

## HIPS WEBSITE Report 1/27/2021

1. As most of you know we have been involved most of 2020 in a project to upgrade our Membership plugin. The goal was to have one unified membership database on the website which was not the case before the project was started. Second goal, to improve the process of join and renew for our members, as we got plenty of negative feedback on that.
2. Before we could upgrade our Plugin, we discovered that our theme, our php, our Wordpress were all years out of date and needed to be upgraded first. We were experiencing not only problems with membership but other strange problems that had nothing to do with membership. Towards the end of the project we realized that our old security plugin was not going to work with WP Member either and we needed a new one.
3. What was a simple project turned into a much longer one as we updated all this infrastructure. That was years out of date.
4. So while we grumbled because the developer seemed to be taking too much time. In reality there was a lot more under the covers that needed to be addressed.
5. Memberpress is installed and working well since the middle of January. It is much more robust, and is considered the industry leader for Wordpress Membership plugins. , and we are learning about the additional features we might be able to leverage. There is for instance a coupon feature we might want to utilize. There is also a way to join, fill out the membership forms and at that point, just click and say I'm sending you a check.
6. There is still cleanup work to be done. Duplicates in the system. Basic members who should either be removed or their emails copied to real member profiles.
7. We have 161 members with no email in the database. We should reach out to them via postal mail to ask for emails we can enter into our database for them.
8. This leads me to a larger issue of what we can do to continue to grow our website in the best possible way. I don't want to see it develop in a disjointed manner.
9. For instance, I would like to see us explore the option of leveraging cloud storage so as not to overload an already large website with 'static' information.
10. Coincidentally the AIS Website committee reached out to me recently inquiring about our experience with WP Member as they are going to be deploying it as well. We should be benchmarking with them.
11. I would like to suggest that a Policy could be created that would deal with 'what goes on our site' and 'how it goes on our site'. I would like to accept Nancy's offer to work on a the Policy and Procedures Committee specifically to delve into this policy, and as the webmaster contribute my knowledge and experience to create and implement such a policy.
12. While Memberpress was this years project we should be determining the next steps for the site. We should not have to do all the upgrading only at the point where things such as the Forum were breaking down. We need a proactive plan in maintaining our site. Basically what I am talking about is a budget should be set aside yearly for separate Operations and Maintenance, just to keep our website technically up to date. New Projects are a separate budget item, and should be considered to keep our site relevant and fresh.
13. As for new projects for the website this year, I would like to upgrade the Gallery with more robust search features, as well as tackle the library, and making it a friendly place for visitors.
14. I would also like to put a few more attributes on all our gallery pictures such as a field for pbf and a field for 'endangeredness'. I could use some volunteers to populate these new fields. Not

sure if the forum needs help right now as I see whatever we upgraded has fixed at least one forum issue.

15. One final thing I would like to bring up because it does touch on website content. We had an unfortunate experience a month or so ago where a disgruntled new member was upset because he said he was not getting anything out of HIPS, mentioned he did not even know what HIPS is, and wanted a refund. His primary concern was what he was getting from the organization but I believe we are an organization where its not 'what I can get' but of 'what can I give'. Nowhere on the site is a description of who we are and what we do. So I created a little summary on that topic.
16. We know who we are, we take it for granted sometimes, but does the public who is cruising the internet know? By posting on the website we can tell them what we are about. No false expectations. I have put something together, I would like to share with you, I solicit your feedback so we can be straight out front with every wandering eye on the net.