



Switchlist

GULF, MOBILE & OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring 2008 Vol. XXXVI, No. 1

A Message from President Ken Donnelly... From the beginning of the 21st century to this year, the GM&OHS has experienced a truly Dickensian turn in fortunes as we have encountered the best and worst of times. The most challenging of these times occurred at the outset of the millennium, when the Society was rocked by a thirty-three percent drop in membership due to the lack of publications during the period of 2000-2001. It was at that time the Publications Committee was only able to produce a mere three magazines, with the resultant feeling on the part of the membership as well as onlookers being one of "that's the end of the GM&OHS". They were almost correct. The fallout from that dark period was a mass exodus that plunged the Society's rolls dangerously close to 500 souls. We were not quite dead, however, and under then President David Bridges' watch, the GM&OHS turned the corner into a brighter day of publishing the *NEWS* in color, a practice continued to this day. With this upgrade, the membership has rebounded into the 750 plus range, and while we can always improve on this, it is a considerable amount of fans for a railroad that has been gone for well over three decades.

Why the history lesson? As President of the Society I wanted to address the membership, as would the Chief Operating Officer of any company, which in reality the Society is. It is in this capacity that I not only wanted to recap that bit of our past mentioned above, but to also address our present situation.

Since 2000-2001, we have tightened our spending, once again have the *NEWS* on schedule, instituted new offers and programs to the membership, created a working, visually pleasing website and all without raising dues once in that period! All these things were accomplished through hard work and sacrifice on the part of a select group of men whose efforts go largely unsung. The result is that in 2008 we are in an extremely strong position ideologically, creatively and financially.

In recent years, while other groups have splintered and faltered from the efforts of divisive individuals working in their inner circles, the GM&OHS remains solid, and should be so for many years. Yet there are detractors that have surfaced in the last few years pushing agendas this Society could simply not support. I would advise everyone to disregard the unsubstantiated, yet virulent ramblings these few individuals offer, particularly when balanced against the body of work the Society has produced since 2002.

There is always room for improvement though, and as a "shareholder" in the good ship GM&OHS, you DO have a say in how things are run. For those of you that have dealt with me in the past, you know I'll listen and in turn tell you exactly what I think, whether I agree or not. No B.S.! With that being said, whenever you wish to discuss Society matters please call me at 815-278-0384 or Email to kennednn@aol.com. I'm your President and I'm here to serve you.

Secretary's Report from Marc Liberta... Welcome to another exciting year for the GM&OHS. There is much to look forward to in the way of publications and special projects throughout 2008. Persons reading this newsletter have promptly renewed their membership for the new year and our thanks go out to all of you. Special appreciation goes out to individuals who have opted to provide additional support to the Society by being Sustaining and Benefactor level members. We will endeavor to use your donations wisely. Annual members will find new membership cards included with this mailing. To complete your card please write in your membership number (which can be found on your mailing label) in the appropriate space on the pass.

In Memoriam... Virginia Jane Ochoa passed away in December 2006. Mrs. Ochoa hired on in December 1968 as a secretary to the Master Mechanic in the Mechanical Department at 21st Street in St. Louis. She worked for a little over fourteen years, retiring from the Illinois Central Gulf in January 1983. Long time Society member **Sam G. Thomason** of Carterville, IL passed away on November 29, 2007 after a long bout with cancer. Mr. Thomason came from a GM&O Railroad family and his middle name was Glen, having been named after GM&O President Glen Brock. Noted historian and author of *The Gulf, Mobile and Ohio: A Railroad That Had to Expand or Expire*, **James Hutton Lemly**, passed away on February 4, 2008. Dr. Lemly is best known among GM&O fans for his 1953 thesis on the culmination of events that led to the formation of the Gulf, Mobile and Northern and its merger with the Mobile & Ohio and eventual acquisition of the Alton to form the GM&O as we knew it. Dr. Lemly had been an Honorary Member of this organization almost from its inception.

Retirements...The Society wishes to congratulate **Owen B. Linton** on his retirement from the Canadian National. Mr. Linton, or "OB" as he is known on the road, signed on with the GM&O as a brakeman on July 27, 1969 at Meridian, MS. He was promoted to fireman in 1971, and in 1973 he advanced to the position of engineer. After a very successful career spanning nearly four decades and four railroads (GM&O, ICG, IC and CN), "OB" retired on January 1, 2008.

As you can see from the above notice, the *Switchlist* has a new feature. We will be glad to post retirements (space permitting) for any former GM&O employee who so desires. Just drop the Society a note with your sign on and retirement dates and the various jobs you held.

New GM&O Print Available... A 1950's depiction of the *Gulf Coast Rebel* with DLI09 no. 272 in the lead meeting an FA1 powered freight train is now available from artist Frank Crowe. To view the print and obtain price and order information, please visit **www.crowerrart.com**.

The 36th Annual Meeting of the Society will be held over the weekend of **October 10-12, 2008** at the **Hampton Inn** and Conference Center, 2201 West Reelfoot Road, **Union City, TN 38261**, 731-885-8850. The motel is already accepting reservations, so make your plans now to attend and don't forget to mention the GM&OHS when booking your room to receive the special rate of \$70.00 per night (plus tax). Show flyers with additional details will follow in the Summer Switchlist scheduled for mailing with Issue #118 in late June.

Modeling Committee Report by the staff... We have a lot of news to discuss in this issue, beginning with updates on three Society projects.

First; We still have six sets of the **2007 Annual Meeting Special Edition Cars** remaining in stock. This is a three-car set of **Bowser** two-bay ribbed sided covered hoppers. Two of the cars are gray, each with a different prototypically accurate paint scheme, and the third car is painted black representing a GM&O diesel facility sand car. The set is available for \$55.00 postage paid. This may be your last chance to acquire one of these sets so don't delay. Orders can be forwarded to the Society at P.O. Box 1753, Marion, IL 62959 or via PayPal at the Society's web address **www.gmoHS.org**.

Second; The SD40 repainting project is rolling along. We have completed the stripping of all of the shells (a bigger task than we anticipated), and they are at **Double "R" Graphics** on Long Island as we speak. We had preliminary artwork already completed, however, in an effort to do as accurate a job as possible we are having our artist, **Mike Vickey**, "tweak" certain aspects of it for the perfect fit and location on the car body. Please remember once these units are painted and printed they have to come back to the Society for reassembly and some additional work. We are going to do this job properly and that will take time. You will be very pleased with the final product!

Third; Enclosed with this mailing is a light green order form for our next Special Edition Car, GM&OHS#33. This is a unique offering since it is a model that has not been produced for over a decade.

We were able to acquire a number of **Front Range Products** 40' single door boxcars and then purchase aftermarket ten foot wide doors to represent four different groups of cars in the 24000 series, which were rebuilt between 1965 and 1971. By affixing the provided **Accurail** ten foot corrugated door or the **Details Associates** ten foot six panel door to the model, you will have a truly accurate representation of these green rebuilds. The cars will be painted in the standard GM&O 1960's boxcar green with white lettering, however, each group of cars had a slightly different lettering style and/or arrangement which we have duplicated for absolute prototypical accuracy. Each car will come with a set of instructions on how to detail the car properly, i.e. the correct door to use (which are supplied with the kits), and whether the car had a roofwalk with full or half ladders. This is a truly remarkable offering by the Society and there will be only 50 sets produced. For the Illinois Central Gulf modelers out there, you should be aware that many of these cars lasted well into the 1980's in full GM&O paint!

Aristo-Craft large or 'G' scale trains, are now available in GM&O paint! Their latest offering for summer 2008, will be an RS3 in GM&O red and maroon and available with two different road numbers. Also coming is a two-bay offset side hopper numbered in the 32000 series and offered with six different numbers. Please check out Aristo-Craft's website at www.aristocrafttrainstore.com for additional details. Also note that to take advantage of their special pricing you must be a member of the Aristo-Craft Railroad Club. The aforementioned website will allow you to download a PDF form to become a member. Our artist **Mike** Vickey created the artwork for these models, so you can be assured they will look great!

The **Ingalls 4S** units are here! We are pleased to inform you that the HO scale turret cab locomotives arrived from Ajin the week of March 24th. These models were originally to be imported by **Global Outlet**, however, a new firm, **Ampolex**, is handling the distribution of these unique, finely crafted diesels. Six different versions are offered (one Ingalls, two GM&O two-tone and three GM&O solid red) but already the Ingalls demo has sold out. Please see www.brassmodels.net for further details.

InterMountain Railway Co. has announced a flurry of GM&O and predecessor road products for release over the next few months, in both HO and N scale. Phase II F3A's will be coming in full-band red and maroon, and in four different road numbers. A steam generator-equipped F3B will also be offered in one number. The MSRP for the cab units in HO will be \$99.95 or \$169.95 for a sound equipped version. The F3B will be \$94.95, or with sound \$164.95. The N scale F3A's MSRP is \$89.95, and the booster unit is \$84.95. InterMountain is also offering their composite side drop bottom gondolas in **Chicago & Alton** and **Alton** lettering schemes. The C&A car is boxcar red and the Alton car is black. Both models will be offered in HO and N scale with six different road numbers available. The MSRP for the HO version is \$29.95 and for the N scale car the suggested price is \$19.95. For further details see www.InterMountain-Railway.com.

Athearn, Inc. has announced the release of their version of a GM&O SD40 in HO scale. The model will retail for \$89.98. There has been discussion on the Yahoo Groups about this model and the inaccurate artwork that Athearn has on their web page, as well as the fact that the shell being used is a late model SD40 with the lengthened short hood and extended range dynamic brake blister, neither of which the GM&O units possessed. We would prefer to see a model before commenting, however, Athearn's track record on GM&O products has been dismal at best (the exception being the Genesis F3's). These models are due out in June and we recommend checking one out at your local hobby dealer rather than purchasing it sight unseen. We sincerely hope Athearn at least gets the artwork and shade of red correct. However, we're not placing any wagers on it...