



# Switchlist

GULF, MOBILE & OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Summer 2006 Vol. XXXIV, No. 2

**Messages from President Joe Petric...** It was great meeting so many of you at the two railroadiana shows that the Society participated in this Spring. The first was *The Streator Connection* held in late April in Streator, IL and the second was *Homewood Railroad Days* in Homewood, IL on May 21-22, 2006. I really appreciated the many kind comments made by all the members that stopped by at the Society's table.

**Speaking of Railroadiana Shows...** Please remember to mark your calendars for **October 20-22, 2006**. This is the date for the Society's **34th Annual Meeting** being held in **Montgomery, AL**. Please see the enclosed flyer for additional details. Show Chairman **Patrick Hayes** has a great weekend planned and we have commitments from a number of new dealers to participate in the Saturday Railroadiana Show. We are anticipating a huge turnout for both the swap meet and the Annual Meeting Banquet. Why not plan to attend? We would love to see you there!

I also request that all members check with their friends to make sure that everyone has renewed for 2006. It is extremely important that we do not leave behind any members from 2005. We encourage our members to be ambassadors for the Society which can best be done by sharing your copies of the *NEWS* with fellow railfans. We feel our publications "speak for themselves" and will be able to take it from there.

**Messages from Secretary Marc Liberta...** Nominations are now being accepted for the five seats on the 2007 Board of Directors as well as the offices of Secretary and Treasurer (the offices of President and Vice President are two year terms which are elected in odd numbered years). Please send all written nominations to Election 2007, P.O. Box 1753, Marion, IL 62959. A simple statement for the desired candidate and your signature is all that is required to nominate a willing member. **Current Board members are required to submit their names if they wish to run again for a seat on the BOD.** All nominations must be received by August 31, 2007.

As President **Joe Petric** indicated above, renewals are lagging behind. Our erratic 2005 publication schedule may have confused some members a bit so we will be contacting any unrenewed people in a few weeks in the hopes that we can get them "on board" for this year. Though hearing from a friend who is a current member, certainly would help! We do not want to lose a member due to any confusion.

A loose end from the Spring *Switchlist* has been tied up; All refund checks for the overpayment of 2006 Senior Membership dues have been mailed to the affected members and should have been received by the time of this writing. Once again, we wish to apologize for the error of omission on the original renewal form.

**Publications Committee Report by Ken Donnelly...** I had hoped to speak about a double issue of the *NEWS* at this juncture, however it was decided to publish the next magazine as a single issue; no. 111. This was due to many factors however the most pressing was the need to get the 34th Annual Meeting information into the hands of the membership in a timely manner. Rest assured, the fourth quarter mailing of the *NEWS* will more than make up for this smaller than expected issue.

We have great features planned for the future including **Charlie Volkar's** piece about how the original **Rebel** arrived in Chicago once upon a time, **Louis Saillard** takes a look at new information that was recently discovered concerning GM&O no. 1900, a feature on the GM&O's fleet of Alco RS2 and RS3 diesels and finally a story on Louisiana, MO. We have a great year planned publication-wise so remember to remind your friends to renew if they have not already done so.

**2006 Survey Results by Kevin Kiper...** Thanks to all the members that responded to the survey in our last mailing. Of 711 surveys mailed, we received 124 responses (17.4 percent).

**Calendars;** There is still a high degree of interest. The Publications Committee is looking at more cost effective ways of somehow publishing a 2007 calendar.

**Annual Meetings;** Sixty percent of the respondents had attended at least one Annual Meeting. Over forty percent have attended a meeting in the last five years. The top three reasons for **not** attending an Annual Meeting were; **1) Too far to travel, 2) Inconvenient dates, 3) Inconvenient location.** The top three reasons **for** attending an Annual Meeting are; **1) Railroadiana show, 2) Socialize with other Society members, 3) (tie) the Banquet and Speakers and Close to home.** Respondents said that they would be more likely to attend an Annual Meeting if they included; **1) Joint meets with other societies, 2) Railroad history seminars, 3) Fan trips.** The majority of the respondents preferred holding the Annual Meeting in the Fall. Only 22 percent said they would be more likely to attend a meeting if it was held at another time of the year. The preferred alternative time was Spring. Two thirds of those responding indicated they would travel 250 miles or more to attend. Only three percent said the Annual Meeting influences their decision to renew.

**Elections;** Two thirds of the respondents always or usually vote in Society elections. The top three reasons for not voting are; **1) Unknown candidates, 2) "forgot", 3) Uncontested positions.**

**Website materials;** Fifty six percent said they would be willing to download and print selected Society material. Forty four percent were not interested in obtaining Society material electronically.

Thanks again to all that responded. If you have any questions, please contact me at;  
**thealtonroute@comcast.net** .

**Modeler's Track by the Staff...** Thanks to all the members that ordered cars from the second run of GM&OHS#29, our **Con-Cor** 15 panel hopper car in GM&O' s 61500 series. These cars were shipped on July 7th. Our thanks to everyone for their patience while we completed this project. We especially appreciate the many members who ordered multiple sets of unnumbered cars to enhance their GM&O fleets. A special thank you to **Joe Legner** of **End Cab Models** who donated his time, talent and the mailing costs and handled the inspection, packaging and shipping of each order from ECM's distribution center in Berwyn, IL. Thanks Joe!

Enclosed with this mailing is an order form for GM&OHS#31, our **InterMountain Railway Company** composite side gondola lettered for the GM&O and GM&O Maintenance of Way service. Please note that this is a **pre-order** form and only the number of cars ordered will be produced. It is important that you get your orders in as soon as possible to insure that your cars are reserved for you. The revenue service car and the MOW car are both available in two different numbers and can be purchased as a four car set at a discounted price.

We opted to introduce this car at this time to coincide with the article on this series contained in the pages of Issue 111 of the *NEWS*. This is an excellent model which is 100 percent accurate! Do not be scared away because this is an InterMountain kit. Quite frankly, it is pretty easy to build and looks right at home in a train or sitting on a siding with the rest of your work equipment. Our thanks to **Alton & Rebel Prototype Models** who provided their artwork for this project. They were going to produce this car as part of the A&RPM line, however when the Society decided that we would be running the article on the cars in Issue 111 A&RPM stepped up and supplied their graphics to the Society. Thanks guys!

**A quick note...** The Society has sold out of GM&OHS#30, our three car set of predecessor road box cars. Thanks!!! We do however have a limited supply of three and six car sets of GM&OHS#27, our modern **Walthers** pulpwood car. Please see [www.gmoHS.org](http://www.gmoHS.org) for details.

The Committee received several positive comments from members concerning our review of the **Athearn** GM&O GP35 in the Spring 2006 *Switchlist*. We did receive one response that complimented us for our efforts but thought we were unduly harsh on a mass produced model and Athearn in general. For the record; We would dare to say that 90 percent of the modelers in our organization probably received or purchased a "blue box" Athearn locomotive or car to start them off in the hobby. Athearn is a good company that produces some excellent models. The problem is that most of the artwork for their GM&O products is wrong. This includes not only the aforementioned GP35 but several recent GM&O box cars that they have produced. This is a shame because they could do the job right if they wanted to, however their artist has decided what he produces is "good enough".

Unfortunately, that does not cut it when you have other companies doing the job correctly on locomotives and rolling stock. The **Proto 2000** and **Atlas** lines are most notable for excellent artwork. It is really disappointing when you have an accurate model and the artwork that is produced is incorrect. There is no excuse for that, as it is just sloppy craftsmanship and quality control and shows a total lack of respect to the customer whether he models the GM&O or another road. Now for a review of the latest Athearn product...

Athearn is producing two unique cars for the Alton and GM&O. These are the aluminum express box cars from 1945. The prototype cars were manufactured by Mt. Vernon Car Shops with parts supplied by Reynolds Aluminum. The Alton cars were numbered 1200-1209. They had six foot doors, nos. 1200-1204 had a seven panel door while nos. 1205-1209 had a corrugated door. Their 14 panel car sides truly made the series a unique looking 40 foot car. The Alton cars were relettered GM&O shortly after the takeover, however they retained their original numbers. While on the Alton/GM&O they had three paint schemes; the original Alton delivery scheme, the first GM&O scheme which was the standard box car straight line lettering scheme of the era however it was with red lettering on the aluminum sides and later, at least one car, no. 1201, received the arched lettering in black on the aluminum car side. This car was eventually transferred to the Stores Department and renumbered 6001. It finished its career at Glenn Yard in Chicago.

As ordered, these cars were used as express box cars on the Alton and later GM&O's varnish. Due to several design flaws they were withdrawn from passenger service in the mid 1950's.

The Athearn/Roundhouse model used is not an exact prototype due to it being only a ten panel car. In all fairness to Athearn, we could not expect them, or any manufacturer, to invest in the dies for such a unique piece of equipment. Putting that aside, the preliminary artwork that we have seen appears to be reasonably accurate. Apparently someone at Athearn has taken note of our recent observations about their lackluster graphics. Athearn's MSRP is \$14.98 each and the car is available in two different numbers for both the Alton and GM&O versions. We do not know the car numbers that Athearn has selected however they have decided to put the paneled door on the Alton cars and the corrugated door on the GM&O cars.

This model will make a unique addition to your Alton or GM&O trains. Though not an exact replica, we recommend that you purchase at least one of these express box cars so you can add a very interesting look to your red and maroon passenger service.