



# NMRA BULLETIN

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## BEN PEARLMAN PASSES

Ben Pearlman, 1942–2006

It is with much sadness that we report the passing of Bennett "Ben" Pearlman on the 26th of June, 2006. The National Model Railroad Association has lost a member who has contributed much to our national organization, and to the Lone Star Region as well.

Ben was born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania on December 6, 1942. While he was in his middle teens the family moved to Houston, Texas. Upon graduation from San Jacinto High School he attended the University of Houston. After graduating from the University he was employed as a cameraman for the local ABC television station KTRK. This was a fortuitous association considering Ben's love of trains (TRK being one of the abbreviations of the word track).

While in college, Ben met his future wife, Irene Pearl Chanowsky. They were married in 1966. In time the family expanded to include daughters Marci and Lisa. During that period he formed Pearlman-McNee Productions. In 1970 he and Irene transformed this company into Pearlman Productions. In the 28 years of their management the company became a well-known full service film and production company, garnering Ben the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Houston as well as industry tributes such as the Telly award.

His love of trains eventually led him to the NMRA. Being the dynamic individual he was, it was inevitable that he would become a leader in the organization. He started as Vice President of the Lone Star Region from 1987–89 and President from 1989–93. He was co-chair of the NMRA national convention in Houston in 1989. In 1994 Ben

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All notices of changes or corrections to this page must be directed to the NMRA Secretary

2007 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:

Detroit, MI • July 22 - 28, 2007 • Info: • nmraconventionregistration@charter.net

Trade Show Booth Reservations—Debbie Draper, Registrar • 10837 N. 34th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85028-3310 • (602) 569-9072 • natltrainshow@aol.com  
2008—Anaheim, CA • 2009—Hartford, CT • 2010—Milwaukee, WI • 2011—Sacramento, CA

**NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND  
2007 ELECTION**

Board of Directors and NMRA Canada President

needed. Ben was one of those lucky individuals who was able to combine successfully his work and hobby. He enjoyed both to the fullest.

At the recent NMRA National Model Railroad Convention held in Philadelphia, Ben's years of service to the organization were recognized. Ben was given the well-deserved honor of being named Honorary Life Member #44.



was appointed Chair of the (National Membership) Services Department, in which post he served until 2005. In this position he was overseer of the various membership services provided by National. He was also instrumental in conceiving, then designing the framework for the Heritage and Living Legend cars series produced by the NMRA.

Pearlman Productions was sold in 2002. Ben was then able to pursue his model railroad hobby in a different manner. He opened Papa Ben's Train Place at 2506 South Bend Boulevard in Houston. The shop became well-known as a place where the area's model railroaders could find the trains, materials, and advice they

The plaque announcing this award was rushed to his family in Houston. His name and number will be inscribed on the permanent HLM plaque displayed at the NMRA's headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Those of us who knew Ben personally will miss his quick wit and excellent business sense, as well as his willingness to serve the organization. His many accomplishments on behalf of the membership of the NMRA will long stand as a testament to his commitment, his energy, and his dedication to the hobby, the NMRA, and his many friends around the world.

—Dr. Robert Chait

Three Directors of the NMRA National Board will reach the end of their terms at the annual board meeting, July 2007. Over the winter, we will hold the director elections. The Regulations set three-year terms for directors. The three positions are At-Large Worldwide, Atlantic District, and Western District. In addition, nominees are sought for the positions of NMRA Canada President and NMRA Canada Vice President

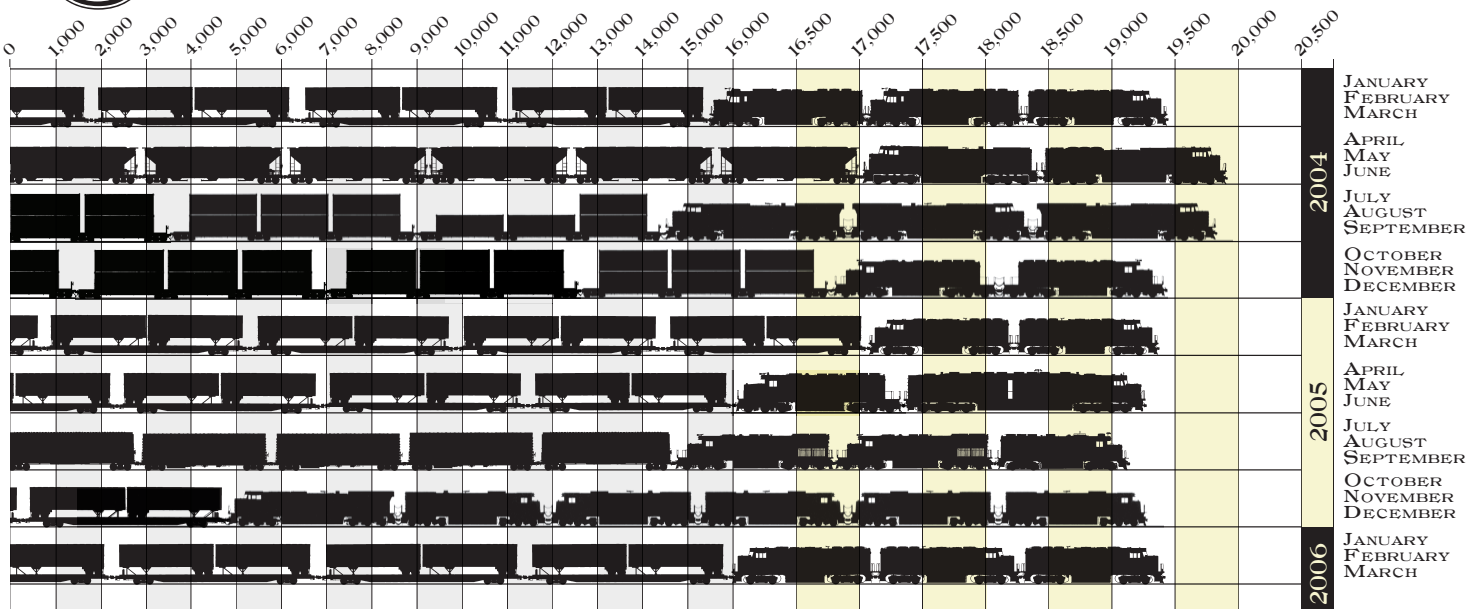
If you are interested in running for one of these positions, contact the Nominations Chair at [nominat@hq.nrma.org](mailto:nominat@hq.nrma.org) or by mail at 632 Bob White Rd Wayne PA USA 19087-2305. The deadline for submitting names is August 31, 2006.

The Regulations provide an alternative approach—petition. Signed petitions must be presented in hard copy to the same address. The deadline for receipt of petitions is September 15, 2006.

Review the NMRA Regulations on the website for the entire nominations and election process. Questions will be received by the Nominations committee at the address above.



# Membership Thermometer



## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM



**Thomas E. Shook, MMR 378**

I, Thomas E. Shook (Tom), was a youth in the tank town of Cisco, Texas, along the Texas & Pacific Railroad, a mainline station in the hills about 100 miles west of Ft. Worth. During the World War II era (1938–1944) I was ages 10 through 16, and enjoyed four passenger trains daily as they stopped for water, along with troop trains and heavy military freight shipments. The station agent, Mr. Pugh (3–11 shift), allowed me the opportunity to sell tickets, plan schedules for passengers out of the Railway Guide, receive telegrams, fire the coal stove in the station, and the like. I also had the opportunity to listen to the dispatcher in Ft. Worth and recall the importance of the message “By Lancaster Yard, Ft. Worth,” for it was then we knew the exact time the *Sunshine Special* No. 1 would arrive and receive water and block ice for the Pullman—in five minutes! The T&P station was a joint station with the MKT “tin can line” from Stamford, Texas, to Waco, Texas, and had a gas electric motor car due there at 5PM. The station had an interlocking plant so the agent was extremely busy writing and handling orders to a multitude of trains.

My first train was a blue-and-silver windup Bullet train manufactured by Marx. I had many cars, but also a chemistry set or two, and played in the band. I was 17 in 1945 and moved to Lubbock, Texas, where I was a chemistry and engineering major at Texas Tech. I was exposed to the AT&SF.

I graduated from Texas Tech and went to graduate school at Oklahoma State until I was drafted into the Army in October 1951. After basic I was sent to Pine Bluff Arsenal as a physical science research assistant and reassigned to the chemical warfare unit at Ft. Detrick, Maryland, for one year. This started a 44

year career as a civilian supervising engineer-scientist with the Army material command. As a scientist I made many trips by train (Pullman) to Washington, Baltimore, California, and so on. Upon retirement I found I had clocked over one million miles—what a life!

In 1965 I joined a new railroad club which met in Little Rock Union Station (MoPac) and became a charter member; I also joined the NMRA in 1965. I met many modelers of exceptional skill and a MMR, Paul Moon, started me on the way. The NMRA magazine was run by Clift Towers, an exceptional person who put out a magazine that everyone looked forward to reading. I met him twice over the years; he was Mr. NMRA.

I married Betty Rice Shook in 1958, after completing graduate school in biochemistry at the University of Arkansas Medical Center. We had three children. She is now deceased and my current wife Margaret Shook and I are well-known in model railroading circles. I have one step-daughter.

Paul Moon and I hosted three Mid-Continent Region conventions in Little Rock over the years and were associated with many fine modelers. My first certificate was in 1971, and I completed my last (structures) in June 2006. I would encourage others to be involved in the hobby and attend the conventions. Marty Vaughn, Patrick Harriman, and Richard Napper encouraged me to go for MMR. My railroad is now 1,000 square feet, started in about 1968, and is still under construction. The railroad is a DC cab operation that now has sound courtesy of Broadway Limited, Athearn, etc. Model railroading is a wonderful hobby and allows many opportunities to develop your skills.

I am a Presbyterian elder, an emeritus member of the American Chemical Society, Sigma Xi, Kappa Kappa Psi, and the Arkansas Railroad Club where I am the director of the Little Rock Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. I have attended eight national conventions of the NMRA, and many in the Mid-Continent Region. The second and third digits of my MMR #378 are also my age. Happy Railroading.

*Tom has earned AP Certificates in Cars, Structures, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chief Dispatcher, Association Official, Association Volunteer, and Model Railroad Author.*

## MEMBERSHIP BOOTH



Membership Services and Promotion Department staffers gave National Train Show visitors more than they bargained for at the NMRA Booth. Pictured (left to right) are Deputy Chair Gerry Leone, MMR, Department Chair Jan Wescott, and Chuck Diljak

## TRAIN SHOW VISITORS GET A FREEBIE: INFORMATION

First time visitors to this year's National Train Show found more than a multitude of vendors and layouts—they found information in the form of the NMRA Membership Booth. This year's booth, which was open throughout the show, was staffed by members of the NMRA Membership Services and Promotion Department (MS&P), as well as an assortment of NMRA Directors, MMRs, and local Philadelphia Division volunteers.

Knowing that the NMRA has its foundation in local Divisions and Regions, the Membership Services and Promotion Department spent the last year compiling a comprehensive listing of local contacts for each and every Division and Region. As a result, any Train Show visitor who inquired about local meets or shows could be given a person's name, email address, and phone number in his or her area as a point of contact. “We gave out an amazing number of contacts to visitors,” said MS&P Chair Jan Wescott. “Now those curious people know exactly who to contact to get local information. Hopefully they'll get involved with their local group.” In addition, booth volunteers signed up a record number of new NMRA members.

A colorful map of all NMRA Divisions was prominently displayed to help potential members determine which Division they would be part of. The map was compiled and drawn by NMRA member Will Jensen, who donated it to the Department.