

# NPRHA Membership Committee

## A Master Plan for Enhanced Recruiting & Retention

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## Description and Use of This Document

This document is presented as a 'Master Plan' for the enhancement of NPRHA Membership Recruiting and Retention. As noted within, the sources for our membership ranks are not only changing in size – they are constantly changing in their own membership and interests. The format of the document, of necessity, blurs the boundaries between the five basic functions. This is because there are no clear lines of separation between them – each of them has an effect on all of the others.

Similarly, our members working to achieve a larger and more stable membership must realize that good communications between themselves and their partners must recognize the whole of the objective – to make each and every *present* member a contributor to the R & R effort. It must be the goal of this integrated effort to put into the hands of our membership the tools that they will need to succeed in that objective.

We welcome your input and participation in the immediate membership target: **“2007 in 2007”**

## The Future of the NPRHA

To continue toward the NPRHA's primary objective "to preserve the history of the Northern Pacific Railway," it is essential that the association remain strong and vibrant into our second Quarter-Century. Our historical association currently appeals most strongly to a population that knew the Northern Pacific during its period of operation which ended in 1970. But to maintain and grow our membership, we must convince the next generations of railroad fans of the value of the Northern Pacific as the ultimate example of the Classic Western Railroad.

Because of the passage of time, the original members of the NPRHA are approaching, or are well past, retirement. This means that recruitment of new members and the retention of existing members has become essential for the association.

In this effort, Retention *must* be emphasized as much as Recruitment. Once a person becomes a member, keeping him or her *should* be much easier than recruiting a new member. Successful Retention means that we are maintaining a significant connection with the membership by covering subjects in our publications and activities that interest them, and by making the membership renewal process simple and straightforward.

## Where Are New Members?

New NPRHA members will come from two segments of the general population:

1. People who remember the NP in operation and have an interest in railroading or model railroading, but are unaware of the NPRHA.
2. People from younger generations with an interest in modeling "Classic Railroading" during the period that the NP operated, and who become interested in modeling the NP.

We must *sell* the Northern Pacific to all of them in addition to making them *aware* of the NPRHA.

The two segments require some different approaches to their recruitment:

- The first segment mainly needs to be shown that we exist and the benefits that the NPRHA offers: *The Mainstreeter*, calendar, research web site, annual convention, Company Store, etc. This segment will need to be reached via printed publications, advertising, and personal contacts.
- The second segment will require somewhat more salesmanship. As time goes on, potential new members will know less and less about the Northern Pacific as the former employees pass on and most of the existing signs of the NP disappear. Rail fans and modelers tend to be attracted to railroads and rail operations that they witness personally. Anyone born after 1965 will not have experienced the NP in action, and will most likely not have a natural attachment to the way

railroads ran before the 1970s, without presenting it to them.

As the older NPRHA member population diminishes we must actively promote the exciting opportunities presented by modeling various parts of the Northern Pacific in order to recruit rail fans from the second segment. This segment can be reached via online sources, as well as the more traditional printed venues.

## ***Why Follow the Northern Pacific?***

As existing sources of Northern Pacific information fade away, the NPRHA must become a more visible source of the NP's the mystique and operations. This is not hopeless – many current rail fans prefer to follow the 'Classic Era' of railroading from the 1940s through the 1960s since:

- Motive power, equipment, and operations were unique to each specific railroad;
- Steam and diesel power were intermixed on both passenger and freight consists;
- People used trains to travel locally and long distance;
- Trains were controlled by 'train orders,' requiring that stations be located about every seven miles along a railroad's lines to hoop-up orders to trains;
- Dispatchers were located in each division, knew their territory from personal experience, and communicated with station operators via telegraph;
- Block signals were semaphores;
- Freight trains had cabooses;
- Motive power was serviced at division points in roundhouses and back shops;

The NPRHA has already provided a great deal of NP information via *The Mainstreeter* (almost 3,500 pages to date), our web site, [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org), numerous books written by our members, as well as the active participation of NP veterans in the Association. This information is vital to developing interest by modelers and historians alike.

## **How Do We Recruit?**

Recruiting methods of new members fall into a few categories, all of which entail leading a rail-fan in some way to develop an interest in NP-prototypical operations, discover the existence of the NPRHA or in some other way become interested in the Northern Pacific through one or more of the following:

- Face-to-face contacts in rail-oriented venues, such as swap meets, railroad shows, conferences, meetings, etc;
- NPRHA information available at rail-oriented institutions and businesses, such as museums, hobby shops, rail-tourist attractions, etc;
- Public relations efforts, e.g., announcements in rail-related magazines of new NPRHA calendars, modeling items, books, etc;
- Advertising of uniquely NP-related items produced by the NPRHA and sold through the Company Store;
- NP-related magazine articles and published books, either directly by reading or from a reference to them in another publication;
- The placement of our logo and membership levels on the listings of RR Historical Societies in some periodicals.

## ***We DO Have***

- An NPRHA Membership brochure;
- Annual Calendars, our primary contact with non-members who receive one from a member or buy one from a hobby shop;
- Quarterly publication of *The Mainstreeter* magazine sold by hobby shops;
- Information-rich web site at [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org);
- NPRHA Company Store accessed from the web site, information sheets and order forms mailed with *The Mainstreeter*;

- Back issues of *The Mainstreeter* available from the Company Store;
- Unique NP-related items produced by the NPRHA;
- Annual NPRHA Convention rotated between division points across the NP system - east, west, and center;
- Application forms printable from the web site;
- Periodic meetings in the Twin Cities and Puget Sound areas;
- A Trial Membership for prospective members. These might be presented (free) to any NP Veteran attending the Annual Convention.

## **We Do NOT Have**

- A modelers brochure selling the modeling of the NP as "Classic Railroading";
- A consistent public relations effort that develops "mind-share" for the NPRHA;
- Local groups of members that will provide 'feet on the street' in the major NP centers outside the Twin Cities and Puget Sound areas;
- Access to the BN veterans organizations in each of the key NP centers;
- List of events that NPRHA members should attend and make presentations;
- A Speakers Bureau who can present NP-related programs, and a listing of program topics, along with associated presentation and background materials provided to the speakers. This would include such things as video tapes and DVDs of presentations from past conventions and meetings;
- An informational resource presenting the Northern Pacific and NPRHA in a binder and on a CD for display on a lap-top;
- Advertising of unique NP items in rail-related magazines and sold under the NPRHA label;
- NPRHA banners for use at swap meets and other meetings.

## **Membership Committee**

### **Bylaw Authority**

Currently, the Bylaws (Article V, Section 12) describe the Responsibilities of the Membership Committee (a Standing Committee of the Board) as follows:

- A. To establish and carry out procedures in actively recruiting new members on a continuing basis; and,
- B. To develop and use recruiter's kits containing accurate and timely information about the NPRHA, membership applications, and any other items of interest likely to attract potential members; and,
- C. To follow up with those whose membership has lapsed, to ascertain the reason for the lapse, and attempt to re-enlist them; and,
- D. To make recommendations for recruiting additional members; and,
- E. To carry out such other duties as the President or the Board of Directors may from time to time assign.

This description would seem to adequately address all of the features of this Plan, so no additional formal action should be required of the Membership.

### **Organization**

Seven functions have been established to serve under the Membership Chair: Receipt, Recognition, Records, Recruitment, Renewal, Response, and Retention. Detailed guidelines have been established for the general responsibilities and resources of the six functions below. The seventh function, Records, is split between Receipt and Renewal, who share the responsibility for maintaining the accuracy of the Website/Database interface. The responsibility for Recognition will be shared between Records (the Receipt and Renewal Chairs), the current Convention Chair, and the Editor of *The Mainstreeter*. Additionally, Receipt, Renewal, and Response are grouped under the heading of The Membership

Services Group.

- **Receipt** -- Optimize the Membership Process by:
  - Receiving postal mail and email applications and inquiries;
  - Depositing mailed checks;
  - Entering credit card memberships;
  - Distributing membership information to responsible parties.
- **Recognition** – Reinforce the new members' addition by:
  - Publishing new and certain long-term members' names and addresses in each issue of *The Mainstreeter*;
  - Publishing the names of all Sustaining Members once each year;
  - Recognizing new members who attend the Annual Banquet.
- **Recruitment** – Sign up new NPRHA members by:
  - Organizing local members to meet together periodically;
  - Providing members to attend swap meets and rail-related shows;
  - Generating programs, literature and materials to reach recruiting goals;
  - Managing public relations and advertising efforts of the association.
- **Renewal** – Track the membership by:
  - Maintaining the master database;
  - Mailing renewal notices;
  - Generating mailing lists.
- **Response** – Enhance the mailing process by:
  - Mailing new member packages promptly;
  - Mailing *Mainstreeter* and calendar replacements promptly, as requested;
  - Mailing calendar orders promptly.
- **Retention** – Keep members active by:
  - Establishing local groups;
  - Following up on non-renewals.

## Member Recruiting Plan

The most effective way to implement a member recruiting plan for the NPRHA is to organize groups of members in each of the major NP division points and get those groups involved in recruiting activities in their surrounding areas. These member groups would then implement the aspects of the recruitment plan that are appropriate in their area.

The plan will be initiated and managed by three or more Board members for whom the Membership Committee will be their major Board assignment. One of the members will be appointed the Chair of the committee, while another should be an NP Veteran to provide access to that important segment of our membership.

### ***Action Steps for Implementation***

- Establish a Trial Membership, which would be set at one-half of the Regular membership appropriate to that candidate in order to promote the recruiting of new members.
- Manage the advertising of NP-related products in national rail-related magazines, so that such ads promote the NP and NPRHA.
- Get to know the editors of the key national rail-related publications, so that they will be disposed to publish articles submitted to them by the NPRHA members.
- Designate the key NP division points where local member groups should be active.
- Recruit one or more members in the designated areas to form a local group.
- Appoint someone in the local group to find the scheduled rail-related events in which the local

group can participate.

- Distribute relevant portions of the media database to the local groups to assist them in contacting media outlets and local institutions.
- Represent the NPRHA at rail-related programs and events in their local areas to promote the NP and seek new NPRHA members.
- Distribute NPRHA information to local institutions that will make is available to their attendees.
- Contact local media outlets with stories about the activities of the NPRHA to extend our public relations efforts to the local level.

In addition, the donation of 160 copies of John Lubetkin's book, *Jay Cooke's Gamble*, to be distributed to local institutions across the NP system gives the NPRHA a reason to contact key members in all key NP areas. This opportunity can be used to organize local member groups in those centers and should get the recruitment process started. The following sections detail the types of activities that we will promote, and action steps for implementation.

## **Membership Level Structure**

Currently, the Annual Membership Levels are as follows:

- NP Veterans - \$ 20
- Regular United States - \$25
- Regular Canada & Mexico - \$30
- Regular non-North America - \$35
- Monad Sustaining - \$50
- Pacific Sustaining - \$100
- Mikado Sustaining - \$150
- Northern Sustaining - \$250
- Yellowstone Sustaining - \$500
- Life Membership (The 1883 Society) is available for a one-time commitment of \$2500.

In addition, we have instituted a Trial Membership which would be available to all regular classes of membership at one-half price, for recruitment purposes, subject to the following criteria:

1. The recipient has not been a member of the NPRHA for the past five years; and,
2. The person (or organization) is recommended by a current Member in good standing; and,
3. The membership will be effective for one year only, but will have all rights and privileges, including voting.

We have also instituted a schedule of multiple-year renewals, at a modest discount. These offer a reduction of \$1.00 for any two-year, or \$3.00 for any three-year renewals.

Application forms for both multiple-year and Trial Memberships are posted at [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org).

Mailed response to receipt of all New Membership applications shall be made within a week, and will include a copy of the most recent *Mainstreeter*, a copy of the current Calendar, and a welcoming letter indicating that the recipient will be receiving the next three issues of *The Mainstreeter* on its regular distribution schedule, and with information on the renewal process, including the various options, and use of the web site [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org).

## ***NP-Related Programs and Meetings***

### **Existing Meetings in the Puget Sound Area**

Experience in the Puget Sound area has shown that many people will come to a regularly scheduled, quarterly meeting where an NP-related program is presented. These meetings started in Auburn, Washington, in 1987 and continue to draw 50 to 120 people to the meetings hosted by the NPRHA and the local White River Valley Museum. Most of those who attend have joined the NPRHA, and this core group of NPRHA members responds to personalized requests for help to attend other events in the local area.

At the Auburn meet, the museum collects \$5.00 (\$4.00 for seniors) from the attendees, which pays for the room, coffee and pastries before the meeting and at the break. When we first started, the meeting was held at a restaurant, where people ordered off the menu and the program started after dinner. While this worked well, it was difficult to find a restaurant that could accommodate the number of attendees. Thus, we changed to an 'after-dinner' format where people gather at 6:30 for a social hour with the program starting at 7:30 and ending at 9:30 PM. To hold such a meeting, you need:

- A room large enough to seat all who come in comfortable chairs;
- A screen and electronic or slide projector, depending on the presentation;
- An amplified sound system to help those with impaired hearing;
- Some way to serve refreshments.

### **Existing Meetings in the Twin Cities Area**

In the Twin Cities area, meetings are held on Saturdays at the Archive Office located in the Jackson Street Roundhouse site of the Minnesota Transportation Museum (MTM).

An effort has been made to have these meets on the first calendar Saturday of February. We are trying to establish a more regular schedule for meets, perhaps twice yearly, perhaps scheduled four months before and after the national convention. No admission is charged to the meeting; however the JSRH does ask that the normal admission fee be paid should attendees want to peruse the museum. Groups have been as small as twenty and as large as forty-five.

Coffee, with hot water for tea and hot chocolate, and cookies and other snacks are served. Out-of-pocket costs for these have not exceeded \$25 per meeting, so attendees have not yet been asked for donations.

There are comfortable chairs in a room displaying some of our archival donations, and presenters are provided with:

- A large projection screen;
- An LCD projector for power point presentations;
- A slide projector for traditional slides.

We are currently pursuing the acquisition of an amplified sound system for both our hearing impaired members and speakers not used to projecting their voice.

It should be noted that as of this date, following the 2006 East End meet, MTM has offered the use of a refurbished baggage car for future meetings. There is also an adjacent coach car that has café-style seating with a modest kitchen. How this might be utilized has not yet been determined.

We have found that advertising is paramount to success of the meet. We did not advertise the most recent meet by posting notices of the event in local hobby stores. The smaller attendance reflected this lack of notification.

## **Proposed Meetings in Other NP Areas**

We can learn from the experiences of other railroad interest groups, such as the CB&Q and the Soo Line, who hold meetings at various locations, either along their railroad, or at the convergence of theirs and other rail systems. We should explore the use of existing NP depots as a focal point, with a projected attendance of around 100 people. For example, we have contributed to the efforts of local folks who were working toward the renovation of some local depots in: Sprague and Chehalis in Washington. Perhaps we could work with them to organize an event which would encourage some of their folks to join the NPRHA. Jim Dick and Pat Egan have already discussed this topic in much more detail.

## **Rail-Related Swap Meets**

Most areas have rail-related swap meets scheduled each year in the Fall or Spring. These meets offer a great opportunity to meet people interested in railroad subjects, modeling and to make the case that the NP is a very interesting railroad to get to know. To be effective at a swap meet, you must actively meet the people as they pass your table and ask them "if they are a member of the NPRHA" and hand them a membership application if they are not. This is best done by standing in front of the table and meeting people as they pass the table in the aisle. Sitting behind the table generates little or no interest. When this active technique is used at swap meets or railroad shows in the west, we have found that 10 to 15% of the membership application forms handed out resulted in new NPRHA members. The membership in western Washington went from 50 members to 350 in less than two years.

To be effective at a Swap Meet, one must:

- Reserve a table or booth space early enough to assure inclusion.
- Get a set of materials, including:
  - An NPRHA placard or banner to display at the table;
  - Some models of NP equipment to attract attention;
  - Many membership application forms to hand out;
  - A set of Company Store items to display with ordering forms;
  - Copies of the current annual Calendar and back issues of *The Mainstreeter* which can be presented to members who join at the meet;
  - Modeling information sheets on the NP.
- Other useful items are:
  - Laptop computer showing an NP and NPRHA presentation CD, if electricity is available;
  - Some NP books, if not too heavy to be easily carried;
  - Make the table space stand out! For example, \$12 at Costco will buy a "display" box of 200 York individual peppermint patties, the kind restaurants charge 25 cents for. Doing something nice will draw a crowd, especially if no one else is doing it.

## **Attending Rail-Related Conferences**

Local historical societies and museum continually have presentations, openings and conferences, some of which are on rail-related subjects and attended by potential NPRHA members. It is best to try to get a table to display the items listed under the swap meet section above. If that is not possible, a person will have to just mix and mingling with the attendees carrying membership brochures or application forms and try to engage people in a discussion about the NPRHA. Also, many conferences have bulletin boards on which information may be displayed.

## **Others' Events**

Most areas have traveling authors read from their books and then sign copies. These readings can be held at a book store or at a large auditorium, depending on the expected crowds. In order for these to be utilized to our advantage, there is a vital need for a person in each region to take responsibility for checking for scheduled presentations that are open to the public, and alerting the local group to



participate. These events include:

- Book Signings.
- News conferences/photo opportunities.
- Other rail-related openings and activities.

## **Making NPRHA Information Available**

Printing of a full-color, tri-fold promotional brochure has been authorized by the Board of Directors. Substantial quantities will be available for distribution at local railroad- and history-oriented events.

In addition, 160 copies of John Lubetkin's book "*Jay Cooke's Gamble – The Northern Pacific Railroad, the Sioux, and the Panic of 1873*" have been donated by the author for distribution to libraries and institutions of learning across the NP system.

John has also compiled a list of over 2000 such institutions for our reference and use. A survey of these local institutions should be made to determine candidates for distribution of NPRHA literature to interested parties. Each should be called and asked if you can provide informational material to their clients. When they accept, the institution should be visited to see where the material will be displayed and to how many copies will be needed. Then, it is important for someone to visit the institution regularly to restock the material and check that it is still being displayed in an appropriate space. These types of institutions include:

### ***Railroad and Regional Museums***

- NP-oriented railroad museums (e.g., Livingston, Wallace);
- Mid-size and smaller historical museums in NP-served areas;
- Railroad museums adjacent to NP areas, including Manitoba Province.

### ***Railroad Hobby Shops and Stores***

- In main NP states;
- Adjacent to main NP states;
- Others with an NP-related clientele.

### ***Public Libraries***

- In main NP states;
- Adjacent to main NP states.

### ***Public Train Rides***

- In main NP states;
- Adjacent to main NP states;
- Others with an NP-related tie-in through equipment, etc.

### ***Railroad Historical and Modeling Expositions and Meets***

- In main NP states;
- Adjacent to main NP states;
- Others with an NP-related clientele.

## **NPRHA Public Relations & Publicity**

Public relations and publicity are FREE advertising. Other than negative publicity, any mention of the NPRHA in newspapers and magazines is a form of free advertising. It is much more effective to get a newspaper to carry a story about our annual conference, rather than buying an ad in the daily paper

because more people will read the article, than will read the ad.

NP-related articles published in general railroad magazines will help to create the interest in the Northern Pacific that we need. Some ways to create useful publicity include:

- Encouraging members to write NP-related articles for publication in rail-related magazines, possibly coordinated with an in-depth article in *The Mainstreeter*;
- E-mailing the same story to scores of papers without postage costs. A story such as “NPRHA to begin second quarter century with Montana conference” could be sent to close to 100 weekly and daily newspapers around the state;
- The same story, with a slightly modified headline, could be sent to hundreds of papers in states served by the Northern Pacific;
- All stories should conclude with something like, “For more information about the NPRHA, contact.....”;
- Any article including photos or illustrations should include, in addition to the traditional credits, a statement about the resources pertaining to similar information available on the web site [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org);
- Wherever appropriate according to the article content, mention should be made of our NP Archives, located at Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, MN, and including reference to the (limited) availability of our volunteer staff to assist them with their research. The address (193 E. Pennsylvania Ave., St. Paul, MN 55101-4319) and telephone number (651-228-0263) for JSRH should be included.

## ***Public Relations is an Ongoing Process***

- NPRHA public relations needs to be part of the recruitment activities.
- Public relations stories are much more likely to be published if the editor has met someone from the local area who requests that a story be published.
- The NPRHA's public relations activities include sending out material throughout the course of the year to publicize:
  - The annual convention, program, swap meet, train ride;
  - Annual modeling and all other NPRHA awards;
  - *Mainstreeter* stories;
  - Publication of NP-related books;
  - Publication of the annual NPRHA calendar. For example: the December 2005 issue of *Railfan & Railroad* has on page 14 a “calendar call” listing, among others, the calendars (and how to buy them) of the Chicago & Northwestern, Katy Railroad, New York Central, and Western Maryland historical societies;
  - Important local events, such as giving *Mainstreeter* subscriptions to public libraries.
- Emphasis should be on reaching:
  - Daily and weekly newspapers;
  - Monthly and quarterly regional publications;
  - Historic societies and museums;
  - National railroad publications;
  - National railroad organizations;
  - Other local venues.

## ***Publicity Database***

John Lubetkin has developed a data base of over 2,300 names in the states along the route of the Northern Pacific. While some of these names will not be of interest to the NPRHA, the vast majority consist of newspapers, magazines, historic societies, museums (with both gift shops and newsletters), and some book stores. All names include addresses, phone numbers, websites, email addresses, circulation or attendance and names of key contacts when available.

- Emphasis of the database is on the core Northern Pacific states:
  - Idaho
  - Minnesota
  - Montana
  - North Dakota
  - Oregon
  - Washington
  - Wisconsin
- States and Provinces adjacent to NP states
  - British Columbia
  - Illinois
  - Manitoba
  - South Dakota
  - Wyoming
- Other areas or sites with an interest in railroad history.

## **Advertising**

Advertising can be costly and should be used only to promote the sale of unique NP-related products through the Company Store. Such advertising should promote the allure of the Northern Pacific along with membership in the NPRHA by prominently displaying:

- NP products to attract attention;
- NP Monad;
- Involvement of the NPRHA in developing the product;
- [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org) as the place to go to purchase the product;
- How to join the Association.

## **Member Retention Plan**

NPRHA members are a dispersed and diverse group of individuals with a common interest in the Northern Pacific. Their interest can come from the fact that the:

- Member or a relative worked for the NP;
- Person grew up somewhere along the NP tracks;
- Individual developed a liking for some aspect of the NP, such as, its steam power, mountain operations, the monad, etc.;
- It was the first northern tier transcontinental railroad and was involved in the much of the development of many of the northern states;
- Member developed strong friendships with NPRHA members and likes sharing their interest in the NP.

Each year, our member numbers remain about the same, but we lose about 150 members who do not renew for various reasons, while we average out 165 new members. Some of the members not renewing have passed away, but if the other approximately 130 members were retained each year, our membership would definitely grow. To this point, the following are true:

- It can be assumed that any new member has a basic interest in the NPRHA or some of its activities (*The Mainstreeter*, modeling, etc.);
- In general, as long as the people feel that their needs are being met, that the NPRHA is a good value, and the NPRHA demonstrates interest in them, they will remain members;
- New members dissatisfied with the NPRHA will likely drop out in the first few years; and,
- It is possible, on a cost-effective basis, to make new members feel a part of the NPRHA.

The NPRHA must commit more resources to retaining members from the time they join the Association to the time they pass on. This should start with:

- Paying more attention to new members when they join the organization;
- Making it much easier to renew a membership by offering discounts on multi-year renewals and developing simpler processes;
- Polling the membership, especially the newer members, for concerns after they have been a member for a period of time;
- Developing an effective follow-up process for contacting members who have not renewed their membership as soon as the deadline has been reached.

Each of these items will take additional effort by the Association to accomplish, but will pay big dividends in terms of reaching our goal of 2007 members by mid-2007.

## ***Direct Mail***

Our contact with members is mainly through the four mailings sent each quarter to deliver *The Mainstreeter*, the annual Calendar, and various flyers enclosed in the envelopes. Members also receive a first class letter reminding them to renew, sent by the Membership Records Chair. These are the only contact most members have with the NPRHA, other than our annual convention, the Yahoo discussion groups, and the groups in the Twin Cities and Puget Sound areas. Members who participate in these latter activities are very likely to renew. Thus, the main target of the retention efforts should be the members that only receive *The Mainstreeter* mailings. By the same logic, any member that can be induced to attend local area meetings or annual conventions will likely renew each year.

We currently do not acknowledge new members in any way until the next *Mainstreeter* is mailed to them. This causes many new members to wonder if their membership was received correctly. In addition, we have no clue as to whether or not the member is, and continues to be, satisfied with his initial 'NPRHA Experience'. To correct this, we have instituted the Retention function.

Responsibilities of the Retention Chair will include:

- Periodically monitor the information flow between Receipt and Response, particularly with regard to the New Member mailings;
- Send a short questionnaire to each new member nine months after joins, inquiring about his satisfaction with NPRHA;
- Send another Member Satisfaction questionnaire three months before each member's 5-, 10- and 15-year renewals;
- Collate the responses from the Member Satisfaction questionnaires at least semi-annually, and communicate the results, with recommendations, to the BOD;
- Follow up on non-renewals, as reported to him by Renewal, coordinating the effort with the applicable local group leader, if there is one available.

## ***Making the Renewal Process Easier***

One of the most time-consuming NPRHA jobs is that of the Membership Renewal Chair who maintains the membership list, reminds members to renew their memberships each year, and mails missing issues to members. Individual NPRHA memberships start during each quarter of the year, and those members receive the next four issues of *The Mainstreeter* plus the annual calendar which is mailed with the second issue of the year. Prior to the expiration of each membership, the Membership Renewal Chair mails a first class letter reminding the member to renew.

Membership renewals are received in three forms:

- By mail with a check which must be recorded and deposited;
- By mail with the member's credit card information which must be recorded and entered into the Company Store web site to receive the payment;
- From the Company Store web site which must be recorded.

These efforts take a substantial amount of time, given the number of NPRHA members. To reduce some of the renewal work, the NPRHA should promote two and three year memberships, along with the current one year memberships. This would lighten the Records Chair's work load, and highlight for follow-up members who appear to be undecided whether to continue as a member by having ordered only a one year membership. However, the Renewal Chair and the Treasurer will need to accommodate extended memberships in their records and assure that such information is not lost. In addition, many of the renewal notices could be sent more easily by email, since sixty-five percent of our members have given their addresses. The balance of the members can be reminded by direct mail.

Caution: A problem inherent with this method is the frequent changing of ISP's by members. The e-mailed renewal notices should be sent out in relatively small batches, with attention being paid to any "non-delivery" notices received. These should be followed up with direct mail notices, all of which should include an entreaty to provide current addresses.

## **Member Recognition Plan**

### ***Use of The Mainstreeter***

Since *The Mainstreeter* is our most visible presence, it should be used to list:

- New members received in the previous quarter with their city and state in each issue;
- Member renewals for 15-, 20- and 25-years in each issue;
- All the sustaining memberships once each year.

### ***Annual Conventions***

The annual convention offers an opportunity to acknowledge members who joined in the twelve months and attended the convention. The following should be done:

- Make a concerted effort to recruit new members in the area prior to the Convention;
- Have the convention badge prominently indicate each new member present;
- Introduce the new members at the banquet;
- Take a group photo for publication in *The Mainstreeter*.

## **Membership Services Group**

### ***Duties***

In general, the Membership Services Group maintains the records of each member and provides timely notice in time for easy renewal. However, there are a number of other benefits provided by the subcommittee which can be divided into three categories of services. There is now a member chairing each of the three functions described below.

### **Receipt – Chair, Dave Hillard, Kirkland, WA**

Distribute incoming membership inquiries, information, and messages by:

- Receiving postal mail applications and inquiries;
- Depositing mailed checks in NPRHA account;
- Entering new memberships and renewals received by mail and from the Company Store into the web site database;
- Emailing new member information to Response for mailing of packages;
- Forwarding received questions and information to responsible members via mail or email;
- Providing deposit records monthly to the NPRHA Treasurer;

## **Renewal – Chair, Michael Borkan, St. Paul, MN**

Track the status of each membership by:

- Maintaining the master database on the Membership web site;
- Mailing renewal notices to members in a timely manner;
- Distributing names of non-renewing members needing follow up to local group leaders;
- Responding to mail and email questions from members;
- Generating mailing lists to the printer and to local groups as requested.
- Emailing to the Editor of *The Mainstreeter* quarterly reports of those memberships scheduled for publication, per the listing under ‘Member Recognition’, above;
- Emailing to the Convention Chair a list of new members since the last convention, for cross-checking with the list of projected attendees, so that they can be recognized at the Convention.

## **Response – Chair, Dave Cooley, Auburn, WA**

At the direction of Receipt, the Company Store Fulfillment manager will mail the following items:

- New member packages within one week of their being added to the database, including:
  - A thank-you letter for joining;
  - A Membership Card;
  - Company Store information and sales list;
  - A page of modeling information;
  - Information on why and how to access our web site, [www.NPRHA.org](http://www.NPRHA.org);
  - The latest issue of *The Mainstreeter*, so that the new member will receive the balance of the first year’s issues by the normal process;
  - The last annual calendar, regardless of the time of year;
  - Information about writing for *The Mainstreeter*.
- Replacement *Mainstreeters* and calendars as requested by Renewal or Receipt;
- Calendar orders when requested by members;
- *Mainstreeter* and calendar orders to hobby shops.