

To: FRRS Board of Directors
From: Paul Finnegan, Webmaster
Re: Museum Web Page
Date: February 10, 2022

Mailtrain

We continue to have society members and the public signup on our “WPRM News” email distribution list on Mailtrain. We now have 297 active email addresses on the list. Last month we had 290, so we had a net increase of 7 subscribers.

Email from WPLives.org Getting Marked as Spam

Note: I realize this article is rather long and detailed. I wanted to capture the information that may be helpful to a future webmaster. This is the second time I have had to work through an email delivery problem that had nothing to do with us, but how email providers (e.g. Yahoo, AOL, AT&T) have mishandled our bulk email.

Matt Shuman contacted me after seeing the election material on the website, but not receiving the Mailtrain New Years Day email announcing it. After some investigation, we found the email was in his spam folder. The email server log showed his email as being successfully accepted by AOL for delivery, but then AOL directed it to his spam folder. One of the features of the Mailtrain email system we have been using for the “WPRM News” list is it can show when (some) delivered emails are opened. Not all email clients allow this, so the reported opened count has been recognized as probably under-reporting the real open count.

The opened email count for the New Years Day email was notably smaller than previous email blasts, so I did some more testing and investigation. I also note that AOL, Verizon, att.net, sbcglobal.net, pacbell.net and Yahoo really use the same backend email service provided by Yahoo; so if there is a problem with one, there is likely a problem with all of them.

I created a new Yahoo email account to do some testing. Email from wplives.org was immediately redirected to spam. Using my existing Yahoo email account, it also directed new wplives.org email to spam until I marked one as “not spam”, and then new email went to my inbox. Just adding wplives@wplives.org as a contact (which is supposed to work) didn't.

Going back to the New Years Day email, I selected a few users that were not listed as “opened” by Mailtrain (including FRRS Board Member Bob Sims) and asked if they had received it, and if not to check their spam folder. They all found the email in their spam folders.

Looking at earlier Mailtrain email blasts logs, it looks like our emails starting getting redirected to spam sometime between 10/8/21 and 12/2/21.

I opened a ticket with AOL/Yahoo mail support on 1/7/22. I heard nothing and so on 2/3/22, I inquired about the open ticket. This time I got a response and after several email exchanges, we made progress on the problem. On 2/4/22, I received a new email from Yahoo Customer Care and said they were forwarding my ticket to engineering to get it resolved. Late in the day, I tested using my special Yahoo email account and new email was properly delivered to the inbox. On 2/5/22, I received an email from Yahoo Customer Care that said their engineers were able to fix the problem and everything should be working now. I created a new Yahoo email account and sent email to it from our server and it properly was delivered into the inbox.

I created a list of the subscribers who were not reported as opening the New Years Day email and sent them a message (from one of our gmail email accounts so it would get through). More than half that responded found the email in spam and were able to mark it as “not spam”. I also updated the

subscription web page and subscription confirmation web page to tell people to look in spam folder if they don't get our emails and how to mark them as "not spam" so future emails will go to their inbox.

To fully quantify and monitor the mail system, I created a new UNIX shell script that uses the Mailtrain's SQL database to report email recipients that have not been reported as opening the email. A few days after the next Mailtrain email blast, I will use the new tool to create a report that I will use to follow up with the non-opened recipients and see if we can improve the mail delivery success rate.

General Items

- 1/8/22 – Posted January Board Meeting materials, fixed obsolete convention.wplives.org sub-domain link. (Also fixed Pumpkin and Santa Trains links)
- 1/8/22 – Posted updated FRRS 2022 Calendar (Rev. H) to website.
- 1/10/22 – Extended H&R Block Silver Sponsorship for another year.
- 1/16/22 – Created Around the Museum 2022 gallery and posted two photo from Greg Elems of snow at the museum.
- 1/19/22 – December Approved and January Preliminary Minutes posted to [Minutes & Reports](#) web page.
- 1/24/22 – Removed 2022 WP Historic Calendar from home page and replaced it with 2022 Convention notice.
- 1/27/22 – Added verified nominations: Bob Sims (Incumbent), Roger Stabler (Incumbent) and Janet Steeper (Incumbent) to [2022 Election News Item](#) web page per email from Matt Shuman.
- 2/3/22 – Updated WPRM Google My Business web page to show museum as "Temporarily Closed". Some public visitor had changed the museum to "Open" yesterday. (Automatic notification from Google to status change to WPRM Google My Business managers notified us.)
- 2/3/22 – Updated election nomination status on [2022 FRRS Election News page](#).
- 2/4/22 – Posted WP 64001-64075 Series 50ft Boxcar Line Drawing in response to a public question to the H/A department on the [WP History File Cabinet web page](#).
- 2/4/22 – Posted monthly H/A and Modeling updates:
- 2/4/22 – Posted PM0038_Conference_Call_Access.pdf to [Museum Policies web page](#).
- 2/10/22 – Updated hotel information for 2022 WP Historical Convention per request from Kerry Cochran.
- 2/10/22 – Posted February Preliminary BOD Meeting Agenda to [Minutes & Reports](#) web page.