



## Switchlist

GULF MOBILE & OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### Returns are in for 2006 Officers, Directors

The 2006 elections results are in and elected were Joe Petric and Gene Glendinning, President and Vice President respectively for two-year terms, Marc Liberta, Secretary, and incumbent David Johnston, Treasurer, for one-year terms.

Though only 25 percent of the membership returned ballots, the number was the second highest percentage voting in the past four years.

All of the candidates for officers appeared on the ballot without opposition but there were seven listed candidates for five director positions. An unusual number of write-in votes for officers and directors alike were recorded, especially for vice president and secretary. Though having resigned the 2005 position before ballots were distributed, Kenneth Donnelly received 25 percent of the write-in votes cast for vice president, and Glendinning's name was written in by 18 percent for secretary. Most of the votes cast for Donnelly and Glendinning were received within a single week.

Seven candidates for five director positions were on the ballot and elected for 2006 were former Society President David Bridges, incumbents Brian Johnston and

Kevin Kiper, former secretary Art Richardson, and incumbent Louis Saillard.

Twenty-three percent of the votes cast for directors were recorded for current Director Gerald Doran, James Windmeier, both of whom were on the ballot, and eight write-ins.

The elections resulted in geographical balance with three officers, Glendinning, Liberta, and Petric residing north of St. Louis, Director Kiper from California, and one officer, David Johnston, and four directors, Bridges, Brian Johnston, Richardson, and Saillard from the South.

Officers and directors will assume their responsibilities January 1, 2006.

### Membership Renewals Due

Membership renewals for 2006 are now due. Memberships run from January 1 to December 31.

There are three levels of membership available. **Benefactor** is for those making an added contribution of \$100 or more. **Sustaining** members are those contributing \$50 or more. Both memberships are eligible for partial tax deductions. Benefactor and Sustaining members are recognized each year within the *News* for their generous added support of Society activities. **Regular** memberships are \$30.

Income derived from membership makes up nearly 85 percent of each year's available funds for publishing the *News*, the *Switchlist*, advances to manufacturers for model projects, and general administrative expenses. Without the added contributions of Benefactor and Sustaining members, the current level of activity would not be possible.

Please consider either of the two higher levels of membership to insure the current level of benefits can be maintained.

*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](mailto:geneglen@sbcglobal.net). ? GM&O Historical Society 2005.

## ***President's Report***

This will be my last message to you as President since my second and final term ends December 31. I want to thank those fellow 2005 officers and directors who devoted so many hours of labor in serving you, the membership, and advancing the Society's goals.

I know you join me in welcoming incoming President Joe Petric as he assumes his first, two-year term. Joe is a founding member of the Society and brings not only a love of the Society, but fresh ideas and managerial skills that will be essential for its continued success.

The Society has now been in existence longer than was the railroad we honor. Whenever I speak with members, the one recurring theme is amazement that so much has been accomplished and that it still exists!

It *has* been an amazing run, but there are warning signs that new programs and probably renovation of others is needed if its vitality and financial well being is to be maintained.

Sadly, for the past four years, membership has been in a slow but steady decline. Every year members go on to their eternal rest and others find their interests change and do not renew. This is a concern because without new members, money to pay for programs and publications is diminished. What will it take to renew interest among those who dropped out and bring them back while at the same time attract new recruits?

Participation in elections is another concern. Though this year's vote totals were the second highest in the past five years, it is troubling that so few offer their names as candidates to help in the direction of the Society and so small a percentage take the trouble to drop a postcard in the mail. How can more members be made interested in running for office and what needs to be done to increase voter participation?

For many years, an annual wall calendar was provided members free of charge. This no longer became an option when full color was added to the *News*. Beautiful calendars were offered for sale the past three years and

it was hoped they would be another source of much needed revenue but despite their appeal, each lost money or returned only a little more than the cost to produce them so it was not possible to continue the project. Are large images of GM&O scenes no longer something of interest?

Only a small fraction of the membership has attended Annual Meetings though participation of vendors and attendance of the public at sponsored trade shows was usually strong.

Since 2001, member attendance, the number of vendors showing their wares and the public visiting has been in decline. The nadir was reached this year at Peoria Railfest 2005. Despite more than 100 members residing within 100 miles of the meeting site, fewer than 40 from all over the country showed up. There were only 32 members and guests who sat down at the banquet, only a third of the usual number that have appeared in the past. Thus, an event that over the course of many years was fun for those attending and profitable for the Society turned into a losing proposition. Has e-Bay killed off trade shows and is meeting old friends a thing of the past? If so, what should replace the annual meeting format?

Though support for model projects remains strong, the availability of more GM&O commercial products puts the program in jeopardy. While the off-the-shelf products are welcomed--and might lead to increased membership--how will the much needed profit generating model program be continued?

Publication of the *News* has been the Society's focus since the beginning. Richard Wallin, Gene Glendinning, Harold Weber, Stephen Parsons, David Wagner, Kenneth Donnelly as editors, and Jim Windmeier and John Steenwyk as designers, plus perhaps a dozen or so others who submitted articles and photos, have invested more hours than can be imagined in providing us with one of the most informative and entertaining magazines any group has produced. Though there are many subjects still to be covered, the question has to be asked, who will write them?

In a few weeks, you will receive a survey asking for your views on what the Society

currently offers and what might need to be changed. The results will serve as a blueprint for the design of the Society's future. Especially important will be the responses from the vast majority of you who have never voted, never purchased a calendar or model, never attended an annual meeting. Your opinions will be especially welcomed. I hope there will be a 100 percent response.

On behalf of your officers and directors, thank you for the opportunity to serve you this past year.

- *Bill Molony*

## ***Peoria Railfest 2005 Report***

The venerable Pere Marquette Hotel in downtown Peoria, Ill. was the headquarters hotel for this year's annual meeting, Railfest 2005, and those members attending had a most enjoyable weekend.

A Friday night social brought together GM&O fans from as far away as Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C. as well as those much closer to the host city. There was plenty of money ready to be spent Saturday morning, as the trade show got under way. Though the number of vendors was not as numerous as in past years, each had many items too good to pass up. The Society's tables were particularly well patronized thanks to the efforts of Director Gerald Doran and incoming Secretary Marc Liberta who manned them. Society models sold well, as did back issues of the *News*. Three new members were signed up.

A short afternoon break allowed railfans to scout the area where plenty of railroading is very much in evidence as are the former Rock Island and Illinois Terminal depots still standing though serving new purposes.

Only 32 attended the banquet and annual meeting but the informative presentation of Pioneer Railcorp's general counsel, Daniel LeKemper, provided insights into today's world of short line railroading. During the Q and A session, LeKemper was asked if the GM&O-IC merger had not occurred, could the GM&O have survived until now as a pared down operation like Pioneer Railcorp

properties. The answer was a resounding "Yes."

Recognized during the business portion of the dinner was Kleve Slouber, New Lenox, Ill. for his multiple entries in the model contest that displayed some fine effort. Examples can be seen on the Web site's Modeler's Corner page.

Because a quorum of officers and directors could not be present, a Board of Director meeting scheduled for Sunday morning had to be postponed. It will be made up in a conference call format, as has been recent practice.

## ***Two Take a Ride of a Lifetime***

Incoming President Joe Petric and longtime member Mike Schafer had the ride of their lives on Wednesday, November 2, aboard Isaac Tigrett's former business car, no. 50. Now decked out in Victorian splendor, Ike's great nephew, Isaac Tigrett III, owns the private car. Also aboard was the former star of *Saturday Night Live* and many films, Dan Aykroyd.

The opportunity arose through a chance meeting between Petric and the car foreman at Galesburg, Ill. while the car was inbound to Chicago. The visit included some fast running on the rear of Amtrak's no. 5, the *California Zephyr*, on the Burlington Santa Fe's speedway from Chicago's Union Station to the train's first suburban Chicago stop, Naperville, 28 miles.

Not to miss an opportunity, en route Schafer showed Tigrett the book he designed, *The Art of the Streamliner*, and the image of his painting in it of the *Little Rebel*. Tigrett immediately recognized it as the original his mother bought from Schafer at the GM&OHS Jackson, Tenn. swap meet. Tigrett was pleased to autograph the illustration giving Schafer a very special souvenir of the trip.

Petric promoted the Society by leaving a few back issues of the *News* for the pair's enjoyment. This resulted in Tigrett declaring he would bring his car to any future GM&OHS meeting as long as it was on an Amtrak route. It was a ride of a lifetime.

## ***Improved Society Web Site is Up and Running***

A redesigned and upgraded Society Web site came on-line over the Labor Day weekend thanks to the efforts of three key computer savvy members and the contributions of three others.

Marc Liberta and Curtis Kyger, assisted by Kevin Kiper, residing in Illinois, Oregon, and California respectively, reconstructed the multi-page site with all-new material they designed and valuable components carried over from the previous site contributed by members Kenneth Donnelly, David Johnston, and Stan Maddox. At press time, more than 3,500 hits have been generated with the daily rate growing.

The first and foremost goal is to serve member needs but as importantly, those of the larger railfan community who might choose membership. It is a "first source" for events, projects, and Society activities for members, and a location a broader audience searching for answers about the Society and the railroad can access.

For the overwhelming percentage of members who model, there is the very latest information on Society projects and a valuable, comprehensive list of commercially made models in every scale from Z to G crafted by Curtis Kyger. Future data will include a photo gallery, members' modeling efforts, and a GM&O bibliography.

Also available is a Yahoo group for discussions on all matters of interest related to the Society, the railroad's history, and modeling. Participation is free.

A brief history of the railroad written by Robert Schramm that appeared in the first issue of the *News* is showcased to serve those surfing for information about the railroad. A family tree developed by David Johnston, and maps of the GM&O, C&A, and M&O at their zeniths provide visual information.

Also available is a link to a downloadable copy of all 24 chapters of Dr. James H. Lemly's *The Gulf, Mobile & Ohio: A Railroad That Had to Expand or Expire*, the most comprehensive history yet published.

Also appearing is an essay on the first years of the Society written by Gene Glendinning. It is based on an article that appeared in issue 100 of the *News*.

For the first time, promoted products and services can be purchased with a credit card through Paypal? , avoiding check payments and mailing of order forms. This electronic convenience is seen as "making it easier and more cost effective for members to make Commissary Car purchases and meeting reservations," Treasurer David Johnston stated. "On-line payments have been an objective since the original Web site was posted and sales will grow now that the service is in place."

Marc Liberta will serve as Web Team Coordinator. Existing pages will be updated on a regular basis and there are elements still to be added. Any suggestions, contributions, or corrections you might wish to submit should be sent to [webteam@gmo.org](mailto:webteam@gmo.org).

Congratulations and thanks to Marc Liberta, Curtis Kyger, and Kevin Kiper who brought this improved added Society service to fruition.

## ***Bloomington Railroad Photo Exhibit Runs Through January***

"Prairie Thunder: 80 Years of Midwestern Railroad," a 75 photo exhibit of railroad subjects at the McLean County Museum of History selected from the archives of the Bloomington *Pantagraph*, and the collections of noted rail photographers Bruce Meyer and Steve Smedley, opened September 24. Its debut was marked by a lecture by exhibit curator Mike Matejka and remarks by both Meyer and Smedley. The exhibit will remain on display through January 2006.

The photos present a wide array of C&A, Alton, and GM&O scenes, recording the many years of association between the railroad and the city.

The exhibit can be visited at the McLean County Museum of History in the Old Courthouse, 200 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington. The museum is open 10 a.m. to

5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, until 9 p.m. on Tuesday, and 12 noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children and free on Tuesday.

Thanks to member Matejka for keeping the railroad's history in Bloomington alive with this excellent exhibit.

## **Depot Developments**

Activity at the Chatham Railroad Museum, Chatham, Ill., in the former C&A depot continues to attract new as well as repeat visitors. Currently, "Santa at the Depot" running throughout December with Dale Jenkins, president of the Illinois Traction Society serving in the role of ole St. Nick is under way. Past promotional events include "Loco-motion" held in September and "Chatham Homecoming" in June.

The museum recently received a grant from the National Railroad Historical Society of \$735 and supplemental money from the Chatham Kiwanis for the purchase and installation of dark green window shades to reduce heat buildup in warm months saving the extensive collection of railroadians on display from deterioration.

Installation of an operating B&O-style position light signal that were fixtures on the mainline for more than 75 years is planned for 2006.

Those who have visited it assert the Chatham depot is one of the best restorations of a former C&A depot existing and the collection housed there, one of the most interesting and complete to be found anywhere.

Lonzerotti's Italia restaurant, housed in the former C&A depot at Jacksonville, Ill. has been sold to new owners. This is good news because the restaurant's closing could have meant deterioration of this important example of a C&A brick depot.

- David Johnson

An editing error was the cause in the Autumn 2005 issue of the misidentification of the Pekin depot as the place where the B&O took possession of the C&A. The correct

location was, of course, the Wilmington, Ill. depot. The editor regrets the error.

## **Modeler's Track**

**GM&OHS**, Clinton, Miss., Society car no. 29, the 70-ton, three-bay hopper that was offered as a three-car set is sold out. Those who missed out on these high capacity cars purchased second hand from the Detroit Toledo & Ironton in 1965 should e-mail Model Committee Chairman Kevin Kiper, [thealtonroute@comcast.net](mailto:thealtonroute@comcast.net), with the number of sets you would buy if a second run is made. Only if enough reservations are received to justify production will another run be considered. See the Web site for a description of the model and prototype photos.

The Society's 30th project is a three-car set of exquisitely decorated **Accurail** cars, designed and produced by Kenneth Donnelly. An M&O 46000-series double sheathed, a GM&N 20000-series outside-braced, and an Alton 53000-series 1937 AAR steel box car with GM&O reporting marks comprise the set. All are painted box car red with black ends and roofs, and have unique repack and chalk handwriting. Each car lasted well into the 1960s or '70s. Only 18 sets of the original 50 run remain in stock as of press time, so get your orders in today. Go to [gmohs.org](http://gmohs.org) for model photos and an order form.

Only five three-car sets of the Society's no. 27 project, the Magor and Thrall pulpwood cars, remain on hand. Each manufacturer's set includes three different numbers in the 35000 and 36000 series. They are priced at \$65 or all six for \$125. Illustrations of the prototype and an order form can be found on the Web site.

The number of new commercially available GM&O and predecessor products continues to roll out from some quality model railroad manufacturers. Remember, the Society neither endorses nor authenticates any of these products. Your acceptance of them is dependent upon the level of accuracy you demand. Listings are for the information only of the vast majority of members who are modelers and collectors.

## O Gauge

Member John Brown, Bloomington, reports that **MTH Electric Trains**, Columbia, M.D., will in fact be producing its C&A USRA 2-8-2 with a correct number (887) and Standard Oil of Indiana lettering as delivered. See the Autumn 2005 *Switchlist* for details. John deserves our thanks for stepping up to make the manufacturer aware of the greater accuracy that could be achieved with its model.

## S Gauge

**American Models**, South Lyon, Mich. has a RTR GM&O 2-bay offset sided hopper (no. 3270) in black bearing no. 32439. MRP is \$31.95. Also available is a RTR 40-foot dark red box car, (no. 130) with arched lettering on the left panel, no. 53498. MRP \$33.95.

## HO Gauge

**Atheam Trains**, Carson, Calif., has announced availability in March 2006 of two 85-foot brown Trailer Train flats (nos. 93269, 93270) with GM&O with wings and script in red and Illinois Central brown and orange 40-trailers. This will be the first chance to own GM&O decorated trailers since the 1992 release of **End Cab Models** Realco Services in two-pack sets. MRP \$29.98.

Also now available from Athearn is a RTR 40-foot rebuilt box car (nos. 70125, 70126) in two numbers, 21584, 21618, in red with white arched lettering over the left panel and wings over the right panel. MRP \$13.98.

**Red Caboose**, Mead, Colo., has available a RTR green 100-ton Evans Coil car (no. RR-32532) in 10 numbers in the 75025-75034 series. This is the car fully described in issue 106 of the *News*. MRP \$35.95.

No longer available from Red Caboose is the 40-foot freight car red with black ends with the "Rebel Route" banner in six numbers, and its 42-foot fish belly, side sill flat car in freight car red. Check your dealer shelves.

**Sunshine Models**, Springfield, Mo., has released its Merchants Despatch

Transportation 9000-series 40-foot steel refrigerator car in white with both GM&O and New York Central logos and MDT reporting marks decals. This craftsman kit in vacuum-cast urethane includes neither trucks nor couplers. MRP \$36.

## N Gauge

**Life-Like Products by Walthers**, Milwaukee, Wis., has released its previously available Alco PA-1 (nos. 7551, 7554) in GM&O dress, nos. 290, 291. MRP \$105.

**Red Caboose**, Mead, Colo., has available a green 100-ton Evans Coil car (no. RN-17684) in 10 numbers of the 75025-75034 series. This is the car fully described in issue 106 of the *News*. MRP \$19.95. Set of three (no. RN-17784) MRP \$59.85.

## Information Wanted

Ed Sams, Bloomington, wants information on prototypical color and available model paint matches for C&A box cars, specifically the Harriman B-50-4 with Roman Gothic Chicago & Alton script as delivered in 1907. Contact Sams at mesams@msn.com.

Michael Grenstedt, St. Louis, needs data on circa 1925 observation cars that appeared in *Midnight Special* consists. Contact Greenstedt at michaelvictorg@yahoo.com.

## Photos, Data Needed for Upcoming News Articles

In final planning stages is an article for the next issue of the *News* of the USRA composite gondolas received by the C&A in the 1920s, some of which survived with Alton and GM&O MOW reporting marks. Builder and in-service photos especially are needed.

Needed for a planned 2006 article on the Dwight Branch are photos, maps, schedules, and other data.

Please send anything you have to GM&OHS News Editor, 411 E. Valencia Ave., Barrington, Ill.