

To: FRRS Board of Directors
From: Paul Finnegan, Webmaster
Re: Museum Web Page
Date: August 9, 2023

Mailtrain

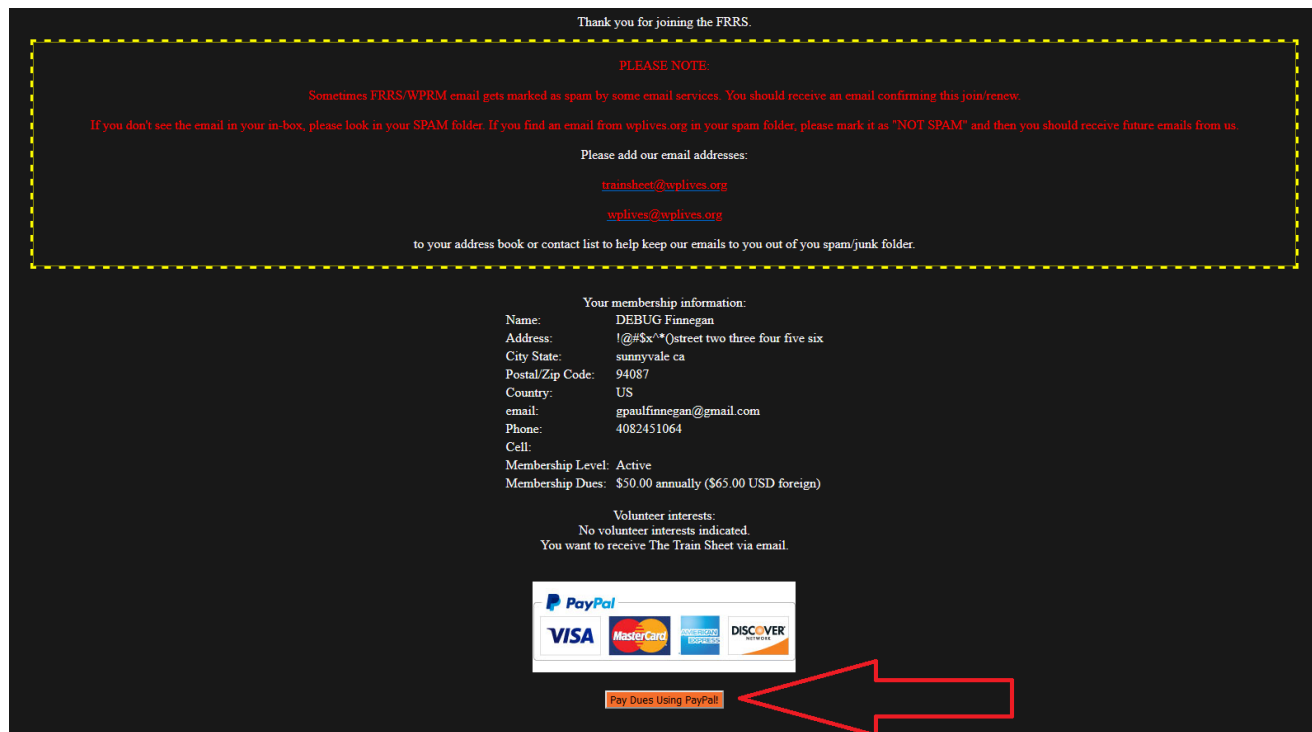
We continue to have society members and the public signup on our “WPRM News” email distribution list on Mailtrain. We now have 466 active email addresses on the list. Last month we had 454, so we had a net increase of 12 subscribers this month. No one unsubscribe this month.

runalocomotive.com Domain Renewal

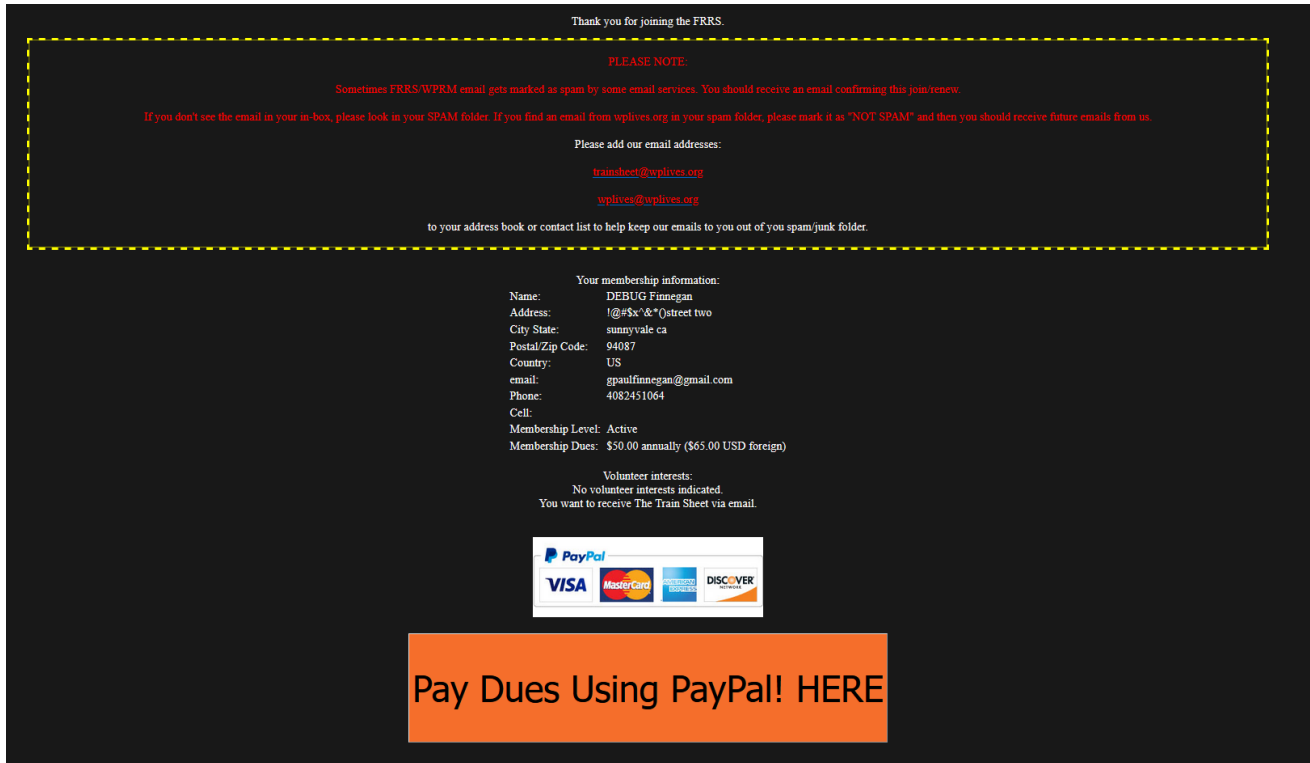
Our domain, runalocomotive.com, renewed automatically on July 16, 2023, for one additional year for \$12 at Google Domains.

Website Membership Join/Renew

For a long time we have experienced an issue when a new or renewing member used the online Join/Renew tool and choose PayPal for dues payment. I had been in discussions with Eugene Vicknair and Kerry Cochran about migrating the tool to use the WPRM Online Store. In July, we had two new membership applications that tried to use PayPal, and neither of them showed up in the PayPal system. I sent emails to both of the new members explaining that the PayPal had not processed correctly. Both of them immediately paid their dues with PayPal. I had my Eureka Moment when I decided I would try to join online. When I got to the final (of 3) screens in the Join/Renew process and I think I found the problem. Although the link to go to PayPal to pay the dues was there, and properly functioned, I think the users just plain didn’t see it. The screen looked like the following with the go to PayPal button at the very bottom.



I changed the code so the tool now looks like:



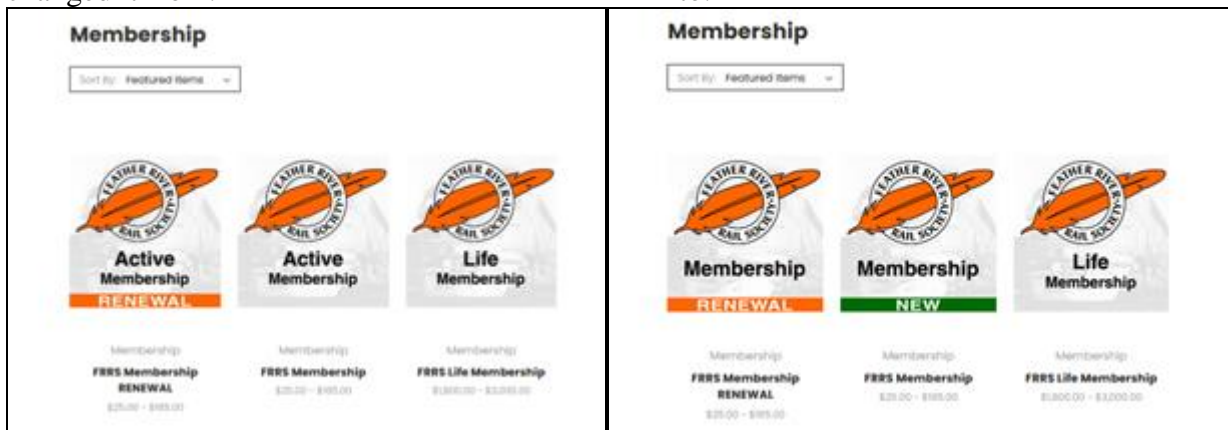
After explaining what I had learned with Eugene and Kerry, we decided to table the conversion to using the Online Store and see if these changes help. If we experience another missing payment, I will follow up with an email to the member. I really suspect there has never been a PayPal problem.

Since the change went online, two people have used it. It was used once on July 28, and once on August 7, both times the PayPal payment was made on the first try.

Since I was working through all the Join/Renew pages and shell scripts, I made a large number of edits. Although the shell scripts and pages all worked, they were not up to my current quality standards. It was good motivation to fix a lot of little things to be best practice.

FRRS Membership User Interface Improvement

I worked with Eugene Vicknair to clarify the FRRS Membership offering on our online store. I changed it from:



Online Store Updates

Kerry Cochran and I have been working with Eugene Vicknair to improve the museum's online store listings. Recently Eugene gave me access to the store's dashboard at BIGCOMMERCE and I created a couple reports to list the products at the store that did not have images. Kerry spent time while he was at the museum taking photos of many of the products that lacked images. I was able to find images online of many of the pins and other products. I also replace a few images with better ones.

Of the 99 products without images, I was able to add photos for 87 of them to the store's pages.

As time permits, I plan to continue the housekeeping chores and continue to cleanup small issues at the online store.

WPLives.org Mail Service

The FRRS has various email addresses using the WPLives.org domain (e.g. info@wplives.org) for both public and internal communications. After leaving Hostmonster as our ISP for our web services in September 2020, we utilized a fully featured email server system from Cisco systems set up by Javier Henderson and Kenneth Finnegan at the Hurricane Electric data center in Fremont. We had a gratis license available for our use. Earlier this summer Kenneth became aware we would not be able to renew the license after 7/31/23. He and Javier investigated alternate solutions.

After research and testing, they decided on installing PROXMOX, a powerful, enterprise-grade, open-source email server. Three systems were set up (two in Fremont and one in Boston) for redundancy. This way, even if both systems in the Fremont facility goes down (e.g. major network disaster), the WPLives.org email will queue in Boston and not be lost.

On Sunday, July 23, 2023, Kenneth converted all of the WPLives.org email service from the pervious Cisco service to the new PROXMOX system. Kenneth and I did extensive testing and found no issues. As we intended, the change was transparent to all our users.

Tour.WPLives.org System

In 2021, Kenneth Finnegan created a new web based tour system (<https://tour.wplives.org/>) for visitor use at the museum. He placed a large number of QR code signs on equipment around the museum. It has been used by many visitors to learn more about items. Kenneth and I were discussing the system in June and wondered how widely it is being used. Kenneth explained how he had configured the Apache web server logs for the tour system to me. I used this information to create two new UNIX shell scripts to create reports about how the Tour.WPLives.org system is being used. I submitted the report for July 2023 as a separate report to the August 2023 FRRS Board Meeting. Please see it for the details, but the system seems to be used by a fair number of visitors.

Google Reviews this Summer

We have received these reviews this summer on the Western Pacific Railroad Museum search results page on Google:

Amber Luster ★★★★★

This place is wonderful for the train enthusiast. My son loves this place. Friendly staff and the train rides are nice. You just purchase one ticket and you can ride all day. Lots of shirts to choose from in the gift shop.

Justin Pirie ★★★★★

Holly Harris ★★★★★

You can even take a ride on the train on the weekend.

Nancy Jones ★★★★★

Awesome place with some great trains!

John Peake ★★★★★

Amazing collection of rolling stock, wonderful volunteers and retired train crew

Lynn Gordon ★★★★★

Truly a fun, educational, immersive experience for all ages.

Carol Elliott ★★★★★

My boys love trains and they really enjoyed our visit!

Kevin Feeney ★★★★★

Extensive collection of historic rolling stock, though some pieces have no relation to WP or it's relatives

Ian Hoffmann ★★★★★

Always a great place to visit Great trains and the history to go with them

Craig Philpott ★★★★★

We had a good visit. Plenty of old rolling stock and nice staff in the gift shop. Two things really impress, the freedom to wander among the engines and cars and climb on some rolling stock and the opportunity to ride in an active engine cab or participate in rail crew activities like coupling and uncoupling cars from engine and control hand switches on tiny switching yard. For the hands on train fan this is very cool stuff. It would be nice if the indoor displays were cleaned up and better lit but for an all volunteer operation it is quite the operation.

Daniel Graifer ★★★★★

General Items

- 7/6/23 – Posted Departure notice for Steve Miller in Latest Museum News.
- 7/7/23 – Posted July FRRS Board of Directors meeting preliminary agenda.
- 7/9/23 – Posted four photos from Greg Elems to the [Around the Museum 2023 Gallery](#).
- 7/10/23 – Posted notice of the passing of Tom Graham in the Latest Museum News column.
- 7/10/23 – Posted three photos from Greg Elems to the [Around the Museum 2023 Gallery](#).
- 7/11/23 – Posted nine photos from Kerry Cochran to the [Around the Museum 2023 Gallery](#).
- 7/11/23 – Updated [crew roster](#) to show Nick Manos as QB.
- 7/12/23 – Posted Departure notice for international member Stephen Pettitt of the United Kingdom.
- 7/13/23 – Posted a photo from Greg Elems to the [Around the Museum 2023 Gallery](#).
- 7/19/23 – Changed the Purple Air Monitor sensor on the [Webcam page](#). The previous sensor appears to no longer function.
- 7/21/23 – Prepared download of five photos from the “WPLives Cloud for use by a non-member in a special project about the Flying Scotsman in the USA” per a request from Kerry Cochran.
- 7/30/23 – Updated positions for Nick Manos to include SC on Operating Department [Roster](#).
- 8/1/23 – Added new material in “For the modeler...” and “From the Archives...” for August.
- 8/1/23 – Posted link to [A Celebration of Life for Steve Miller](#) Saturday, September 9, 2023 Information in the Latest Museum News column.
- 8/6/23 – Created new web page [Western Pacific Seniority Rosters](#) with material sent by Kerry Cochran.