be purchased from machines in parking lots.
- MORE INFO: Call 510-885-7414 or go to www.csueastbay.edu.

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