TO MY ASSOCIATES

Christmas is many things to many people:

A time of giving and a time of receiving gifts; a time of expressing our love and a time of having love expressed to us; a time to inspire and to be inspired; a time of concern for those who have cares we may share or burdens we may help to bear and a time, perhaps, of feeling the concern of others.

It is also a time for contemplating with reverence and awe what Paul terms God’s unspeakable gift of his son.

It is in the light of all this that I express to you my gratitude for your friendship and loyalty during the year and my wish that this Christmas and the New Year bring you real joy and true happiness.

Glen Brock
President

St. Louis Office Change

Robert (Bob) J. Puff, who was General Rate Manager at St. Louis, has been promoted to Assistant Freight Traffic Manager there. He succeeds William (Bill) E. Barrett who retired after 32 years with the Company.

All of the newly promoted traffic office’s service has been at St. Louis where he began with the M&O as a Junior Clerk. He held various positions and was named General Rate Manager January 1, 1969, the office he held until his most recent promotion.

Mr. Barrett started with the railroad as a file clerk and at St. Louis also. His first solicitation job was in 1925. He was transferred to Chicago as Commercial Agent in 1928 and headed the Pittsburgh office from 1937-1938, when he returned to St. Louis as Asst. Gen. Ftg. Agt. He was made Asst. Ftg. Mgr. in 1954.

Astro Program Launched In Mississippi

Representatives of Mississippi railroads met recently in Jackson to formulate plans for advancing the American railroads' national Astro program at the state level. The meeting was called by GM&O Assistant Vice-President Fred Johnson whose headquarters are in the capital city and who heads up the state organization.

Eighteen district chairmen were present. Through them steps will be taken to better acquaint the public, governmental officials, the news media, customers, rail stockholders and others with Astro purposes and objectives. Similar action is being taken in every state in the Union.

What Is Astro?

Astro— America's Sound Transportation Review Organization — was created more than 14 months ago by the Association of American Railroads to study the problems and the prospects of the railroad industry Bankruptcy of the Penn-Central, which also highlighted the financial plight of a number of other American railroads, hastened the report by the Astro Committee, which is headed by former United States Senator George A. Smathers.

The study determined what many knew. That the railroad industry was in deep trouble. That largely because of unreasonable regulations and inequalities of treatment by the government in relation to other modes of transportation, railroad earnings were insufficient to maintain properties properly or to finance the improvements needed to meet the ever growing demand for rail services.

In the words of Smathers in a recent address, the railroads “cannot — on their own decision and judgment — make competitive rates and offer new services designed to attract new business. They cannot — on their own decision and judgment — stop unprofitable operations. They cannot adjust prices to meet inflation automatically like other businesses.”

Billions For Other Modes

At the same time, government passes out — in the past year alone — $4 billion in tax dollars for transportation modes that compete with the railroads. And the railroads are expected to meet all their financial needs on their own as though there were no competition.

Forty of 71 major railroads had deficits in working capital at mid-year and the welfare of any railroad sooner or later affects the welfare of all railroads because their services are so inter-related. But railroads can do the job successfully if allowed to do so. For the government to take over the railroads would cost as high as $66 billion, and there would still be the need for improvements costing billions more.

So what does Astro recommend? As outlined generally by Smathers, it proposes in order to place all modes on a more even footing that railroads be exempt from taxes on road of way, especially since competitors don’t pay similar taxes.

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Liton to Meridian

K. E. (Kea) Litton has been named Division Traffic Manager to succeed C. Y. (Corky) Hall at Meridian. He assumes his new office after two years as Commercial Agent at Birmingham and two years as Division Freight Representative at Tuscaloosa. Prior to that he was with the Company as Commercial Agent at Dallas and Ft. Trft. Agt. at Mobile. His first job with the railroad was in Mobile in 1947.

With Mr. Litton’s promotion E. B. (Ted) deVilliers, Jr., was appointed Division Freight Representative at Tuscaloosa. Formerly with the GM&O Traffic Department in various capacities at Mobile and Memphis between 1960 and 1966 Mr. de Villiers returns to the railroad following wide experience as an industrial traffic executive.

(See Page 3, Col. 3)
Rolling Lab Tests Rails For Defects

Twice a year a Sperry rail testing car inspects GM&O rails. Constantly on the move, the five man crew lives aboard behind the six windows in the center of the car which resembles one of the old gas-electric combination baggage and motor cars of the 1930’s. The lab is in the rear and the motive power in the front.

Twice a year a Sperry Detector Car makes a system wide inspection of GM&O rails in an effort to spot trouble before trouble develops. Car 131, one of Sperry’s 16-car fleet, was based at Bloomington for four days in October while testing on the Eastern Division.

Resembling one of the old 1930 type gas-electric motor cars on the outside, but packed inside with space age electronic equipment and with living quarters for five, the car attracted widespread interest, as it always does. Writing in the Bloomington, Illinois, Pantagraph, Reporter Charles Hilty told how the moving laboratory discovers faults in the steel rails that are undetectable to the human eye. And he described how the nomadic crew lives and works aboard.

The Sperry cars were converted into rolling laboratories from commuter cars purchased from various railroads starting in the early 1930’s. Their nearest ancestors might be the gas-electric cars that scouted back and forth during the declining days of passenger traffic on the GM&O’s Kansas City branch,” Reporter Hilty wrote.

13 Miles Per Hour

When testing track the car never exceeds 13 miles per hour, and more frequently operates at 6 miles per hour, although it is capable of traveling 50 miles per hour when moving from place to place.

During testing electricity is sent into the rail, picked up by receivers and recorded automatically on tape. Any defects, such as cracks deep in the rail or joint metal, change the flow of electricity.

When a defect is found, the car is stopped. A crew member determines the exact location of the defect with a hand-held ultrasonic transmitter. The location is marked with paint and a track maintenance crew, following the car, changes the rail.

Charles Jackson, a member of GM&O’s engineering force with headquarters at Bloomington who traveled with the car while on the Eastern Division, explains the car’s work this way. “We’re hunting out something before it happens. It is one of the cheapest forms of insurance the railroad can buy.”

Crew of Five

The Sperry crew consists of a chief operator, an operator and two trainees. While operating on the GM&O, a locomotive engineer and a conductor are always in charge, in addition to supervisory personnel.

Describing the interior of the car Reporter Hilty wrote, “living quarters weren’t furnished from a Mediterranean cruise ship, but they compare favorably with accommodations on a destroyer.”

On nights when they can find a siding with easy access to 110-volt AC current their rolling home is air-conditioned. Newly remodeled cars in the Sperry fleet even have indoor-outdoor carpeting in the living quarters, but the decor in Car 131 is vintage 1949 American dinette.

“Transformed is the rusting old railroad kitchen into a smoothly operating kitchen that serves less than 25 cents a day,” the article continues.

“At the front of the car is the power plant, where Car 131 betrays her age.

“She is powered by a six-cylinder Winton gasoline engine, built for the old Electro-Motive Co., a forerunner of the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors that has had so much to do with sweeping the steam locomotive off American railroads.”

With the spring will come another Sperry car to GM&O rails.

Charles Jackson of GM&O’s Engineering Department in Bloomington rode the Sperry car while it was on the Eastern Division.

Not Interested In Liberation Movement

The women’s liberation movement that is sweeping the country doesn’t interest Mrs. R. L. (Marilyn) Prichard the least bit. After all, the attractive Artesia Agent-Operator has been holding down a man’s job for more than 20 years.

“I’m just one of them,” she said, indicating with a sweep of an arm that she meant the men busy working around the station and in the yards at this Mississippi terminal where our Montgomery and Mobile-Chicago lines meet. She first came to work for the GM&O during the war years when telegraphers were so badly needed. “If I had come here needing special attention I wouldn’t have done so well,” is the way she modestly puts it.

The mother of a twin boy and girl — Daryl and Caryl — age nine and another
ASTRO

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amount lost from state and local coffers would be reimbursed by the federal government.

One Transportation Fund

Astro also proposes that Congress establish a single transportation fund, to be used by all modes in furthering a balanced transportation system. It recommends that funds already available be used to eliminate rail and highway grade crossing hazards.

In addition to proposing a guarantee of up to $400 million annually in loans for improvements to railroad rights of way, Astro findings urge assistance for railroads in updating and modernizing motive power and freight car fleets.

Under the plan the Government would (1) guarantee loans for such purposes; (2) make low interest loans available for equipment; and (3) create a non-profit corporation to acquire a fleet of unassigned general purpose freight cars for which the railroads would pay for on a user basis. Bills are already in Congress to provide for the latter proposal.

Passenger Train Problem

Astro also made proposals for a realistic approach to the passenger train problem which was the basis for legislation recently enacted creating a semi-public corporation, National Railroad Passenger Corporation or Railpax. Railpax will begin operations May 1 and the railroads will have to contract with them to transfer their passenger services to the corporation or continue such service until 1975.

However, the railroads will have to buy designated amounts of Railpax common stock based upon previous passenger train losses, either with cash or by contributing equipment. Among other provisions are that any state, regional or local agency may request Railpax service if it agrees to pay 63/3% of the losses caused by the new service.

A basic system of inter-city passenger service is to be announced soon and Railpax must provide this service until July 1, 1973.

In the nationwide effort to have Astro's objectives understood, support must first come from the men and women who work for the railroads. You will be furnished with ample material from time to time.

Burns Promoted

W. T. (Ridgie) Burns, who has been a member of the Freight Traffic Department at Mobile since 1945, was promoted recently to the office of Assistant General Rate Manager. At the time of his most recent promotion, he was a Special Representative of the Company. He has had wide experience having held jobs in the Correspondence, Mailing and Tariff Division on the East side of the Traffic Department. He specialized in traffic courses while studying at the University of Alabama Extension in Mobile. Mr. Burns is married and has a daughter who is a sophomore in college and a son who is a junior in high school.

Clark V. Hall, formerly Division Traffic Manager at Meridian, has been promoted to the position of Manager-Special Equipment at Mobile. He succeeds the late H. O. Austin who succumbed recently to a heart attack.

Hall worked in the office he now heads in 1963 and 64 after nine years prior service in various capacities in the Traffic Department. He has also had experience as a Traffic Agent in Kansas City and in Mobile and headed the Meridian, Mississippi Traffic office from January 1969 to the time of his present promotion.

Fifty-Year Salesman

R. P. (Pat) Tallman, General Freight Traffic Manager, is proudly wearing his new fifty year service pin. He's a wee bit heavier than many remember him back in the days when he traveled the line six days a week looking for a car of freight, but still the same exuberant salesman.

Columnist Remembers

Paul Flowers is a widely read columnist for the Memphis Commercial Appeal. In a nostalgic piece recently about the passing of name passenger trains from the American scene he commented,

"Isaac B. 'Mr. Ike' Tigrett pioneered with the Rebel on the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio, and inaugurated hostess service aboard his streamlined diesels. Mrs. Vera Evertt, now in retirement in Memphis, trained Mr. Ike's hostesses, and was responsible for multiplying the comfort and polish of passengers between St. Louis and Mobile."
Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Yeend Jr., drink a fruit punch toast with fellow employees on the occasion of his retirement after 53 years of service. Behind the table is Edward III, who also works for the Company. The retiring Accounting Department employee at Mobile has been active in the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, having served as General Secretary-Treasurer. Also he was a member of the GM&O System Board of Adjustment dating back to 1932. As one of the founders and secretary of the GM&O Cheer-up Club he helped bring entertainment to shut-ins.

Vice President and Comptroller Y. D. Lott, right, expresses the Company's appreciation to Miss Mayme Talley for her loyal services over a period of fifty years. Secretary to the Asst. Auditor Disbursements, Miss Talley was honored at an office party. Waiting to offer congratulations also are A. M. Vast, retired Auditor Disbursements (second from left) and E. A. (Ed) Overbey, Auditor Disbursements.

Inspects Last Train

Car Inspector W. A. Schimpf checked his last train recently ending a railroad career that began at the Frascati Shops in Mobile 42 years ago. Trimmer C. R. White was on hand to say goodbye and to express the Company's appreciation for the loyal and efficient manner in which he has carried on his work. Mr. Schimpf plans to work among his flowers and do a little light gardening now that he has the extra time.

The GM&O Traffic Employees Club was on hand in full force and with a large bouquet to see Russell Parker (right), Chief Tariff Bureau, presented with his fifty year service pin by F. H. (Freddie) Bowers, Gen. Pkt. Traff. Mgr., Rates and Divisions. Among those present from left to right were: C. L. Marlin, Asst. Gen. Rate Mgr. (T.O.F.C.); W. T. Burns, Asst. Gen. Rate Mgr.; W. H. Greb, Rr. Ck. (TOPC); J. E. Kopf, Tarff. Ck.; Miss Eloise Wahl, receptionist; Mrs. Betty Mashburn, Tarff. Ck.; Mrs. Ann Lanney, Office Asst. and Miss Mary McAtee, Office Asst.

Osing Recognized

G. L. (Gary) Osing, age 23, is Assistant Auditor Revenues at Mobile and attends the University of South Alabama at night. Fellow students recently elected him President of the Evening Student Council. The busy young man is the son of the late "Thub" Osing, well known Traveling Auditor for the Railroad with headquarters at Springfield for many years. When his father died in 1967 after an extended illness, Gary left college and accepted a job as Office Assistant with the Company in Mobile. He was promoted to Chief Clerk in August 1969 and a year later named Assistant Auditor Revenues in general charge of the Passenger and Station Accounts section.