

Peoria Railfest Weekend 2005 Is Where You'll Want to be

Preparations are in the final stages for the Society's 33rd Annual Meeting, Railfest 2005, October 14-16, and you won't want to miss it. The venerable and recently renovated Pere Marquette Hotel (with free, covered parking) will be the headquarters for the weekend's events. In the center of downtown, you'll be in easy walking distance to the former Rock Island and Illinois Terminal depots, the picturesque Illinois River and numerous rail photo spots.

Peoria Railfan Weekend October 14-16, 2005

- ? Friday night Social with Your Favorite Slides and Photos
- ? All-Day Saturday Giant Trade Show
- ? Operating Model Layout
- ? Model Displays and Contest
- ? Annual Banquet Featuring Speaker Pioneer Railcorp's Guy L. Brenkman
- ? All-GM&O Slide Show

The fun begins Friday night with the traditional gathering of fellow GM&O fans for socializing in the Society's hospitality room. Bring your favorite slides and photos to show and display.

Saturday morning and afternoon, some of the best railroadiana and models will be available for sale. Here's your chance to fill in

your collection of photos, timetables, china and so much more. A fully operational modular layout will be sure to please and if you need inspiration to get back to modeling, check out the excellent examples entered in this year's popular-vote contest.

Addressing us during the Saturday night banquet will be Pioneer Railcorp's founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer Guy L. Brenkman. Among Pioneer Railcorp's 16 rail subsidiaries are five located in Illinois, two in Alabama, and another in Mississippi. Mr. Brenkman was one of the first to recognize the future importance of shortline railroading. With rail subsidiaries in three former GM&O states, every member, South or North End, will come away with a better grasp of shortline railroading as it is practiced today.

A brief business meeting will follow and then you'll enjoy having your name called out when some rare and not so rare but worth having door prizes are handed out. This year, for instance, you could be a winner of a copy of the hard-to-find *Singing Rails*.

The evening will be capped off by a presentation by Joseph Petric of some of the best GM&O images ever in a slide show that will go on until the last man is standing.

Sunday morning the officers and directors will meet and you are cordially invited to attend to learn about the Society's affairs and ask questions. Plenty of the day will remain for railfan tours. The Peoria area is one of Illinois' best places for railroad action. Stop by the Society table at Saturday morning registration for a printed guide to Peoria railroading.

A block of rooms at special Society rates has been reserved. Call the Pere Marquette direct at 309.637.6500 for this rate.

In October, Peoria is where you'll want to be.

President's Report

VP Ken Donnelly Resigns

Kenneth Donnelly resigned as the Society's Vice President in mid-August for personal reasons. Ken's term expires in December and I, with the assent of the Board of Directors, have elected to leave the post vacant.

In addition to his duties as Vice President, Ken had served as Publications Chairman, editing the *News* and the *Switchlist*. On an interim basis, I have appointed Gene Glendinning, a current member of the Publications Committee, as Chairman. He, along with Committee Member Louis Saillard, will carry on the publication program until the first of the year.

Ken also had charge of the Society's model projects. Kevin Kiper, Chairman of the Modeling Committee, assisted by Committee Member Gerald Doran, will continue that program.

Ken's service to the Society for the past several years has been immeasurable and we all owe him our gratitude for his unstinting service.

Your Vote is Important

Enclosed is your ballot to elect the Society's President and Vice President for the years 2006-2007, and Secretary, Treasurer, and four Directors for 2006.

Every candidate has pledged to devote his

The Switchlist is a publication of the GM&O Historical Society and appears four times a year with news of the Society, the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad and its predecessors, modeling and other matters of interest. Material for submission should be mailed to **The Switchlist**, 411 E. Valencia, Ave., Barrington, IL 60010, or e-mailed to geneglen@sbcglobal.net. ? GM&O Historical Society 2005.

energies to insure the continued success and growth of the Society. Each has volunteered to devote his personal time to insure your continued enjoyment of membership.

To fulfill by-law obligations, it is crucial that you cast your vote. You may not

participate in any other Society activity than voting for your representatives, but doing so is important.

Please do your part and cast your vote. Don't put your ballot aside. Take a minute now to make your choices, and then return your ballot today.

On Katrina, Flood Devastation

As this issue goes to press, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf region and the subsequent flooding of New Orleans have yet to be calculated or fully appreciated. It isn't yet possible, just days after the tragedy, to publish a full report of the damage to the former GM&O. Such a calculation will have to wait for a subsequent issue.

What is known, however, is that a large number of Society members were among those who endured the ravages of the hurricane's ferocious winds and subsequent flooding. To those affected, those who may have lost their homes, their possessions, and their safety, know that you have the sympathy and good wishes of your fellow Society members. Please join me in keeping our friends throughout the ravaged region in your hearts and in your prayers. - **Bill Molony**

Depot Developments

One remnant of the GM&O is gone and another nearly destroyed, both by fire.

The former M&O depot at Shubuta, Miss., 38 miles south of Meridian, was consumed by fire in the early morning hours of June 21. The structure had been moved from its original west-of-tracks site to the east side and at the time of the fire, was in derelict condition. A photo of the depot in better days appears in issue 91-92 of the *News*.

On the afternoon of August 4, fire all but claimed the former C&A depot at Petersburg, Ill. on the Jack Line. According to the Illinois state fire marshal as quoted in the Petersburg *Observer*, the interior was "completed gutted." The building has been privately owned for several years. Photos of the Petersburg depot in service appeared in *News* issue 55.

- **Brian Johnston, Jack Brand**

The Friends of the C&A Depot, Independence, Mo., an all-volunteer group, has faithfully restored the 126-year-old C&A and have finished both floors with appropriate furnishings and railroadiana. Relocated about a mile from its original position, it is now strategically placed next to the National Frontier Trails Center. The depot is open between April and October with convenient weekly and Sunday hours. Admission is free but donations are welcome. If you are in the Kansas City area, a visit is a must.

Seemingly forgotten by all but the current private owners, Louise and David Milam who have kept it from being leveled, the 107-year-old former St.L P&N (C&A, Alton, GM&O) Pekin, Ill., depot is still standing and in nearly the same state of repair it was in 1972 when the agent closed the door for the last time.

Louise Milam has worked tirelessly to gain historical recognition of the Pekin depot and was successful in 2004, adding the Pekin depot to a list of only a few other former GM&O structures with that distinction.

The depot has particular importance for C&A fans because it was on the station's platform in 1931 that representatives of the Baltimore & Ohio formally took possession of the C&A.

The building stands at Broadway and 14th streets and is only a short drive from downtown Peoria. It should be a must visit while attending Peoria Railfest 2005.

According to an item in *Preservation Magazine*, the publication of the National Trust and Historic Preservation, the 1854 M&O brick shops, Prichard, Ala., the state's oldest surviving railroad building, was demolished last winter when contaminated soil cleanup efforts failed. - **Louis Saillard**

Metra, Chicago's suburban rail service, has used the Lemont, Ill. station since assuming service from the ICG. Though modernized with new windows and interior, the depot externally appears as it has since it was opened in 1858. It, along with the Lockport, Ill. depot, also served by Metra, are among the oldest Illinois depots still standing and certainly the oldest still in regular service.

Modeler's Track

A wealth of commercially produced GM&O and predecessor power and rolling stock has recently or will soon become available. The quality of production and accuracy of paint schemes of many of these products has steadily improved to the point it is certainly possible to claim museum quality models.

This flurry of great stuff should not be taken for granted. Sales are closely monitored to determine which roads sell so if you want to see even more quality power and rolling stock in your favorite markings, check out these new products.

O Gauge

MTH Electric Trains, Columbia, MD, will soon have a C&A USRA 2-8-2 (no. 20-3182-2) as part of their Premier line with a Protosound 2.0 system and bearing the prototypical no. 887. Standard Oil of Indiana purchased five Mikes, nos. 885-889, along with 500 coal gondolas, in 1921 to insure both power and equipment was available to haul coal from its Southern Illinois mines to its refineries. The model is an example of that series. Being considered by MTH at press time but not decided is appropriate Standard Oil of Indiana markings. If this happens, the MTH Mike should prove to be one of the most sought after engines ever. Member John Brown, Bloomington, was instrumental in getting MTH to change its planned incorrect number by supplying diagrams and roster data to document his case. Thanks, John, for assisting MTH in getting this one correct. The MRP is \$799.99.

Atlas O, Hillside, NJ, has released accurately numbered and lettered GM&O pulpwood cars (no. 7284) in both yellow, nos. 4000, 4001, and oxide red, nos. 4020, 4028. The bodies are die cast with see-through sloping decks, plastic bulkheads, and separately applied grab irons and brake parts. Appropriate trucks and Kadee-compatible couplers are included. MRP is \$55.95.

Also out is GM&O PS-1 single door 50-foot box car (no. 7595) in ABS plastic with

etched metal roof walk, separately applied grab irons and brake gear. The green car comes with the "Cushioned for a soft ride . . . inside" slogan, arched lettering, ownership and return routing lettering, plus end markings. Appropriate trucks and Kadee compatible couplers are included. MRP is \$62.95.

A 1937 AAR double door 40-foot box car (no. 9703) in GM&O markings featuring the "Rebel Route" banner, the word "automobile" and white stripe door is another release. Featured are wire grab irons, die-cast ladders, etched metal roof walk, accurate trucks and Kadee-compatible couplers. The red car with black roof comes in four numbers. MRP \$57.95.

Available since late last year and worth a look is a 50-ton war emergency hopper (7420) decorated for Alton in four numbers, 60055, 60096, 60111, and 60143. The RTR cars are of ABS and die cast construction, have removable coal loads, full interior detail, excellent train line and brake systems, separate grab irons and ladders, sprung hopper doors, and sprung trucks. MRP \$52.95.

Soon to be released is the first SD-40 bearing four GM&O numbers. The chassis is die-cast with metal handrails and grab irons and features dual motors with flywheels (in the powered versions), directional LED lighting, and Kadee-compatible die-cast metal couplers. Numbers 907, 916 are on both the two-rail (nos. 2502-1, 2502-2) and two-rail with TMCC (nos. 3502-1, 3502-1, 3502-2) while two un-powered units, (nos. 2552-1, 2552-2) bear nos. 906, 913. MRP \$439.95, 479.95, 229.95 respectively.

HO Gauge

Athearn Trains, Carson, Calif. has released a GM&O GP35 (nos. ATH91739, ATH91740) in two numbers, 602, 605. The die-cast body rides on Alco trucks. Two numbers are available, 602, 605. MRP \$87.98.

A GM&O double door 40-foot box car (ATH70165, ATH70166) that features the latter day red scheme, "DF" marking, arched lettering, wings, and return instructions, is available in two numbers in the 24000-24099 series. MRP \$13.98.

Branchline Trains, East Hartford, Ct., has released its 12-section, 1 drawing room sleepers (nos. 5340, 5341) lettered for *Trinity* and *Orange State*. Each is a state-of-the-art, museum quality kit featuring accurate components and full interiors to match the prototype. Both were part of a fleet of 12 sleepers that had electro-mechanical air conditioning and appropriate components to represent the system are included. The unsatisfactory paint scheme of the earlier released coaches has been replaced by accurate and beautifully applied colors and lettering. MRP \$39.95.

Model RR Warehouse, Roanoke, Ind. has a made to order, un-powered and undecorated Brill 55 brass kit for the GM&N's nos. 300-301. A photo of no. 301 appeared in *News* issue 15. Those who want an unusual GM&N kit may wish to explore the possibilities. MRP \$79.95

-Kevin Kiper/Gerald Doran

Crown Custom Imports, Woodbury, N.Y., has acquired the *Rail Classics* transfer caboose project and will produce the previously announced series. It is reported that previous reservations placed with brass dealers or with Crown Custom have been cancelled. New reservations must be placed only through Crown Custom Imports, P.O. Box 273, Woodbury, NY 11797-0273, 631.692.8805.

To be offered are: factory painted CCI-255P, GM&O 2970 with spelled out road name; CCI-256P, GM&O 2973 with large initials, small side numbers; CCI-257P, GM&O 2979, with large initials and side numbers; and CCI-258P, in ICG orange. Unpainted models of each will also be available. The factory painted models have a MRP of \$195; unpainted models, \$160.

- Daniel Kohlberg