



The Mud Ring

The Newsletter of the Cinder Sniffers Inc.

Fall 2008 Issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Is it time to rethink?

Or where do we go from here. An interesting discussion was held at the September meeting. None of the elements were new, we have discussed them all before. This time may be the time to move forward. Cinder Sniffers has been around for over fifty years which is quite an accomplishment and something to be proud of. During those years a way of doing things was developed and has evolved. We may be at a point where additional evolution is necessary for our continued success as a club.

As it stands right now we are holding nine run days per year with smaller crowds. We do not keep attendance figures as we don't man the gate anymore. We do keep count of the rides we give that provides an indication of some sort. At the present time we are in the two hundred plus range with many repeat riders. It has been holding steady at this number for several years. I have detailed the statistics in the past but the bottom line is this: In order to give rides, we need to fill certain positions to ensure the safety of our guests, the trains and the facility. At the present time we have a lot of members running trains and not enough manning the other positions. During a recent survey, there was overwhelming support for continuing our open gate policy and giving rides to guests. I believe it is time to recognize that we have about twenty-five active members including

five or six junior members. On a run day we typically have about a dozen engines. The math says we should have a dozen people to fill positions with some rotation, but the reality is there are usually about 6 people that end up running the show, including the flea market and the diner.

So what am I proposing? I believe we need to scale back on the number of run days. In the past we have been swayed to hold more, but we must hold the line. First, we need to agree that at this point in time, five would be appropriate and they would include Jan 1st, May, July, September and Thanksgiving. We can keep the fourth Saturday. Second, we should insure that on each of these days members are assigned to specific tasks for specific time periods. This would ensure that nobody gets stuck in one job for too long. If we are going to haul guests then we need to have at least two trains available and manned with conductors to haul the bulk of our guest riders. We need to keep waiting time at the station down to a minimum and must require that servicing be done in the yards or at the car barn, unless there is a breakdown. Any unreliable equipment should be removed from the track until such a time as it has been repaired to the satisfaction of the safety committee.

If we follow these guidelines then the Cinder Sniffers can haul guests safely long into the future without undue strain on the membership. What do you think? Can we do it? Do we want to do it? The decision rests on you, the membership.

Vincent

Remember... Safety First

There are many dangers in the live steam hobby. When operating equipment the size and weight of our trains things are going to go wrong in a hurry. Members and guests must watch out for each other and lend a hand if things go wrong.

One danger we can and must do something about is live steam. Our club rules have always required boiler inspections as the minimum that must be done to insure the safety of the operator and those in the general area. Live steam has a very large amount of potential energy. It has to be contained and directed if it is going to do useful work. We now have about 8 boiler inspectors trained by our Chief Boiler Inspector, Steve Chromick. We have made it very easy to find a boiler inspector when a boiler needs inspected. Some of these inspectors do house calls, which is pretty amazing in today's day and age. So why do we still have individuals bypassing inspections? Most likely it is because their boilers are not to our code or they are leaking so badly they can't hold pressure. In either case the boiler needs attention along with the safety appliances that go with it, such as the feed water system, the sight glass and the safety valve.

In any club there are different levels of knowledge and expertise. If you need help with something, please ask somebody or bring it up at a meeting. I don't know of any club member who, when asked for help will not gladly give it. The alternative is to try to bluff your way onto the track. The Executive Committee and the members at large do not take kindly to this type of activity and any member found to operate their boiler without a valid boiler inspection would be removed from the club. These rules are the ones you agreed to when you became a member of Cinder Sniffers. They are here for the Safety of all.

Please be safe

Club Happenings

Hurricane Ike hits Cinder Sniffers hard:

On Sunday September 14th Hurricane Ike's winds tore into the track and managed to make a mess of things. We have 6 or 7 trees down with some of them on the track along with a very large amount of tree debris. One tree is resting on the unloader and some other trees and will be very difficult to remove. Another tree is laying across the switch and entrance steps. The railing took a direct hit and is a little bent but not broken. The Aullville barn is supporting another large piece of tree. It does not look like any building has received more than superficial damage. It is going to take some workdays to get things back into shape. I have cancelled our September run and based on our progress we will decide on whether to hold the October run. The tree at the unloader is going to be the biggest problem.

We will hold a series of Saturday work sessions with the first one on September 20th starting at 9:00 AM. Bring tools for garden clean up such as rakes, hand saws and gloves.

Since this is being sent via Email, please tell any Cinder Sniffers who are not on line.

Take care,

Vincent Bradley, President Cinder Sniffers

Indiana Live Steamers:

As I write this I received a Pop Valve from the Indiana Live Steamers. After a terrible rain early in the summer which caused a facility wash out, they are rebuilding. As I understand it, all the track and bridges are repaired with some track alignment and leveling still to be accomplished. At least one new bridge has been built where there once were two culverts. This is an amazing recovery and our collective hats off to the membership of the ILS.

JUST A REMINDER

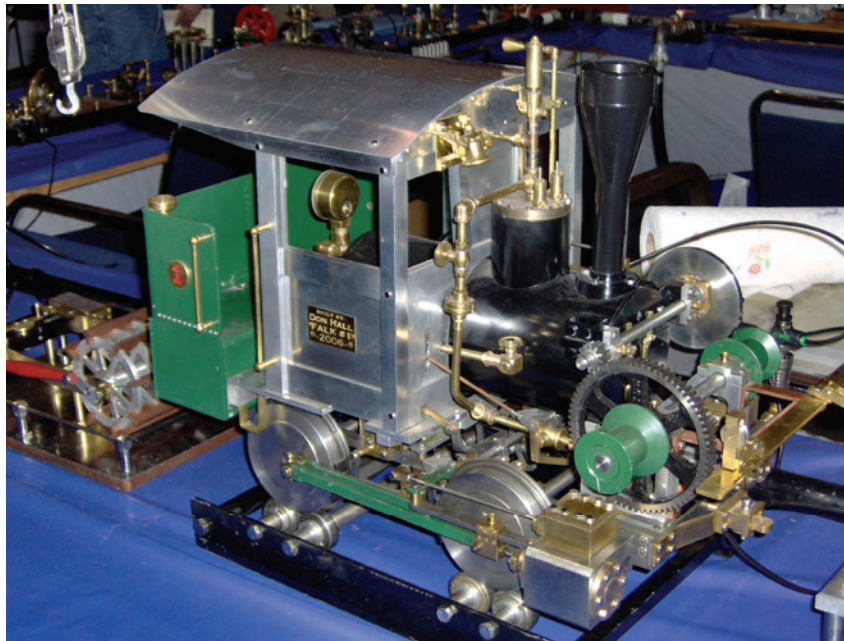
Sometimes it is necessary to reflect on who we are and where we came from. It is important to remember those who have passed on. They made what we have possible. In order to facilitate this we will be erecting a memorial board on the Station.

Once completed we will hold a meeting to honor them.

CHARLOTTE'S PAGE



Is this Carl and Ed inspecting a diesel for Jeannette? Actually, the gauge is a little big for Cinder Sniffers. It is a Plymouth Switcher. Did you know Plymouth made the Silver King tractors?



A model of Falk, a very small Porter with a gypsy engine and capstan.

CHARLOTTE'S PAGE (continued)



Damage to the track from the remnants of Hurricane Ike.

