

## Webmaster Annual Report, 2022-2023

### Annual Updates

Summer updates are going on now. Working with the Continuity Committee we are collecting Annual reports and toolkits, as well as the annual update of all the web pages and web documents. The Operating Manual was updated, allowing toolkits to be updated in alignment with the Operating Manual.

### Web Migration and redesign

The web team had one or two meetings a month from July 2022 through January 2023. Design and content were developed according to priorities identified at the beginning of the process (see Appendix A). We met with the Communications Committee twice for review and feedback on priorities and design. Various members of the team built over 350 views, and migrated over 900 articles.

Mike Austin did a large number of the views and the migration of lists. Kathy Jensen became the co-expert with Cathy on content entry. Kathy developed a communications plan to announce the new website. Cathy and Kathy spent all day for several days, in December, dedicated to responding rapidly to editor questions about content entry supporting the first newsletter production cycle.

We continued to adjust the design mockups through November. Mockups were done in Lucidpress. Kathy was reimbursed for the cost. Minor adjustments in design, implementation and process continued January through June. One key update remains outstanding due to needing to use Max's time on other fixes – our top priority fix now is to get the UMRA site working properly on mobile devices, with Max's help. There are a few pages that are not yet working well on mobile.

Kathy and Cathy also started a new article series, *Cyber Tips & Tricks*, reviewing web site concepts and other computer related topics.

### UMRA Photo Library

We started building a library of photos for broad use by UMRA for bulletins, web, newsletter, eNews or any other UMRA needs for images. We worked on selecting a storage location, writing processes to engage photographers, standards for meta-data to collect and preserve for each image, and guidelines for photographers on submitting photos to the library. We are currently testing the processes and guidelines developed with summer events.

### Member Database updates with Max Fierke

Max did a great deal of CSS work for the new website in October through December. We also did functional fixes to the member database this year, in addition to the normal debug as minor issues are detected, so we kept him quite busy!! Busier than I would have liked, since he is such a valuable resource.

At the end of last fiscal year we made the decision to move to Stripe, from PayPal. This change was smooth and reliable. At the same time a couple of other decisions were made whose impact was not felt until September:

1. UMRA has decided to allow luncheon signups to be active all year, instead of just 30 days ahead of the luncheon. This change caused some confusion (see below).

2. In addition, members will be able to select and pay for multiple luncheons at once, but need not select all upcoming luncheons. This change also went smoothly.

In August the presence of summer socials on the list of upcoming events confused some people such that they signed up for the summer social along with regular Forums without realizing one of the events was a summer social. To avoid confusion in the future we added a description of each event, making it clearer what people are signing up for.

Diane Young, from the Host Committee, began working with the member database closely. This brought to light some issues that had not been addressed previously. We made the following fixes:

1. We changed the roster so when a transaction was deleted, the person was also removed from the roster for the event.
2. We built a closer link between transactions, events and people such that we did not delete multiple transactions when one was deleted.
3. Should not allow inactive members to register for Forums.
4. Allow a spouse to pay member dues or make reservations for themselves only, or their spouse only, or both, as long as they are members; can accept dues payment for a new member AND reservations for events on the same screen.
5. Should not offer an event purchase to a member when they have already purchased that event! Events for each member of a couple are displayed according to their own event purchase history.

Changes were made to the member database due to newsletter publication changes where all members should now get the print newsletter.

1. Members no longer have the option of selecting to receive the newsletter by email only, by mail, or to unsubscribe.
2. The newsletter preference field was changed for all members so that everyone except those who have previously unsubscribed were set to EMAIL.
3. Admins can still set preferences, to allow members to request to unsubscribe.

We had issues at 4 different times with key accounts being shut off. Two times emails were no longer being sent from the member database, so confirmations were not being sent, and password reset emails were not being sent (so members could not reset their passwords). These resulted in unacceptable times of compromised functionality due to delays in finding the problem, and delays in response to our requests from our account sponsor at CSOM. Two other occurrences were a result of accounts being shut off, where we needed to get new accounts setup or reset. These caused Max and I to be blocked from accessing the database or website, and unable to make needed fixes or updates. These delays are because we are not UMN employees and we rely on a CSOM sponsor who is quite busy. We had similar problems last year. I think we might request special access for our UMRA accounts from Bernie Gulachek so we do not need to rely on a sponsor.

Other

Approximately monthly, I export all member database records to Virgil for his use.

I worked with Diane Young to teach her to do mail merges

Spent some time regaining access to our MySQL database. I lost VPN access, which prevented access to the UMN server that holds our member database. Spent several weeks figuring out how to regain access.

Perform regular maintenance on various UMN accounts used for web, google analytics.

Updated our special site that we use for our Como summer social. It allows us to specify meal selections, which we cannot do with our normal member database.

I work on the (special?) Social Events committee, to assure they have access to the member database information they need for tracking reservations and payment. There are often things that fall between the cracks due to lack of knowledge, so I try to fill those knowledge gaps.

I also work on the Cabinet of Curiosities committee planning events and tracking who has signed up.

Cathy Lee Gierke  
Board member  
Webmaster

## Appendix A

# UMRA Website Priorities

## Overall Priorities

- Place our most important assets prominently. Ron noted Forums, Workshops, interest groups, and news and events as key UMRA assets, as well as URVC and easy access to joining.
- Provide content of interest to our main audiences of retiree members and potential members; also keeping in mind our other audiences of the broader UMN and partner organizations in and out of the U.
- Showcase UMRA as a dynamic organization committed to enriching our members, the U, and the community through our service, outreach, learning opportunities and connections with each other.
- Present ourselves as welcoming, engaging, and fun, through both content and design. We found sites using fun color and language, with smiling faces felt more inviting.
- Communicate the ways in which UMRA is achieving our mission—we don't just say it, we do it.
- Show the components of our mission—connect, learn, and serve—by promoting volunteerism, mentorship of students, fantastic programming, organic growth of interest groups, and a chance to meet, enjoy and support other retirees.
- Make it easy to find what our audiences—members, prospective members, partners, and the U community—are looking for by linking to important content from multiple places and grouping similar items together.

## Priorities by Section

Based on team input and feedback from members, a few things settled into place:

### Home Page

The items identified by leadership and the migration team as UMRA's most important aspects are highlighted on the home page, with Forums and Workshops having the most prominent position, as they are the main monthly events. Interest groups, an annual calendar of all events, member benefits, and spotlighting some key news and events articles, with links to other news and current events are also on the home page.

### Major spotlighted items in the header

- The header has a Join Us button that takes visitors to a page all about membership
- There is also a Volunteer Center button that goes to the URVC website.

### Get Involved

A key aspect of UMRA is the variety of opportunities for people to get involved:

interest groups, programs, committees and volunteering. We chose to highlight all of these options together on a "Get Involved" page, where visitors can then be directed to specific opportunities for involvement.

### Programs & Events; News

- These are a main attraction – UMRA is very active and it shows in the many current events. News articles serve to highlight other interests and work going on in UMRA.
- On the old site, News was taking up a lot of space on the home page, and did not look very professional. But it needed to be prominent. So News became a page of its own, and Programs & Events became a page as well.

### About Us

While the entire website is really About Us, there was a desire to put the mission and structural elements into an About Us menu area. This is where visitors may come to learn the background of UMRA and how we are put together.

### UMRA Mission

- Learning and Connecting, two of the points in UMRA's mission are represented prominently in the **Get Involved** menu area, and the Programs & Events menu area.
- The third mission objective is represented in the **Service & Outreach** menu area, where opportunities for community service, partnerships and volunteering are presented.

### Committees; Liaisons & Representatives

Committees, and Liaisons & Representatives were under-represented on the old site. The work these people do to champion and build UMRA is an important aspect of UMRA, and our mission to benefit

our members and the University. The new site lists all of the committees and liaisons and representatives, with contact info for those who want to learn more, or get involved.

## Resources

The Resources section contains detailed information in a number of areas: member benefits, archives, retiree resources, and member locations.

## Incomplete Items as of 6/30/2023

Several locations on the website do not display properly on mobile devices:

**Home:** CSS is still in progress for the Welcome section at the top of the page, to allow it to display on mobile.

**Programs & Events:** CSS is still in progress for the Events, to allow it to display on mobile.

**News:** CSS is still in progress for the Events, to allow it to display on mobile.

**Event Summaries:** CSS is still in progress for the Events, to allow it to display on mobile.