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## MPLA Webmaster Report

31 March 2009

2009 Elections – this spring Roy and I were able to conduct the annual elections using our new server technology and an application named LimeSurvey (freely available.) Roy installed the application and I created the online ballots for each race. Once the ballot was created, the application generated emails to membership inviting them to vote. A nice feature of the new ballot is we can automatically generate email reminders to those who have not voted. We were fairly certain we were not going to have multiple votes cast by the same person – we had cases in past years where MemberClicks allowed people to vote more than once in an election. Finally, we thought this was a much easier election for people to actually cast a ballot in – all they needed to do was click the link in the email we sent and once they voted, they were not able to vote a second time. Further, people didn't have to login to MemberClicks to vote this time.

MPLA Storefront – at about the same time I had my hands full getting the online ballot going, I was notified that we needed to create an online form for MPLA shirt orders. As creating a form from scratch can be time consuming and complicated, I thought this would be a good time to explore installing an MPLA store on our server. With Roy's assistance, we were able to identify a freely available product which would suit our needs (osCommerce). Roy quickly set installed the application, and I set about creating products for sale – shirt styles, sizes, prices, etc. Not particularly complicated, but time consuming. However, I (nor was Roy) an expert in osCommerce, so getting the store up and running quickly was not as simple as you might think. I was reading help documentation on shipping costs and discovered that the software contained no ability to ship multiple items with the second item having reduced costs. That is, I was told shipping costs would be \$6 USPS Priority Mail, with \$3 shipping for each additional shirt. The storefront couldn't do that – or if it could, I couldn't discover how. I looked for some shipping modules we could install that might do that, but none quickly available. I told Basha and Judy it might be best if we run the shirt sales as “to be picked up in Wichita” because figuring out how to set up shipping modules was not something I had the time to perfect. We ran the store until the deadline. I worked with Judy to make sure that all the sales we recorded on the storefront were reflected in the orders Judy had received payment for via PayPal. We took the storefront down at the deadline. My plan is to bring it back up and online soon, so we can process orders, including shipping. It might be that I create a new web form, if making the storefront application do what we want is too much effort. Amazon makes it all look so simple. I just thought a storefront might allow us to sell all kinds of MPLA gear, but frankly, CafePress might do that much easier than we could. I'm working on it.

2009 Conference Handouts and Photos – I've put the word out that we will once again be archiving handouts and presentation materials for the conference, as well as photos. At the time of this writing I do not have any handouts posted yet – but that is not unusual. These things tend to trickle in a day or two before the conference and there is a flood of them when I get back to town after. Regarding photos – my plan is to take conference photos and encourage anyone else to contribute theirs. We are running a new photo application on the website, which makes dealing with photos much easier than my old way. Now, all I need to do is upload photos to the

server and the lightbox application does the rest. My plan is to try to upload photos from the conference if I can find a connection to the internet.

Facebook – I created a new page for MPLA in Facebook. In the past, we had created an MPLA group, which lots of people belonged to. The new page, however, allows MPLA to have an actual Facebook presence (meaning MPLA can post things, create events, post photos, announce things, etc.) Anyone who is in Facebook can “become a fan” of MPLA and they will see in their news feed when MPLA posts anything. It’s another way for us to reach our members – it’s another recruitment tool, frankly, as we have fans of MPLA who are not actual members. It’s about communication.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Chaney  
MPLA Webmaster