



**LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS, INC.**

<http://statepalaoh.com>

**Mary Ann Lubinsky, PA State Webmaster**

**WEBSITES, NEWSLETTERS, EMAIL, SOCIAL NETWORKING**  
**JULY 2021**

To our Webmasters:

I am once again sharing this information regarding websites and email suggestions. Mary Hogan, National Webmaster 2004-2006, started this and I expanded on it when I was National Webmaster 2006-2010. It has been updated several times to keep up with our changing electronic times. I hope you find it helpful. Websites are handled in various ways throughout the country. Some States include them under Publicity and others have a separate Webmaster. Whichever way your division, county or state deals with your website is fine just so the matter is addressed.

A website consists of multiple pages linked to one another. Each one of these pages is commonly known as a web page. Websites are viewed on the Internet. Think of them as a book, but instead of being a paper copy in your hand it is on your computer or smartphone via the Internet. Today, so many people use a smartphone for web-browsing and emails, but it is not a substitute to having a computer.

**Why does my Division/County need a website?**

Your website can:

- Provide information about the LAOH 24 hours a day, seven days a week at an inexpensive cost
- Your information can be accessed by anyone at any time of the day.
- It gives potential new members a way of learning about our organization. Remember that today almost everyone, not just young people, use the Internet to find out all types of information, if they don't find it on the Internet then it doesn't exist for them.
- It gives the public and your community a way of finding out what we are doing—upcoming events, projects, Mass, parade, charity fundraisers etc.
- It can also give your members a way of getting up to date information, e.g., if a meeting has been canceled, or the meeting time or place has been changed.

**How do I get started?**

First, canvass your members and find out if someone has any expertise in building a website; or who has computer knowledge. Even if you have never built a website don't shy away from the task, it's not that difficult.

**What is Web Hosting?**

A Web Host or Internet Service Provider (ISP) is the company that you build your website with and who provides it on the Internet for all to see. Most companies charge a fee for this service. There are thousands of webhosting companies. Do a search for "webhosting" and go through them and you will find less and more expensive ones. Ask around before selecting one; find out which company other people with websites use in your area. **Some hosting companies offer a free domain name for the first year with their plans. (See next section).**

**Choose a Domain Name:**

A Domain Name is a name your site will be known as on the Internet. For example, our National Board's domain name is ladiesaoh.com, our State's is STATEPALAOH.COM. We also have STATEPALAOH.NET and STATEPALAOH.ORG, but all point to one website. Some State domain names are LAOHNYS.ORG, LAOHMICH.ORG. You may check if the name of your choice is available through your webhosting company or by going to [www.register.com](http://www.register.com) and typing in your name. If it is not available, you may try other variations. Try to keep it simple; it will be easier for people to remember. The two or three-letter suffix after your name is on all domain names; ORG means organization, COM means commercial but many private or organization websites use it also. NET is another popular one. Once you have chosen a domain name it will be registered to your Division/County, they own the name for as long as they pay the yearly registration fee. **Please register your domain name to the LAOH Division/County and not to the individual who is setting up your site.** This way if a member leaves the organization the Division or County still owns the name. Once you have done this you will now have a website address- [www.YourDomainName.com](http://www.YourDomainName.com). [www](http://www) means world wide web (contrary to popular belief, not all websites begin with [www](http://www)) this is what anyone in the world can type into their computer and find you. **Always ensure that the President and at least one other person in your Division or on your County Board, have the information needed to access the website as well as the hosting account/domain registrar. NOTE: If you use weebly.com, you do not need a domain.**

### **Can't afford a website?**

-If your Division cannot afford to pay for a website there are many web hosting sites that will give you a free, small website; in return they are allowed to put advertising on your website. The drawback for these sites is that it can be very annoying to someone looking at your site to keep having advertisements popping up. Another drawback is that you have no control over what is advertised, it may be something that is offensive to our Catholic Faith or our Irish Heritage. Beware of these sites. Advertising of products or organizations that are contrary to our faith is unacceptable on a LAOH website, even if it is for free. You can get a free website from [weebly.com](http://weebly.com) or [wix.com](http://wix.com). Most of the ones I have seen did not have ads but there may be ads on your site. I have found them to be free of offensive material, so far. You can then experiment with their web-building tools that they provide. Keep in mind that free hosting may have limits on the storage space (usage) you use and the number of people accessing your site (number of hits). I am using a Weebly site for our parish. Despite tons of videos, there are still no restrictions.

Avoid having a website on a member's personal account. If the member leaves the organization the website goes with her. If she discontinues/changes her Internet service then the website is wiped out. Stick to a free site but read the small print.

### **What else do I need for a website that I want to build myself?**

- A text editor such as Notepad which comes free on Windows computers. Go to Start, All Programs, Accessories, Notepad. There are other free and paid text editors, but Notepad works fine.
- A file uploading program such as FileZilla, also free.

### **How do I build a website?**

A website is built using plain text using Hypertext Markup Language or **HTML** and Cascade Styling Sheets or **CSS**. If you want to learn more about HTML/CSS, contact me. I highly recommend that you learn some coding just to get a grasp on what you

are doing and why. Most web hosting companies have their own website building software that is available for a fee to their customers. Or you can go on their website and build your new website right online. They also have ready-made sample pages that you can use, all you have to do is type in your own information and choose what colors you want on your webpage. Most also have a tutorial that teaches you step by step what to do. It is similar to using a print program. Each webhosting company is a little different from the next, so ask around and find out which one in your area is at your level of expertise. Try them out first and see what they have to offer. Start simple and add a little at a time until you have what you want. **Keep in mind that if you change your hosting service in the future, you will have to start all over again from scratch with the site.**

Take a little time to learn HTML and CSS. There are many free tutorials online. You can do a great website with just these lessons and no additional software is needed. Microsoft is still offering their Expression Web 4 for free at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=36179> Download, install, and start playing around with it while it is still available. It's a great program and does not require HTML/CSS. On the other hand, there are great free options such as Weebly that allow you to do a site using their templates. Just keep in mind that a site done using a web-builder from one company will not work with any other company. Sign up for an account at [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com). Put together a page or two and Publish it. It's easy to add your own photos and files. No one needs to know it's there until you tell them!

You can also download Expression Web 4 for free from Microsoft at <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=36179> There are also Content Management Systems such as WordPress which can be used whether you purchase a domain/hosting or not. WordPress has free online tutorials.

#### **What if we don't have a website?**

-If you don't have a website but still want to be listed on the "Divisions" page of the State website please provide a contact name and an email address to the current Webmaster that can be posted on the website, also include your division name, number and city/county of location. Remember to check this information on a regular basis to ensure none of it has changed.

#### **Suggestions for, and things to review on your website.**

- Review the other LAOH websites for ideas.
- Please feel free to copy and use any of the information from our State website.
- Your website doesn't have to be complicated; a simple website will serve your purpose just as well as a more involved one.
- When your site is online, please take a few minutes to click on each of your links and email addresses on the site to verify that they are correct and that the link is going through; there is nothing more frustrating than trying to contact an organization to find the link on their website is not working.
- Ensure that contact information (the name and email address for the Webmaster) is on the site for potential members to contact your division.
- Please include your complete location details, County, Town or City name. Remember that this is the World Wide Web. Anyone can view your website from anywhere in the world.
- Once your website is online, please include a link back to the State and National LAOH websites.

- Email the State Webmaster with your web address and a contact name and email address. I will add a link from the State site back to your local website and will also share with the National Webmaster.
- Divisions/County and/or States may combine info and have one main website for an area; this will keep down cost and may capitalize on the expertise of a local Webmaster.
- If you update or change your website address, please notify the State Webmaster ASAP to update your link on the State website.

### **What should I include on my website?**

- Make sure you have the proper name of our organization "Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc".
- Include your town/city, County, and State on website (many areas have similar town names).
- Include a contact name and email address in a prominent spot on the website.
- Include a section with general information about what our organization is all about.
- Include our motto "Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity."
- You may want to include a section on our Patron, Saint Brigid of Ireland, or on Our Lady of Knock. You can do this simply by adding a link to those pages on the National Site.
- You may include some Irish history.
- Include history of your Division, County, or State.
- You should include a section on membership, the requirements and who to contact.
- You might include an upcoming events section- this is an inexpensive way of advertising.
- Please remember that whatever information is included on your website MUST reflect the ideals of our Order and not personal agendas. We are not a political organization, nor do we ever endorse a political candidate.
- You may list your Officers and their email addresses (with their permission). Never place an actual email address on a webpage, hyperlink to it. **Never place a residence address on a site, email address only!**
- Include a section on our Good Works and Charities- Project St. Patrick, Columban Fathers & Sisters.
- Every Division, County, or State that has a website must include a link back to our State and National websites. Divisions and Counties should also link back to their respective State website.
- NEVER POST YOUR MEETING MINUTES OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH NON-MEMBERS.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **What about Facebook and other Social Groups?**

Facebook is strictly a social networking site as is Twitter. A Division Facebook page is never a substitute for a website. Never place any LAOH private business or personal information on Facebook. You should place a link to your website from your Facebook page.

One word of warning—avoid other "social" groups such as Grouply. When you join them, you give them permission to get into your Contacts/Address Book. **Never allow any program to access your Contacts/Address Book.**

#### **What about YouTube?**

YouTube is one of the most popular sites on the web. You can find a video about almost anything you want on there. What else can you find on there? Some of the things I have found are: The Holy Mass; the Holy Rosary; the Vatican Page; pages

for different Dioceses across the nation and the world, including my own diocese; Mother Teresa; videos of some of our divisions doing works of charity or just having fun.

### **Newsletters**

Newsletters are a wonderful way to communicate with your division members. They are a wonderful way to keep all members aware of what is going on, especially those who cannot make meetings due to work or other commitments. Put your newsletter on your site, mail to those members who do not have computers or web access.

### **Hibernian Digest Submissions**

Do not submit anything for the Digest without first reviewing the guidelines from the National Publicity Officer. These would have been sent from National to the State and then forwarded to the divisions. If you are a Publicity Officer and have not received the latest guidelines, contact the State Publicity Officer.

### **EMAIL GUIDELINES**

Email is electronic mail. Simply put it is sending a letter using your computer over the Internet. Many of our members have access to Email. It is an inexpensive and expeditious way of communicating. Below are some guidelines when using Email:

- Please include your full name, Division and County in all emails sent. Don't assume the recipient knows who you are.
- **DON'T use your work email unless it is OK with your employer to use it for personal emails. Many companies do not permit personal emails. It is not worth losing your job.**
- **If you use verizon.net or aol.com, I suggest you get a Gmail address from google.com. Verizon and AOL (and some others) tend to block email messages.**
- **Did you know that when you have a free Gmail account, you have free YouTube, free Google Drive, plus other perks?**
- **Don't give your email address out as a way of communicating if you are NOT going to read your email on a regular basis.**
- When changing your email address please advise the Webmaster just as you would if you were moving to a new street address.
- For safety, DON'T put your street address on your website. Anyone viewing your website has access to a computer and can contact you via email. Your email should be just a name that is a link, not your entire email address spelled out. That is how Spammers find you.
- If someone unknown to you contacts you requesting a street address, get their information (address, telephone number) and then contact them the old-fashioned way—via the USPS letter.
- Safeguard email addresses that are given to you by other Hibernians. Many people have work email addresses and don't want them clogged up with excessive emails.
- Don't give out email addresses unless you have the owner's permission. If someone requests another person's email address forward the message to that person and let them make up their own mind if they want to give their address out.
- When sending out email messages to several people at once, send the first copy to yourself, with BLIND COPIES to the other recipients. This way no one will see the other's addresses. You do not have the right to give out other people's email addresses and this also helps to prevent unwanted spam.

- Don't clog up email with spam or jokes, stories, cute sayings, spiritual writings. Many people receive several copies of the same emails. If you do receive spam, report it to the proper authority. Only send non-business items to friends that you are sure will appreciate them.
- Beware of emails that appear to be from someone you know. You might see an email from "Mary Smith" but if you hover your mouse over the name, it is not her email address.
- Beware of "downloads"! Don't download anything unless you know who sent it to you. This is the way many computer viruses are spread.
- **Never click on a link if you do not know where it will lead.** If you receive a link in a message with no subject or a subject that doesn't make sense, delete the message. The person may have been hacked. Never reply to a suspicious message. If the person was hacked, the reply will go to the hacker. Contact the sender and determine if the message was legitimate. If it was, they can send it again. If you click on an infected link, you too will be hacked. You must change your email password immediately to prevent further hacking.
- **When sending an email to a group, email to yourself and blind copy all others. This may prevent the message being marked as SPAM or undelivered.**
- **When forwarding an email to someone else always use "copy and paste" instead of Forward. This is how viruses are spread and how spammers can tap into email addresses. Also, by doing it this way you are not sending everyone else's email address that received the original email. If you do use Forward, be sure to delete all of the email addresses and other unnecessary information that came with the message. Why? Because some people have their email accounts setup to save each email address in their Contacts or Address Book. If that person has their email address hijacked by a spammer, your email address is then available to the spammer.**
- When sending email always add a Subject to the message and **include LAOH** so the receiver will know it is from someone they know.
- When responding to an email associated with your Division, County, or State website or email address, please remember you represent the LAOH and your answers should always reflect or motto.