How to Use the GP-MI Website

This document is to help people understand the nuances of the GP-MI website. Anyone with questions that aren’t answered here should contact a Web Steward for assistance.

The GP-MI website is actually a web application. Users interact with it in ways that aren’t possible with ordinary websites. You could do online banking or manage your work scheduling after logging into a web application for example. But ordinary websites just present informational content like text and images.

Individuals and small groups maintain websites as blogs or to present news about, say, their Thursday night card club. But a growing state-wide enterprise needs a web application to conduct its organizational business. No single person could adequately maintain data associated with our national and statewide committees, catalog and update all important documents and financial records, present news about caucuses or candidates, and track address information for fifteen hundred members. The GP-MI web application offers a growing set of data driven features that are based upon the user’s assigned “roles”. Like a symphony, we work together.

A visitor to this site who has not created an account or has not logged in has no recognized role. These users have the most limited access to the site. Users who are logged in and recognized as GP-MI members have permission to access videos and documents that are restricted to members only. These users can also submit agenda item requests, publish articles to the site, and engage in a growing list of other things.

GP-MI Member vs. Website User

It is important to note the difference between being a member of the GP-MI and being an authorized website user. The GP-MI membership list has existed for many years. Most of the people on the list are not (yet) site users. Historically, people would join the GP-MI by submitting a written form. The member’s information would subsequently be keyed into a spreadsheet. This process was prone to errors. Today people can join online by clicking the nav bar button on our site, as seen here:
Whether the member has joined via paper or online form, GP-MI membership does not in itself bestow permission on the website. They cannot even login until they create a user account. In order to do that, they must click on a different nav bar button, as shown below:

![Login Screen](image1)

The registration process is quite standard and includes a step to verify that the user’s email address is unique and genuine. An email is automatically sent to the new user. That email has a link that must be clicked within five minutes in order to confirm its accuracy and authenticity.

Please note that it generally takes a couple minutes for the email to arrive, and that it might land in a spam folder. If the email expires before it is clicked, the user will get the following screen after logging in:

![Error Screen](image2)

The only way to overcome this problem is to contact a Web Steward.

Creating a different account with the same email address will not be possible. Creating a different account with a different email address is problematic.

The Web Steward is able to verify and set the account property manually, allowing the user to login successfully.
GP-MI Member AND Website User

As we noted, most GP-MI members are not (yet) authenticated website users. It is also possible for an authenticated site user to not (yet) be a GP-MI member. Another possibility is that the authenticated user is a legitimate GP-MI member, but that the web application doesn't recognize this fact.

The only way that the website can recognizes its members is by comparing the authenticated user’s email address with the email address we have for the GP-MI member. For this reason, it is important that the email address that is used for registering as a site user is the same email address as the one we have in the membership list.

If multiple family members shared an email address when joining the GP-MI, problems may occur. Likewise, if no email or an invalid address was submitted to the membership manager, the authenticated user will not be recognized after logging in. In these cases, they will see a welcome screen like the following:

They are recognized only as a site user and not as a GP-MI member.

They are encouraged to join. However, if they are already a member, they should contact a Web Steward instead. Joining the GP-MI again with a matching email address may be possible, but that would orphan the old membership record and cause problems for automated processes such as with sending U.S. Mail. The Web Steward can manually alter the email data appropriately so that users are recognized as GP-MI members after logging in. When that occurs, they will see a welcoming screen like the one below:
The welcome screen looks similar but the nav bar has buttons that it didn't have before. Other differences will be apparent as the member browses the site.

**Home Page vs. Splash Page**

Another change may cause some confusion at first. Until the user logs in, the Home Page is the same as the Splash Page. Now, however, the Home Page is as shown above and can be accessed by clicking the Home button in the nav bar. The splash page can be reached by clicking the nav bar button that says, “Green Party of Michigan”. The button and the splash page are shown below:

One of the most important things a member can do after logging in is to check and update their profile information. That is done after clicking the “Hello” nav bar button as shown below.
This brings up a page that will allow password reset and profile information management:

Clicking the Update Profile Information button presents the following page:
In this way, the member can change their information at any time. The update to the GP-MI Membership record is immediate. The Membership Manager can also make these updates on behalf of the GP-MI member, but members are encouraged to maintain their own data. This enhances efficiency and accuracy. It also relieves the member of reliance upon a central authority. This is a salient point when you consider that only members with a certain vintage can vote.

The Web Steward can assign to users any of a number of roles, depending on their status within the organization. As an example, you can see the current home page for a user that is recognized as the Meeting Manager, as well as being a particular Local Group’s Contact Person. The number of buttons available to any role increases as we add software features. The “Local Group” nav bar button currently provides data management tools for the local group and the GP-MI membership data within the counties served by that local group.

Each of the eleven officers has a custom home page with data management features tailored to their needs. Each officer is also provided with documentation that explains how to use the features. Officers are able and encouraged to update that documentation in order to make it more useful to the next person to fill their role.

This document will not describe the special features available to users with roles beyond that of general membership. This article is intended to describe the GP-MI website as experienced by an authenticated GP-MI member. Anyone with questions that aren’t answered here should contact a Web Steward for assistance. We’ll be glad to hear from you!

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