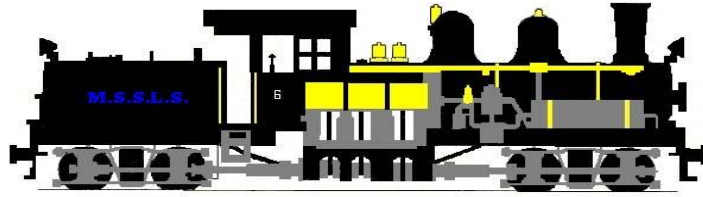


Michigan



Small Scale Live Steamers

The "A Train Show" Run January 15, 2012 by Bob Winkel

The first MSSLS run for 2012 was at the Avondale High School in Auburn Hills as part of the A Train Show. This show was previously in Troy but switched venues when the organizer changed school districts. As our crew finished assembling the track the day before the run, Jim Bowers said "This is a great set up!" And, thanks to his efforts, we were in a good spot, close to the door and "protected" from the crowds. But we were in a remote corner from the main show and your reporter wondered if we would have many viewers to see the steamers.

The Sunday run got started around 10am with a small but dedicated crew of steamers. John Ehrmin fired up his Mikado and was pulling a fast freight for the early show attendees. Later he got his 0-4-0 running, doing some switching. Bob Paternoster put a long train on the outside track, including his newest (at the time) billboard reefer, a Christmas themed car named "The Santa Express".

It wasn't long before John Wessels had a logging train in action, being pulled by his Shay. He finished the run using his Climax and we learned later that the reason for switching was that the Shay needed to go into the shop for some repairs. Our engines can be just as finicky as the full size locomotives at times...

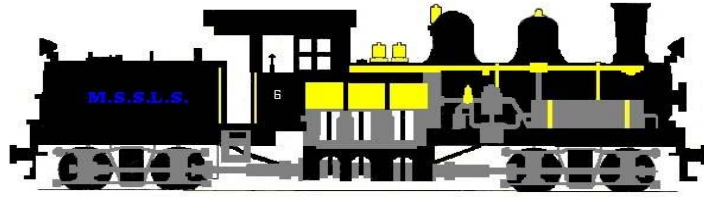
The Avondale High School turned out to be quite a large venue for this train show. Luckily the promoters put out maps of the school to help visitors navigate the hallways, gymnasiums, cafeteria and other locations where displays were set up. They also used a clever idea to encourage patrons to visit the various display areas: they offered an adult raffle and a child raffle for those visitors that got a registration card punched in each of the major show areas. Also, Jim Bowers made up and installed a number of MSSLS signs with arrows pointing to our location. Thus, we had lots of visitors in our out-of-the-way gym.

Bob and Mary Weltyk were at the show but concentrated on selling a large selection of his LGB cars. Taylor Moon steamed his Forney and pulled a mixed consist. (Parker was volunteering at the Steam Railroad Institute table). Dan Samuels ran his Accucraft with a string of tanker cars in tow.

Your reporter hauled a maintenance-of-way train with loads that consisted of wheel sets, ties, rails, and a pile driver with rigging. The engine was equipped with a B.F. Industries Water Level Detection system, which worked very well.

Jim Bowers spent a fair amount of time "working" the crowd but just before noon he got his Forney on the track pulling a whimsical Christmas train with lots of snowmen on flat cars. Fritz Braun brought his Roundhouse Lady Ann for the run. We saw Jim Linfield briefly when he was not at the Lakeshore track.

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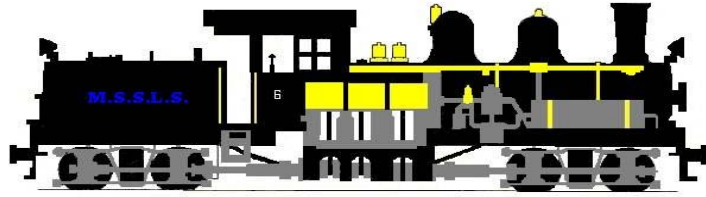
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Bob Paternoster added to his collection of billboard reefers when he purchased a USA Trains Pullman reefer with an advertisement for Indian Motorcycles. It looked sharp next to his Studebaker reefer.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable show and run for MSSLS members. We were surprised buy the large turnout (they said there were police directing traffic in the crowded parking lot and access streets). We presume that our brother steamers at Diamond Head had a good run as well but the members who stayed in town for the A Train run were not disappointed. We offer our thanks to all who could help out.



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