



The Mud Ring

The Newsletter of the Cinder Sniffers Inc.

Summer 2007 Issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

How does it go? Spring is sprung, Fall is fell and Summers here and it is hot as heck. The Cinder Sniffers had our May meeting at Don and Becky Saager's Heavenly Hilltop Railroad. The weather was in the mid 80's and bright sun. There were 3 steam engines and 4 assorted Diesels including Charlotte's Santa Fe. The meeting was as short as possible so that people could enjoy the beautiful scenery and railroad. Don and assorted friends have been busy grading and preparing the ground for the long

extension. For those of you who have not been to Don's, the original track was a loop with passing sidings, engine facilities and a reverse loop. The new extension leaves the mainline on the far side and descends down the hill while hugging the contours. This extension will include a passing siding, a gravel unloader, a 65' tunnel and a reverse loop over a high steel trestle. The extension will be signaled. I believe ultimately Don will run the railroad as a reverse loop to reverse loop with the option of a shorter

run around the original oval.

Don is proving to be a very resourceful builder and the quality of the right-of-way matches the finish on his Cli-Shay. This railroad is definitely worth the drive.

It is time again to remind one and all that boilers need inspection. We have added 5 new inspectors so it should be easier to find one when you are ready.

Finally, we need conductors on all long trains hauling our guests.

Please remember...

Safety First

A Walk Down Memory Lane

The Short History of the Diner by Bob Maynard

It is always easier to know where you are going, if you know where you have been. Since the beginning of the Cinder Sniffers, close to a quarter of century ago the Diner has been much in evidence. The custom of serving hot drinks and food was started at the track of the E.G.B. & Pacific Railway located at 3825 Virginia Court. It was really intended only as a Wintertime operation, and some of the early runs were done on New Year's Day with the temperature sinking close to the zero mark. The early meets were attended by only a few. The hot cakes, doughnuts, coffee, and, of course, hot chocolate really hit the spot especially when we were running in the snow. The first of these events was held in the year of 1960, and was attended by four hardy souls...two of them being neighbors and were not really into the live steam bit.

The ill-fated track at Lockland didn't ever get a chance to have a club function where the Diner was used. There were a few get-togethers...too few and the track was dismantled. It was an unfortunate situation.

The purchase of the property at Dover, Indiana, in December 1967 was much too late in the year, and the New Year's run of January 1968 was again held on the E.G.B. & P. Actually, it was not until January of 1970 that the Diner first opened for service at the new track site. As there was no shelter of any sort, hot coffee and hot chocolate were served out of the trunk of my 1956 Chevrolet. It was not until the fall of 1970 that Bill Bosse suggested that we build a windbreaker of sort, and the site chosen was very close to the location of the present Diner. It was a windbreaker, and that is all that it was. There was no roof and the sides did not exist, but it did keep the cold west wind away. The stove consisted of an open top 55 gallon drum, and as long as one did not stand too far from it...it was possible to feel some warmth. It was better than freezing. Some of the winter night runs were really only for the dyed-in-the wool Live Steamers...and most of the families did not attend...but the hot drinks and food were there for those who wanted them, and they were good!

In the early Fall of 1972, just before Bob and I hosted the Lafayette Gang for the last "get-together", Larry and Bob built a small 8'X8' frame and attached some plastic roofing for sides. It was crude but really luxurious improvement over the old windbreaker. At least it had sides...no roof...but sides...and best of all a new 55 gallon drum for a stove. The January 1972 run was the last time the Diner was solely operated by the E.G.B.&P. Until this time the Diner was only operated in the Winter months. The January 1973 run was operated as a club function and the "kitty" was brought into use. There must have been many "freeloaders" however, because we just barely made expenses.

A Walk Down Memory Lane

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In 1974, the Diner was enlarged again, this time it was the 8'X16' foot enclosure that most of you remember well. The Club purchased the casting and Larry made the first horizontal drum stove...a major improvement over the "open top" stove. One could get warm without getting smoke in the eyes. Until this time the Diner was only operated in the winter months, but the summer of 1974, cakes and cold drinks were offered for sale. The "kitty" provided enough to keep the operation in business, but the profits were not great. It was difficult to stay in the enclosure all the time and the Diner was short-handed for help. It was more of a convenience for our friends who visited the track, and at that time crowds were not as large as the present.

The summer of 1976 saw a new improvement...crude and ugly, but immensely helpful. A roof of sorts was added...it leaked in places...was unsightly...but it did keep out most of the rain...and in the Winter it kept some of the heat in place. This was a mixed blessing; however, as a good many folk now crowded into the small area and serving was extremely difficult. There was a point made...it would soon be necessary to have a larger more permanent structure, particularly when the crowd pushed the coffee pots outside to a point where it was necessary to house them in cardboard boxes in the wintertime to get them to work. These were the Wintertime runs...when the coffee, if left in a cup too long, would simply freeze...temperatures of 9 degrees and six inches of snow.

To be continued.....

I have posted a picture below of the Diner taken in May of 2007. I would like to post a picture of the enclosure if anybody has one. As Bob said, you need to know where you came from to know where you are going. In the meantime Bob's story will be continued in the Fall edition and bring us up to 1982. VB



Chuck's new engine

Recently Chuck Balmer sent me an Email with some details of his new engine project. Here is Chuck to explain:

About 30 years ago, I bought a set of original builders blueprints for a Lima built 2-6-6-6 Allegheny . The plan was to build the in 3/4" scale and fire it on propane. I began making the cast iron wheels when job responsibilities and kids took priority and the project languished.

Last year my wife retired so I decided to semi retire myself. My youngest son, Jim informed me that I needed to finish the Allegheny, so I started doing research on the engine again and we even made a trip to the Henry Ford museum. We spent a whole day crawling over and taking pictures of one of only two Alleghenies in existence.

Armed with a lot of pictures, books and blueprints I began making patterns for all of the parts that needed to be cast. To date I have completed about 75% of the needed patterns and have actually cast over 100 individual parts. I am currently experimenting with multi-part plaster molds for some of the very complicated parts and will try this technique soon. I am ordering the steel for the engine frames and hope to begin fabrication them next month. Since both front and rear engines frames were one piece steel casting, I have had to do a little re-engineering of the designs so that I can fabricate them out of steel bar stock. I have included a couple of pictures of my son Jim and I pouring casting for the engine.

Chuck Balmer

Chuck's new engine cont.:

Chuck sent along some pictures of the casting process showing cast parts. I have included one on Charlotte's page. We look forward to hearing more from Chuck and wish him well on his project. VB

I have also received details of Greg Korner's technique for making plastic ties and will get it put together for the Fall edition. Unfortunately this dead line snuck up on me and things didn't get done.

If you haven't been to the track in the Spring you are missing a real treat with all the flowers and plants in bloom.

If you are working on a new project why not share with others so they might learn and be inspired to undertake something themselves. The hardest part of any project is getting started. It is time consuming to find the necessary information and translate it into a practical application. The internet can be a highly useful tool in gaining information and knowledge, try it.

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Spring run at the Saager's track in Kentucky



Gary Crabtree's beautiful Pennsylvania G-5 with Gary operating



Charlotte operating Joe Holbrook's engine with Joe enjoying the ride



Chuck's son pouring Aluminum into a mold, completed castings on the floor



The Knox Shop, who remembers when, why, and who built it? I am sure there is an interesting story here.

If you have pictures from our track or others you'd like posted send them in.
Thank you.