



# The Mud Ring

The Newsletter of the Cinder Sniffers Inc.  
Fall 2009 Issue

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another summer has come and gone and fall is upon us. We had a less hectic than normal run schedule this summer with no runs in June or August. This is a good thing and a not so good thing. Some of our members were becoming burned out with monthly runs last year and this year's schedule was to help address that. In some ways the objective was accomplished with this year's schedule matching our 1974 one, but something was missing. Members in those days organized impromptu runs in the off months. During our September meeting a lively discussion was held about our run schedule as I sought to get a consensus of active members' feelings on this subject. The general consensus centered on a Summer / Winter meeting and run schedule. There are still details to be worked out, but the runs and meetings will be held on the same day during the summer schedule to encourage greater participation by our members while running consistently on the 4th Saturday. Stay tuned for more details on this interesting change.

Speaking of changes at Cinder Sniffers, the new Diesel has been delivered and it will serve our needs very well. The Diesel will make its debut at the September run. This will give us the opportunity to see what she will do hauling passengers. There is no doubt in my mind that she will haul all the club president's cars without breaking a sweat. Once we are happy that all is well, the Diesel will be removed from the club site and given a new coat of paint. She is presently in a nice shade of pea green. A Cinder Sniffer's thanks goes out to Carl Schwab and his able helper Ed Habel for making this happen. I have placed some pictures of the maiden voyage on Charlotte's page. Enjoy!

For those members who don't have the opportunity to get to the track, I will bring things up to date. We now have a crossing signal with arms, which rise and fall as the train passes through. There is also a bell. These are very effective warnings on our crowded station walkway. The area sees a lot of foot traffic, much of it small size, and this addition will help keep trains and people separated. Our goal is to provide a safe, friendly environment for the appreciation of all things trains. In addition, the buildings are being cleaned and painted, the grounds maintained and the track is in excellent shape.

## EnterTrainment Junction

The Cinder Sniffers recently traveled with engine and track to EnterTrainment Junction for a hobby show. The modeling on exhibit was first class with our own Chuck Balmer and family showing his Allegheny chassis. Another notable was John Fryant with Suzie, a very pretty paddle wheeler complete with lights, bells, whistle, rotating capstan and smoke. All is done by radio control. The live steam group of the Garden Railway Club was there with some nice examples of their art. There were displays of military equipment, hit or miss engines, canal boats and lots of other stuff, too much to mention. The venue is well suited to this type of event and it is hoped that this is the first annual show.

Continued:

While at the show, my family and I visited the large-scale (G) layout. Great progress has been made in the areas of scenery and buildings. New to me are the historical displays which add much to the understanding and enjoyment. They are a great history teaching tool. If you haven't visited the show or haven't been there in sometime, you ought to go and see what is happening. Bring the wife, kids and/or grandkids.

To many of you, the fact that Cinder Sniffers was broken into and the New York Central System sign was stolen is old news. We were able to get the word out quickly. The sign, while distinctive, isn't unique having come from a bridge. What isn't old news is our vulnerability to this type of event. It is very important that we all understand that nothing should be left at the track that we can't afford to lose. We have had many years of little or no theft; we can't count on it continuing indefinitely.

## **Let's talk safety**

When we have a run day it is important that we have trains operating to show our guests. It is more important to keep them safe. If we are going to allow guests on our property, we must ensure that their visit is interesting and a safe one. Our facilities such as track, bridges and trestles must be well maintained. For this we do extend thanks to the Wednesday gang's efforts. But there is more to safety than facilities alone. Crowd control at the station is very important. The station is the hub of our operation. How the station is run plays a vital role in ensuring that the guests don't stray on the tracks and are loaded in a balanced way. As an engineer it is reassuring to know that your train is loaded carefully. Another area of great concern especially with the wet summer/fall we have had is the condition of the wooden walkways. During our September run they were extremely slippery, perhaps hazardous. The blowing down of steam locomotive boilers and the resulting condensation only made matters worse. It would be helpful if all steam locomotive liquids could be contained and if necessary, discharged to the side when away from the wooden walk ways and not down.

## **The Mud Ring**

Lately I have found it more and more difficult to devote the time necessary to the Mud Ring. Mostly this has revolved around work and the demands on my time. Unfortunately I don't see the situation improving in the short run. Also, I have not received an article from a club member in some time. Is there somebody out there who would like to edit/write the Mud Ring or assist with writing articles? I am looking for help and support. Without support the Mud Ring will have to be reduced to two issues a year until my work life gets sorted out. I should note that Jim Keith has made some photographic and article suggestions which, given time, will appear in future issues.

## **Club Politics**

During a recent meeting a member indicated that he didn't want an issue decided behind closed doors and out of sight of the membership. Perhaps he misspoke or it was a Freudian slip but either way this statement indicates to me that this member doesn't know the Executive Committee members very well or how I operate. Except in those cases where a member's feelings might be hurt, it is my intention to discuss all issues in our monthly club meetings, warts and all, to hear all sides both pro and con. While this can sometimes take a while and even longer to come to a decision, it is necessary as part of the democratic process. The Executive Committee does meet 4 times a year, the times are posted on our Web Page and anybody is welcome to attend. The two summer meetings are held at the track and two winter ones at Faxon Machining.

In any club there is suspicion of those in “power” and the Cinder Sniffers has had more than its share of it in the past. I for one will not be a participant in nor condone backroom politics. If you feel differently about our openness, please come to a meeting and let’s discuss this out in the open and clear the air. I look forward to a good debate.

One final word, the by-laws are the by-laws and any member knowingly violating them and refusing to change when confronted will be subject to dismissal from the club. I understand that this is strong language, but it is the way it has to be. The By-laws exist to ensure that the club functions in a safe and fair way. It is the responsibility of the officers and executive committee members of the club to ensure that the rules are followed.

## **The Chicago Tunnel Company**

Yes Virginia there were and are tunnels under Chicago and for many years they were the home to a unique 2-foot gauge railroad. This railway was built by a private company to transport goods and mail in and out of the city. It should be remembered that Chicago is a lot further north than Cincinnati and gets even colder in the winter; a fact that I have personal experience with. The cold ensures that the city needs a lot of coal to keep all those large buildings warm. The railroad provided an efficient means of transportation without adding to congestion on downtown traffic. The railroad also provided the means of getting rid of all the blue clay that had to be dug for the tunnels.

The railway was begun in 1899 and the system was completed in 1906. It was officially constructed to house telephone cables, but somehow a railroad was secretly built. Chicago politics being even more corrupted then than now with an official eye turned the other way. At its peak the railway had about 60 miles of track, 3000 freight cars and 149 locomotives. The tunnel was always electric powered. The first years had an inside third rail for electrical power but it was decided that an overhead wire system would be safer especially with the concern of water seeping into the tunnels. The tunnels were built using concrete about a foot thick and had large pumping engines strategically located throughout the system to pump the water up and out into the sewer system. Each building had a connection to the railway in its basement. Through this connection huge amounts of coal and other supplies were transported with no interruptions due to weather or traffic jams.

The railway did not officially carry passengers but it did carry maintenance people throughout the system. There was a signal system to ensure that the trains didn’t come to grief. There were many grand junctions where multiple lines crossed. All in all a very extensive railway system which did its intended job quite well. The demise of the railway came about slowly brought on by the construction of the Chicago Subway System. By the 1940’s the traffic had diminished and the Company was declared bankrupt in 1956 with the scrappers moving in rapidly.

Are the tunnels still there? Yes they are and they house communication and power cables. The rails were never removed but the overhead copper wire was scrapped. The large pumps are still there but the electric motors have been removed. Until 911 it was possible to visit the tunnels. When visiting it was necessary to bring your own lighting. The tunnels were never infested with rats or other animals; no garbage or trash was allowed, and until a pile was driven through the roof of the tunnel, there was no major flooding. It was decided that when the hole was driven through the roof of the tunnel it wasn’t flooding but a leak, and therefore covered by insurance. This incident is known in Chicago as the “Great Chicago Leak”.

# CHARLOTTE'S PAGE



The new diesels maiden run with Ed and Carl in control? Seems odd to have two diehard steam people messing with a Diesel but they have done a great job

Ed and company on Carl's Clishay at Entertainment Junction. The Cinder Sniffers gave rides on Saturday and Sunday



Greg Korner's Jenny at the Cinder Sniffer's track under steam.  
Picture courtesy of Jim Keith

