



Fun with Dr. Bandoli



Jack Layman entertains youngsters

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Getting steamed at Pioneer Days

Pioneer Days are always popular with youngsters and Jack Layman's model steam engines keep them enthralled.

The retired machinist makes the steam engines by himself. He began

the hobby just before retiring from Chubb's Security in Brampton seven years ago.

Mr. Layman and his model steam engines have been at Pioneer Days since its inception.

The steam engines are table models of mill engines used in factories years ago, he said.

The factories had boilers to produce steam to operate the engine. The engine would then turn the line shaft and the belts running from it to the machinery.

One of the steam engines Mr. Layman will demonstrate at Pioneer Days is the James Watt engine. It dates back to 1840. James Watt was a British instrument maker.

"A lot of people think Watt developed the steam engine, but they were using steam before he was born," said Mr. Layman. "He just improved upon it."

Down in Mr. Layman's basement are the lathe, drill press, small milling machine and small shaper used to build these models.

"I do the machine-ing. It keeps me away from the television," he quipped.

Mr. and Mrs. Layman belong to the Ontario Steam and Antique Preservers Association and to similar organization in the Niagara and Georgian Bay areas.

They frequently travel to steam shows around the province and the United States.

"You could be out every weekend from now to freeze out, between Ontario and U.S. shows," Mr. Layman said.

Steam models is a popular hobby, especially with many older participants fondly caring for original farm machinery and antique engines they were used to in their day, he said.

"Every engineer who came along had his own idea of what a steam engine should be. He made it. Then, something better came along."

Models made by steam engine fans all run basically the same. Instead of steam, they run on air pressure from a compressor, explained Mr. Layman.

Mr. Layman began working on the "grasshopper" engine last year. The engine is so named because it resembles a grasshopper when it's running.

Along with his steam engines, Mr. Layman will be demonstrating how to make rope with a home made rope machine.

"The kids like to do it. It's a hands-on thing," he said.

Using binder twine, the machine of wood, wire and bicycle chain makes rope of varying thicknesses depending on how many strands are used.



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