



# The Mud Ring

## The Newsletter of the Cinder Sniffers Inc.

### Spring 2009 Issue

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Right about now in the middle of February I am sick of winter. I find it very depressing to face another cold day, leaving the house in the dark and struggling with whatever Mother Nature has left on my windshield. I suppose that compared to others I have had a nice vacation this winter with a work trip to the Dominican Republic. The weather is almost always very nice, and if it rains it isn't for long. They really don't have seasons, just a little warmer or a little colder. Oh yes, they do get hurricanes but only two or three a year. So what does this have to do with railroads? Well it would be an ideal place to retire to and build a 7.5" railroad. The land is cheap and the weather is fair. So why aren't there any miniature railroads there? Well there hasn't been a history of railroads on the island. To my knowledge nobody felt inclined to build one to the sugar cane fields or anywhere else for that matter. I am sure there are a few enthusiasts but I didn't run into any. I have a few more trips planned there, so maybe I will find a live one. If you want a very nice place to vacation and don't want crowds, this is the place. Many of the other islands have railroads. The one I would love to visit is Cuba. Yes I know the politics of it all but still I would love to see the last of the small Baldwins steaming around hauling cane trains and doing what they are suppose to do, earning a living for their owners. There is probably no better place for a steam enthusiast to visit. Perhaps one day the politics will change.

Our erstwhile treasurer, Ed Habel, introduced me to a magazine on miniature outdoors railways. *Miniature Railway*, the title says it all. The focus is on Great Britain's below 2' gauge railroads and there is a great variety to choose. There is a little for everyone, from very small backyard private railways to 15" public ones. The small ones are definitely inspirational to model builders. It is amazing what can be built if one has a little ingenuity and creativity. Too often we focus on the biggest and the best, which results in nothing getting done. Simplicity and reliability should be the objective for a first locomotive. *Miniature Railway* provides plenty of inspiration and how-to suggestions.

We received a letter from Keith Watson the other day. Keith is an Englishman who moved to Australia and has developed a business building and selling locomotives throughout the world. I noticed that there was a line drawing on the envelope very much in the style of Emmett. You do know who Roland Emmett was don't you? If you don't you have missed out on one of the great fun railroad artists with a streak of whimsy and satire that is very British. He wrote books, drew cartoons for Punch and built models with much of his attention toward railroads. For Emmett nothing was sacred when it came to poking fun. His ideas were taken from the cartoon page to full size reality with the British Exposition. Here he built a railway with all his whimsy much in the style of Ward Kimble and Walt Disney. His books are no longer in print but can be readily found on the

Internet including Amazon.com. If you want your sense of humor tickled then give him a try and a good place to start is Wikipedia. There is a very good link there.

The Cinder Sniffers have been out and about. Carl Schwab put together a very nice show at the Duke Energy building downtown. We held the December meeting there over cookies and drinks while enjoying each other's company and enjoying the Trains. This is a definite not to be missed event.

Harvey Bond organized, at the last minute, a display at Johnny's Toys with a couple of engines and a car. The presentation was nicely done and increased our exposure.

We gave away quite a few Cinder Sniffers cards with our Email and run days at both shows. Perhaps this will help turn around our dwindling attendance.

Our January run was very well attended and the weather wasn't too bad. Well, ok it was very cold, but we all survived and had a great time. The fare box did very well and the abbreviated Diner and Flea Market had the best day in a long time. Don Saager showed up beard and all with pictures of the nearly completed trestle. I am looking forward to running over it. The view will be spectacular. The tunnel will be the next project.

So what have you been doing this winter? Chuck Balmer brought his nearly completed Allegheny to our January meeting. Chuck and family have been very busy and the resultant 3/4" model is a jewel. Perhaps Chuck will send the Mud Ring an update on the progress? (cont'd on page 2)

I haven't touched any of my large-scale stuff. I am waiting for the garage to warm up a little before getting back to Susan. I have some things that need attention including plumbing in a new safety valve. Safety valves that don't shut off after they have opened really bug me. The one that came with Susan could half empty the boiler each time she opened. Not really a safe condition and very unnerving when you see the water glass empty. Come Spring she will have a nice new Kunkle safety valve, which past experience has shown, will perform beautifully.

The Cinder Sniffers executive committee will be starting a review of the By Laws this year. Many parts of them are antiquated and out of tune with the present organization and times. Much has changed in the over fifty-year life of the club. Fortunately much has stayed the same including the purpose. We owe a great deal to those who came before in the club.

For those of you with small scale interests things have been happening in my basement. After a series of debates with myself, which usually isn't very constructive, I came up with the decision to change my On3 layout into an 3/8n2. The math isn't very difficult, one is .250 to the foot and the other is .375 and both run on .750 gauge track. So why change and why pick such an odd scale? Well the answer is easy and difficult. The easy part was nothing had to be done to the existing track, as the gauge was correct. The hard part was putting away all those scratch built On3 cars and starting over. The decision was made during the summer and I am still convinced this is the way to go for me. Don't believe all the stuff about how larger scales are easier to build in. Actually you put more and smaller detail on. What I like about the larger scale is that it has presence. It moves and looks pleasing to the eye. Finally this scale is a military miniature scale and there is a huge amount of detail parts and figures available.

As we head into the Springtime I would like to encourage one and all to visit the track. Our grounds are very beautiful and seem to be at their best in the spring. If you don't have an engine or don't want to load it up and bring it to the track I suggest that you bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the facility. As a family we have spent many happy days picnicking and running our steam engine away from the crowds and pressures of a run day.

I would like to encourage all of you to get involved in Cinder Sniffers. It is your organization and it should reflect the whole group's thoughts and activities. We will be a better club if you get involved.

This Spring the Cinder Sniffers made the major decision of purchasing an engine for the club, to be used to haul the public on run days and for maintenance around the track. This is an important decision not only from the money point of view but the liability of maintaining an engine in good condition. This was a problem in the past with our original club engine. We will have to establish rules to ensure that our investment is maintained in excellent condition. For those of technical bent, the engine will be a diesel outline, gasoline powered hydraulic driven SW1500 switcher. It will be custom painted and should be able to easily pull 4 or 5 club cars.

It is our intention to honor those members who have passed on. It has been some time since we placed a marker around the track. This time we will be doing something a little different. Jim Keith and the Wednesday gang have been busy with a way to display the names on the Station. We will be having our memorial service at the May run day.

The Saager's will be hosting the May Meeting at their track in Kentucky. According to Don there has been a lot of activity on the track building front, and perhaps by May the bottom loop will be completed.

Finally I would like to take a moment and explain why the Mud Ring hasn't been seen for some time. It is very simple really. I have been extremely busy with work, and at the end of a long day all I want to do is to settle in a comfortable chair and vegetate with a book. There is some light at the end of the work tunnel, which is good, as this pace is taking a toll on everybody concerned. The economy has effected most businesses and their customers. Nobody wants to miss a job, any job, in case the next one offered is a long time away.

Think Safety, Act Safely and Have a good time.

*Vincent*





A live steam Case traction engine



This model was built in Wales by a friend of John Normans



Enjoy the detail