

User's Guide

To

www.hccmd.org

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Overview	4
Mission Statement of Homeschool Connections of Central Maryland.....	4
Getting Started – Quick Start	5
The Home Page	7
Public versus Private	7
General User Instructions	8
Login.....	8
Forgotten Password.....	8
Home.....	8
Contact Us.....	9
Event Calendar.....	9
Some Features of the Event Calendar	9
General Event Calendar Definitions	10
Viewing Events on the Calendar.....	11
Monthly:.....	11
Daily:.....	11
Per Event from the Monthly Calendar:	11
Per Event from the List Events menu:.....	11
RSVP'ing to Events on the Calendar.....	12
Adding Events to the Event Calendar	12
Adding the General Event Information.....	12
Adding a new "Location" for Events.....	13
Adding "Attendees" Information for Events.....	13
Manually Adding or Deleting RSVP's to Events	14
Editing Events in the Event Calendar.....	15
Family Directory.....	15
Features of the Family Directory.....	15
Using the Family Directory	15
Viewing the Member List.....	16
Editing your Family's Information	16
Adding a Photo to Your Directory Listing.....	18
File Cabinet.....	18
Features of the File Cabinet.....	18
Viewing Files in the File Cabinet.....	19
Adding Files to the File Cabinet.....	20
Forums.....	20
Features of the Forums.....	21
Public Forums	22
Reading Postings in the Forums.....	22

Posting a Reply to a Topic in the Forums.....	22
Posting to the Forums	23
Navigating Within the Forums.....	25
Photo Gallery.....	25
Features of the Photo Gallery.....	25
View Pictures in the Photo Gallery	25
Adding Pictures to the Photo Gallery.....	25
Private Messages.....	25
To Read A Private Message (The Inbox).....	26
Replying to A Private Message.....	26
Sending A Private Message (The Sentbox).....	27
The Outbox	29
The Savebox.....	29
Public News Submissions	30
Reading Public News Submissions.....	30
Adding Public News Submissions.....	30
Public News Topics.....	31
Reading Public News Topics.....	31
Adding Public News Topics	31
Quick Polls.....	32
Taking a Quick poll	32
Setting up a Quick Poll.....	32
Reviewing Results of a Quick Poll	32
Recommend Us	33
Search.....	33
Using the "Search" found at the top of the page	33
Using the Advanced Search function.....	34
Top 10 Lists	34
User Preferences.....	35
Your Info.....	35
Your Home	37
Messages	37
Themes.....	37
Logout/Exit	37
Users	37
Web Links.....	38
Viewing Web Links.....	38
Adding Web Links.....	39
Website Statistics.....	40
Website Suggestions Box.....	41
Using the Broadcast Message Feature.....	42
Using the Filter Functions	42
Appendix A – Website Posting Guidelines	44
Appendix B – Definitions.....	45

Website Definitions.....	45
Event Calendar Definitions	45
Forum Definitions.....	46

Overview

In keeping with the mission of Homeschool Connections of Central Maryland, the hccmd.org website has been set up to keep the members connected to each other and to the events going on in our community. This includes not just a calendar of events but also areas to share news, information and support. Anything homeschool related is appropriate for posting, as long as the “General Website Posting Guidelines” are followed (see appendix A). The purpose of this manual is to get you acquainted with the site and provide you with basic instructions for entering information within the site. Suggestions for updates that will help this document help you are always appreciated.

Mission Statement of Homeschool Connections of Central Maryland

A family oriented group focused on facilitating and promoting the intellectual advancement, social development and community involvement of our children. These goals will be accomplished through:

- Field trips, classes, workshops
- Social events
- Participation in national and world organizations like KASP and Scouting
- Shared knowledge and resources
- Cooperative efforts of all members with emphasis on open, honest, and respectful sharing of ideas and opinions

Getting Started – Quick Start

If you have this document you have already taken the first step in getting started within our community, you have registered with HCCM and become a member. Next, are some simple steps to get you started and on the way to full participation in our great community.

1. Accessing the website site. Point your browser (type in the following address) to <http://www.hccmd.org>. This will get you to the front or Home Page of the public side of the website.
2. Logon. Using the top left box titled “Login”
 - a. Enter your User ID exactly as it was given to you. The standard User ID on the HCCM website is “Firstname_Lastname”.
 - b. Enter you password exactly as it was given to you.
 - c. Click the “Login” button.

Note: If you have trouble logging on to the site, see the section “Logon” in this manual. If assistance is still needed, please feel free to contact us.

3. User Information. After you logon you should see the “User Preferences” page. This page will allow you to make changes to your preferences within the website. More detailed information regarding this area can be found in the “User Preferences” section of this manual, next is an overview of the information needed in the User Preferences area to get you completely registered.
4. Click on the icon or the link for “Your Info”
 - a. Enter your information:
 - i. Real Name – This is your name, not a family name.
 - ii. Real Email – This is a functioning email address and will be used by the website you keep you connected.
 - iii. Fake Email – This is the email address that will show up when other members look up your information in the “Users” area of the website, it is best to keep this address the same as you Real Email.
 - iv. Your home page – If you have a personal website you would like to share with other members, enter it here.
 - v. Your Avatar – If you would like to have an avatar, this can be changed here.
 - vi. Your ICQ – If you use ICQ and want you user ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - vii. Your AIM – If you use AOL Instant Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - viii. Your YIM – If you use Yahoo! Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - ix. Your MSNM – If you use Microsoft Network Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - x. Your Location – Enter you city and state here.

- xi. Your Occupation – Enter your occupation here, this information will be displayed in the family directory.
 - xii. Your interests – Enter you interests here, this information will be displayed in the family directory.
 - xiii. Receive Newsletter by Email – choose yes or no.
 - xiv. Always show my Email Address - choose yes or no.
 - xv. Hide your online status - choose yes or no.
 - xvi. Always notify me of replies - choose yes or no.
 - xvii. Notify on new Private Message by Email - choose yes or no.
 - xviii. Pop up window on new Private Message - choose yes or no.
 - xix. Always attach my signature - choose yes or no.
 - xx. Always allow BBCode - choose yes or no.
 - xxi. Always allow HTML - choose yes or no.
 - xxii. Always enable Smilies - choose yes or no.
 - xxiii. Forums Timezone – Maryland’s time zone is GMT –4 hours.
 - xxiv. Forums Date format – This is the format used to display dates within the Forums and does not need to be changed.
 - xxv. Signature – If you would like all of your messages to include a personal signature from you, enter it here and click the “yes” radio button above for always attach my signature.
 - xxvi. Extra Info – Any additional information you would like the other members to know about you.
 - xxvii. Password – where you change your password by entering your new password twice.
- b. Review what you have entered then click the “Save Information” button
5. Enter your family information – click on the words “Family Directory” in the top left hand box labeled “Main Menu”. This will bring up a list of all current members in alphabetical order by last name. Scroll down to your last name and click on it. This will bring up the information you provided on your registration form and any information you entered in the user preferences page.
 6. Review your Family Directory entry– Review all of the information found within your family directory listing. If any of this info is incorrect, please click the “Edit” button at the bottom of the page and make necessary changes. For detailed instructions on using the Family Directory, see the “Family Directory” section of this manual.
 7. Click on the word “Home” in the Main Menu box.

You are now ready to browse the site and get connected!!!!!!

The Home Page

The home page of www.hcmd.org will provide you with an overview of the information available as a member.

Across the top of the page you have the ability to search the website.

The left side of your screen will have the “Main Menu” box, “User Information” box, “Latest Public News” box, and “Website Statistics” box.

The center section of the page gives you a quick glance at the newest information on the site, including the newest items added to our Photo Gallery (Photos), Event Calendar (Events), Forums, membership (Family Directory), File Cabinet, Web Links, and Website Updates.

Along the right hand side of the page, you have access to a quick view of Upcoming Events, Event Calendar, Quick Polls, Top 10 Files on the site, and the Top 10 Web Links on the site.

You can navigate to any section of the private website using this page by simply clicking on the link for that section or by using the Main Menu.

Public versus Private

The web address www.hccmd.org is an integrated website giving general information about our group to non-members, as well as giving them an opportunity to learn a little more about us. Non- members also have the ability to join us from the public website. The public website does not allow access to all of our wonderful features, including the forums, photos and calendar.

On the public main page, non members have access to our most recent events – not upcoming events, they can see a view of the calendar that lets them know we have activities planned, but not what type of activities. They can see our public news, our 1 Public Forum and the top 10 files and top 10 Web Links. They can access the Web Links but cannot download or see files.

General User Instructions

The following pages will give detailed instruction on using the individual features of the hccmd.org website. Items listed with quotation marks, are actual items you should see while on the page being discussed. General website definitions can be found in Appendix B – Definitions, located at the end of this manual.

Login

On the main public home page, use the top left box titled “Login”

1. Enter your User ID exactly as it was provided to you. The standard User ID on the HCCM website is “Firstname_Lastname”.
2. Enter your password exactly as it was provided to you.
3. Click on “Login”.

Forgotten Password

If you can not remember your password:

1. Click on the “Forgot Password” link.
2. Enter your User ID in the “User ID” box– this should be your Firstname_Lastname (i.e. John_Homeschooler).
3. Click the button “Send password”. This will generate a confirmation code that will be sent to the email address you provided.
4. Return to this screen and enter your User ID and the confirmation code you receive via email. This will generate a new password, which will be sent to your email address.
5. Once your newly generated password is received, return to the login box.
6. Enter your User ID in the “User ID” box.
7. Enter your newly generated password in the “Password” box.
8. Click the “Login” button.
9. Go to “User Preferences” from the main menu.
10. Scroll to bottom of the screen and change your password by entering your new password (one of your choosing) twice.
11. Click the “Save Changes” button at the bottom of the page.

Home

The “Home” button on the Main Menu will always bring you to the main front page of the site, also referred to as the “Home Page”. The Home Page has

access to all other parts of the website and gives you snapshot information about the website, including who's online, the newest additions to the site, quick polls and top 10 files and web links.

You can search the website from the home page. Using the "Search" box found at the top of the page, you can search articles, comments, files, users and web links. For detailed instructions on searching the website, see the "Search" section of this manual.

If you ever feel that you are "lost" on the website, click the "Home" link on the Main Menu, it is always found on the top left side of page. It will bring you back to this page.

You can navigate to any section of the private website using this page.

Contact Us

The "Contact Us" link, will allow you to send information directly to a member of the HCCM webmaster group.

1. Click on "Contact Us".
2. Enter your name.
3. Enter your email address.
4. Enter your message.
5. Click the "Send" button.

Event Calendar

The event calendar is a central part of how the members of HCCM stay connected. As a member of HCCM, you can view events, list events, as well as add you own events to the calendar.

Some Features of the Event Calendar

The event calendar has some wonderful features. Some of the features of the event calendar include:

- Month at a glance viewing.
- Day at a glance viewing.
- Listing of all events, with the ability to sort events with different parameters.
- Event status, including open, closed, planning and completed.

- Event types, including local events, co-op, field trip, scouts, meeting, classes and more.
- Integrated Mapquest directions to the event.
- Event coordinator contact information within the event listing.

General Event Calendar Definitions

Status – the current status of an event

1. Open – these events are currently available to attend or RSVP
2. Closed – these events are full
3. Planning – these events are in the planning stage and may or may not happen.
4. Complete – these events have been completed and are usually in the past.

Event Type – the type of event that is planned, currently, these are the types of events allowed on the calendar, these event types are subject to change, if you feel another event type is needed, please use the “Website Suggestion Box” on the Main Menu to submit the suggestion. Complete directions for the “Website Suggestion Box” can be found in this manual.

1. Classes – local home school classes, either ongoing (i.e. dance), short term (i.e. art classes) or one time classes hosted by a member
2. Co Op – co-op’s are usually regular meetings of small groups of members to discuss or teach a specific materials
3. Family Event – these are events to which the entire family is welcome and are usually arranged by a HCCM member
4. Field Trip – general field trips, which include 1 time field trips to local places or events or multi-part field trips or tours to museums other places
5. Local Event – these are events that are planned and happen outside of HCCM, they are usually placed on the calendar because a member feels the information would be of interest to other members
6. Meeting – these are meetings planned
7. Scouting – these are events planned for the scouting members of HCCM
8. Special Day – these are Special Days, including holidays, birthdays or anniversaries.

Title – the name given to a specific event by the coordinator of the event

Location – the place where an event is scheduled to take place

Event Date – Month Date and Year, the actual date the event will take place

Event Time – the actual time an event will take place

Duration – the expected amount of time the event will run

Coordinator – the HCCM member who set up the event or entered it into the calendar

Fee Description – a listing of any fees that may be associated with the event

Other Information – any other details pertaining to the event

Member – any current family member of HCCM, only HCCM members and family members can RSVP to events that are not open to the public

Non-Member – any person that is not a current member or family member of HCCM, non-member cannot RSVP to events that are not open to the public

Viewing Events on the Calendar

Monthly:

1. Click “Event Calendar” on the Main Menu, this will bring you to the monthly calendar for HCCM, “View Month of Events”.
2. To change month views, change the month in the “Month” box, and if necessary, change the year in the “Year” box or to advance one month forward or one month back, click on the Month on the left (back) or right (forward) of the calendar.

You can always print a monthly calendar by clicking the “Printable Version” button at the top of the page or the “Printable Version” link at the bottom, right of the calendar. Clicking either of these will bring the calendar up in a separate window in a format that is printer friendly. To return to the website, you will need to close this window.

Daily:

1. From the Monthly Calendar page, click on the date (the actual number). This will bring up the individual descriptions of each event scheduled for that date. It will not allow you to edit your events nor will it allow you to RSVP to events.

You can always print a daily calendar by clicking the “Printable Version” button at the top of the page or the “Printable Version” link at the bottom, right of the calendar. Clicking either of these will bring the calendar up in a separate window in a format that is printer friendly. To return to the website, you will need to close this window.

Per Event from the Monthly Calendar:

1. From the Monthly Calendar page, click on the event you would like to see. This will bring up a description of the individual event. On this page you can use the “Printable Version” button at the top of the page or “Printable Version” link at the bottom of the page to print the event.

Per Event from the List Events menu:

From the Monthly Calendar page, you can see a listing of all events that are entered into the Event Calendar. This list is helpful when trying to determine when events are coming up and how many events are scheduled. This list is also filterable. To view a listing of all events on the calendar, click the “List Events” button at the top of the calendar or the “List All Events” link located at the bottom right corner of the calendar.

The “List Events” page will have a listing of all events on the calendar with the following information and filters (for more information on using filters to sort events, see the “Using The Filter Function” section later in this manual):

- Event Date
- Event Title
- Coordinator
- Status
- Event Type

RSVP'ing to Events on the Calendar

1. From the Event View from above, scroll to the bottom of the event description.
2. Click the “RSVP” button. This will bring up a list of all the members of your family that have not RSVP'ed to the event.
3. Click in the box in front of the name of each person who will be attending, this will make a “check” mark.
4. Click the “Save and Back to Event” button if you want to see the event again or the “Save” button if you want to return to the current month calendar.

Another way of viewing events is by using the List Events page. To get to the Event List, click either the “List Event” button at the top of the page or the “List Events” link at the bottom right of the page.

Adding Events to the Event Calendar

All members of HCCM have the ability to plan and attend a variety of events within and outside of our community. One of the ways we stay connected to those events is by members adding them to our Event Calendar on the private website. Any member can add an event to the Event Calendar. To add an event:

Adding the General Event Information

1. Click “Event Calendar” on the main menu
2. Click the “Add Event” button at the top of the current calendar page or the “Add an Event” link at the bottom of the calendar page you are viewing.
Note: the “Add Event” button is available on most Event Calendar pages.
3. Fill In the General Information about your event, including, for further explanations of specific choices, see the Event Field Definitions above. They are also located at the end of this manual under “Event Field Definitions”.
 - a. Status
 - b. Event Type
 - c. Title
 - d. Location
 - e. Event Date – Month Date and Year
 - f. Event Time
 - g. Duration
 - h. Coordinator
 - i. Fee Description
 - j. Other Information
4. Click the “Save & Continue” button at the bottom of this area.

This will bring up a confirmation screen with all of the information you have entered and it will assign an event ID to your event. Your event has been added and should appear on the calendar, to provide further information and /or restrictions about your event, if your location was not available in the drop down menu of locations, you will next need to add the location, and then go to the “Attendees” screen to list any restrictions and allow for RSVP’s.

Adding a new “Location” for Events

1. Click the “Location” button/tab at the top of the event page.
2. In the second area of the screen “Add New Location”, click the radio “dot” next to “Add New Location”, then enter the
 - a. Location Name
 - b. Address
 - c. City
 - d. State – use 2 letter abbreviations
 - e. Zip
 - f. Phone number at location
 - g. General directions from a known landmark or road
 - h. Click the “Save & Continue” button at the bottom of this area.

Adding “Attendees” Information for Events

1. Click the “Attendees” button/tab at the top of the page, this will take you to the screen to list any restrictions and allow for RSVP’s
2. Enter any Age, Grade or Gender restrictions by typing any restrictions in this field
3. In “Tagalongs Allowed” indicate whether tagalongs are allowed
4. “Future Field” is not currently in use
5. In “Max # of Attendees” indicate the total number of RSVP’s allowed, if this field is left “0”, there will be unlimited number of attendees. Also, parents that RSVP will count towards your RSVP number.
6. In “Open To Public?” enter whether the event is open to people other than HCCM members.
7. In “Allow RSVP’s” enter yes to have RSVP’s, which will allow a list of attendees to be generated or no, if you do not want a list of attendees available.
8. In “Allow Waiting List”, enter yes to have a wait list, if your RSVP list fills up, member will still be allowed to express their interest.
9. Click “Save & Continue” to save these changes and return to the main edit event page for your event.

Manually Adding or Deleting RSVP’s to Events

Occasionally, members and non-members will need you to manually add their RSVP to an event, this is done from the “Attendees” tab under the “Edit Event” button from the Event Calendar main page.

1. Click “Event Calendar” from the Main Menu.
2. Browse the Events, to find your event.
3. Click your Event.
4. Click the “Edit Event” button.
5. Click the “Attendees” button/tab
6. Scroll down to the section “Manually Add Attendees”.
7. Choose “RSVP for a Member” or “RSVP for a Non-Member” or “Add New Non-Member RSVP”, using the drop down menu, choose the person you wish to add, or in the case of adding a new non-member, fill out all of the information requested.
8. Click the “Add Attendee” button.

In this section, you can also delete someone who has RSVP’d to your event, using the scroll down menu in “Remove a Member” or “Remove a Non-Member”, choose the person you wish to remove, then click the “Remove” button.

Note: You will have to do each person individually, you cannot RSVP or remove families or more than one person at a time.

Editing Events in the Event Calendar

Only the event coordinator, calendar moderator or and admin user can edit an event. To edit one of your events:

1. Click the “Edit Event” button on the view event screen.
2. Follow the instructions above to edit the field you need.
3. Click the “Save & Continue” button to save your changes.

Family Directory

The Family Directory is the area on the website that contains information about all the HCCM member families. This information is sortable using the filters available on the website. This information is for use only by our members and is protected by our privacy statement, which was signed by all members when first joining our community.

Features of the Family Directory

The Family Directory has several new features, some of the most useful features are:

- Sortable and Filterable by many parameters, including age, gender, and interests
- Groups family members by last name, but allows for different last names of spouses and children.
- Allows for input of all family members.

Using the Family Directory

To use the Family Directory, click on the “Family Directory” link on the Main Menu.

This will bring you to the Main Family Directory, which is default sorted alphabetically by last name. The Family Directory list will provide you with the following information:

- Family ID – the number assigned to each family as they joined HCCM.
- Family Name – the last name of the member who joined HCCM.
- City, ST – the City and State where the family lives.
- Home Phone – the home phone number for the family.
- Member Since – the original date the family joined HCCM.
- Membership Expires – the date the family’s membership with HCCM expires.
- # of Adult Members – the total number of adults registered in the family.

- # of Child Members – the total number of children registered in the family.
- Yrs Homeschooling – the total number of years the family has been homeschooling.

You can sort this list by any of these parameters by clicking on the column title. Clicking again on the title will reverse the sort from ascending to descending or descending to ascending. Also, the Family List keeps totals and averages of our membership. To see the total number of families, adults, children and years homeschooling or the averages for these field, go to the bottom of the list of families.

Viewing the Member List

The Family Directory also allows members to look at individual members information. This information is sortable and filterable. For more information on filtering lists, see the “Using the Filter Function” section of this manual. To view the member list:

1. Click on the “Family Directory” link on the Main Menu.
2. Click on the “Member List” button on the Family Directory list.

The member list contains the following information:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Relationship
- Date of Birth
- Age
- Interests and Talents
- Username (also known as User ID)
- Email Address

This list is again sortable and filterable using any of the drop down menus and the column headings. For more information on filtering lists, see the “Using the Filter Function” section of this manual.

You can go back and forth between the “Member List” and the “Family List” by clicking on the button at the top of the list.

Editing your Family’s Information

It is important to always have up to date information regarding your family in your Family Directory entry. The information originally stored in your listing, is the information you provided on your registration form. While every effort is made to

enter this information correctly from your registration form, mistakes can happen, in addition, there are times when the information you provided changes. When you first join HCCM, it is important that you check this information and correct any errors and fill in any missing information, in addition, it is equally important to check this information periodically to verify that nothing has changed.

To Edit your family's information:

1. Click the "Family Directory" link on the Main Menu.
2. Click the "Edit <name> Information" button found at the bottom of the "Family List" or "Member List" or the "Edit <name> Information" link found at the bottom right of either list.
3. On the "Edit Family Information" page, verify, updated or add information for the following fields:
 - Phone Number
 - Address
 - City
 - ST (State)
 - Zip
 - Years Homeschooling
4. If you would like, you can add general directions to your home from a major intersection or landmark.
5. In the Adults Section, verify, edit and/or add the following information for each adult listed:
 - Last Name
 - Relationship
 - Cell Phone
 - Email Address
 - Co-op Interests
 - Hobbies, Interests & Talents
6. In the Children Section, verify, edit and/or add the following information for each child listed:
 - Last Name
 - Relationship
 - Date of Birth
 - Email Address
 - Interests & Talents
7. When you have completed all of the changes needed, click the "Save All Information" button at the bottom of the page.
8. If you need to add an Adult or Child member, fill in the blank line and click the "Save All Information" button. You should also notify the HCCM general Secretary so that your membership registration form can be updated to match your family entry.

Adding a Photo to Your Directory Listing

You can add a picture to your Family Directory listing; this photo will be visible anytime someone visits your Family Directory listing. To add a photo to your listing:

1. You must first upload the photo to our “Photo Gallery”; complete instructions are located in the “Adding a Photo to the Photo Gallery” section of this manual. Any photo is best seen if it is 400x300 pixels when uploaded into the Photo Gallery.
2. After the photo is loaded, view the photo in the Photo Gallery and copy down the location of the photo of the photo, this is best done by clicking in the address box of your web browser, to highlight the entire address, then right mouse click on the title, then click “copy”.
3. Click the “Family Directory” link on the Main Menu.
4. Click the “Edit <name> Information button found at the bottom of the “Family List” or “Member List” or the “Edit <name> Information” link found at the bottom right of either list.
5. Click in the box under the picture, right mouse click, then click “paste”. This will put the location of the picture into the box.
6. Click the “Save All Information” button at the bottom of the page.

File Cabinet

Features of the File Cabinet

The file cabinet on the HCCM website is the area where you can share, by uploading to the site, computer files for use by the entire community. These files are sorted into categories. At current time, there are 4 categories with 2 sub-categories; these include Organizational Documents with the sub categories; Meeting Minutes and Financial Documents, Homeschooling Events, Templates and Worksheets, and Other. These categories are reviewed periodically to assess the need for additional categories that would allow for better ease in finding files with in the website.

Some of the special features of the File Cabinet page:

- Ability to sort lists of files with various parameters
- Ability to browse files
- Ability to rate files on usefulness
- Ability to see file sizes prior to attempting downloads
- Ability to report, directly to the web masters, files that do not download properly by using the “Report Broken Link To File” link under each file.

Viewing Files in the File Cabinet

You can easily view files that are on the website

1. Click the “File Cabinet” link on the “Main Menu”; this will take you to the “File Cabinet” main page.
 - a. You can search, using the search box:
 - i. Enter your search words
 - ii. Click the “Search” button
 - iii. View results
 - b. You can browse links by clicking on one of the category links, currently there are 4 categories, these categories are subject to change as needed:
 - i. Homeschooling Events
 - ii. Organizational Documents, including Meeting Minutes and Financial Documents
 - iii. Templates and Worksheets
 - iv. Other
2. Click on a category
3. View the list of links and descriptions available
4. Click the link to the file you wish to see, you must have the appropriate program in order to see files.

You can also browse categories by clicking one of the main links found directly under the “Search “ box, these include:

New – recently added links

Popular – most commonly viewed links

Top Rated – top links as voted on by our members

In order that our members can have additional information, namely how useful a link is, it is always appropriate to rate a file you have looked at. To do this:

1. Click the link “Rate File”
2. Enter a 1 from 1 – 10, 1 being poor, 10 being excellent
3. Enter any additional comments regarding that particular file
4. Click the “Rate this File” button next to the number you assigned
5. This will take you to a Review screen, from which you can return to the File Cabinet by clicking the “File Cabinet Main” link

Please note, once you have a list of links on your page, you can sort the links by Title (alphabetically), Date added, Rating (as determined by other member votes) or Popularity (As determined by number of times the site has been viewed by other members. Each of these categories can be sorted Ascending or Descending

Adding Files to the File Cabinet

Any current member of HCCM can add files to the “File Cabinet”. This is extremely useful when wanting to share files with other members. Some general rules when adding files to the website are:

- Submit a unique file only once.
- All files are subject to review and verification by an administrator.
- Username and IP are recorded, so please don't abuse the system.
- Use your discretion is posting of appropriate materials

To add a file to the “File Cabinet”

1. Click “File Cabinet” on the Main Menu
2. Click “Add File” link under the search box
3. This will bring up the page to use to actually add a new file to the website. In the “Program Name” box, type in a descriptive title for your file
4. In the “File Name”, type the location of the file you would like to add to the site, you can use the “Browse” button, to locate the file on your hard drive.
5. In the “Category” box, choose one of the current categories to place your file into.
6. In the “Description” box, type a complete description of the file you are adding, making this description as thorough as possible, gives all members a better idea of what the file contains.
7. In the “Author’s Name”, type your name, unless the file is authored by someone else
8. In the “Author’s Email”, type your email address
9. In the “Version” box, only add something if this is another version of a file that is already listed in the “File Cabinet”.
10. Click the “Add This File” box.
11. You will be taken to the confirmation screen, which shows you have completed adding a file.

Note: There is currently no authorization needed to add files, any member can add a file they feel might be of interest to other members.

Forums

The Forums on the HCCM website are set up to allow easy communication among our members. All members have access to the forums and are encouraged to use them for open and honest communication. The HCCM Board

of Directors will also post general information using the forums. There is currently only 1 Public Forum – “Public Forum” non-members visiting our site as well as members can post to this Forum. All messages or “Topics” are viewable by members and non-members alike. We currently have 8 member only or “Private” Forums. These include:

- Field Trips and Events – an area to discuss any field trips or events, as well as posting of general information about local events, including programs at the local Howard County libraries
- Curriculum Review – an area to discuss and give opinions about different types of curriculum, divided by subjects as well as providers
- Teachers Exchange – an area to discuss, share and exchange your teaching skills, equipment and ideas.
- Business Exchange – an area to discuss and list any services and/or businesses that are run by home schooling families, including home based businesses.
- Kids Konnection – an area to allow our children a safe place to discuss whatever they want.
- About This Website – an area to discuss this website, this would include notices of maintenance being done as well as discussing improvements that may be considered.
- HCCMD Organizational Business – an area to discuss issues relating to the HCCM organization, including notices of general meetings and/or workshops.
- General Discussion – an area that is for everything else.

These Forums are reviewed periodically and may have additions or deletions as necessary. If you feel a new Forum is needed, please use the “Website Suggestion Box” to submit the idea to the webmaster group. Complete directions for using the “Website Suggestion Box” can be found in this manual under the section “Website Suggestion Box”.

Features of the Forums

The Forums have many exciting features, some of the major features include:

- Categories for different topics of discussion
- Public and Private Forums
- Indexes of Forums and Topics
- Visible notifications of new messages
- “Quoting” feature in replies
- Easy linking from “Event Calendar” to Forum to discuss the event

Public Forums

A note about the “Public Forums”. These forums are for use by our members as well as those non-members who are visiting our site. The process for using them is the same as the processes described in this manual for Forums.

Reading Postings in the Forums

Reading posts in the Forums is a great way to keep up with all of the activities that are going on within the community. To read a post in the Forums:

1. Click on the “Forums” link on the Main Menu, this will bring you to the Main Forum Index page.
2. Click on the name of the Forum you wish to read, this will bring you to the index of topics posted within that Forum. Note: If there are message within a Forum that you have not read, the round icon next to the Forum or Topic will appear in a yellowish color.
3. Click on the Topic you wish to read, this will bring up the entire “thread” or conversation related to this topic.
4. After reading this topic, you can post a reply, post a new topic (See the “Posting to the Forums” section of this manual and begin at step 3), or navigate to another Topic or Forum (see the “Navigating Within the Forums” section of this manual).

Posting a Reply to a Topic in the Forums

After reading the posts/messages within the topic, you can post a reply to a message. Note: After you have clicked on “Post Reply” and the blank message screen comes up, you can review the entire Topic by scrolling to the bottom of the message screen to find the area titles “Topic Review”. To post a reply:

1. From the view messages page above, click either the “quote” or “Post Reply”.
2. The “Subject” box should be empty, do not enter anything in this box unless you wish your post to have a different topic.
3. Type your reply into the large box in the “Message Body” area; if you have quoted the previous message, it will be in the box already.
4. You have several HTML coding “extras” that can be added to your message, these are not required in order to send the message, they are simply extras for people with advanced HTML or BBCode experience. Feel free to experiment with them and see what the effects are. The simplest way to do that is to send messages to yourself. These extras include:
 - a. Text styles, including:
 - i. Bold – to add bold type - indicated by the “B” button

- ii. Italics – to add italic type - indicated by the slanted “I” button
 - iii. Underline – to underline certain text - indicated by the underlined “u” button
 - iv. Quotation marks – to place text into quotation marks - indicated by the “quote” button
 - v. Code – to insert specific HTML coding - indicated by the “Code” button
 - vi. List – to create HTML lists - indicated by the “List” button
 - vii. List= - also used with HTML lists - indicated by the “List=” button
 - viii. Img – to add a picture using HTML coding - indicated by the “Img” button
 - ix. URL – to list a website address in HTML coding - indicated by the “URL” button
 - x. Font colour – which allows you to change the color of text in your message
 - xi. Font size – which allows you to change the text size within your message
- b. Emoticons or smiley faces – to add place the cursor in the body of the message where you want the smiley and then click on the smiley.
- c. Options including:
- i. HTML on/off – allows you to turn off and on HTML encoding in your message
 - ii. BBCode on/off – allows you to turn off and on BBCode in your message
 - iii. Smilies on/off – allows you to turn off and on Smilies in your message
 - iv. Add a signature – this will add the signature you have stored in your personal profile
 - v. Notify me when a reply has been posted – will generate an email from the website administrator to notify you whenever a reply is posted to the topic.
5. Click the “Preview” button if you wish to review your message prior to sending it, or click the “Submit” button to actually send the message.
6. After a few seconds the website will automatically return to the Forum you were initially in.

Note: all HTML tags must be “Closed” before sending the message or the text will not read correctly. If you have used any of these features, prior to sending your message click the “Close Tags” link located on the right side of the page, near these features.

Posting to the Forums

Posting to our forums is another one of the integral ways we can all stay connected. There is no difference in posting to the Public or Private forums, simply remember if you post to the Public Forum, it will be available to members and non-members alike. To post to a "Forum":

1. Click the "Forum" link on the Main Menu. This will take you to the "Forum" index page.
2. Click on the name of the Forum you wish to post in. This will take you to the Index page of the Forum you will be posting in. Topics are listed in descending order according to when they were last posted in.
3. Click the "New Topic" button located at the top and bottom of the forum index page. This will bring up a blank "Post a New Topic" form.
4. In the "Subject" box type a title for your message.
5. Type your message into the large box in the "Message Body" area.
6. You have several HTML coding "extras" that can be added to your message, these are not required in order to send the message, they are simply extras for people with advanced HTML or BBCode experience. Feel free to experiment with them and see what the effects are. The simplest way to do that is to send messages to yourself. These extras include:
 - a. Text styles, including:
 - i. Bold – to add bold type - indicated by the "B" button
 - ii. Italics – to add italic type - indicated by the slanted "I" button
 - iii. Underline – to underline certain text - indicated by the underlined "u" button
 - iv. Quotation marks – to place text into quotation marks - indicated by the "quote" button
 - v. Code – to insert specific HTML coding - indicated by the "Code" button
 - vi. List – to create HTML lists - indicated by the "List" button
 - vii. List= - also used with HTML lists - indicated by the "List=" button
 - viii. Img – to add a picture using HTML coding - indicated by the "Img" button
 - ix. URL – to list a website address in HTML coding - indicated by the "URL" button
 - x. Font colour – which allows you to change the color of text in your message
 - xi. Font size – which allows you to change the text size within your message
 - b. Emoticons or smiley faces – to add place the cursor in the body of the message where you want the smiley and then click on the smiley.
 - c. Options including:
 - i. HTML on/off – allows you to turn off and on HTML encoding in your message

- ii. BBCode on/off – allows you to turn off and on BBCode in your message
 - iii. Smilies on/off – allows you to turn off and on Smilies in your message
 - iv. Add a signature – this will add the signature you have stored in your personal profile
 - v. Notify me when a reply has been posted – will generate an email from the website administrator to notify you whenever a reply is posted to the topic.
7. Click the “Preview” button if you wish to review your message prior to sending it, or click the “Submit” button to actually send the message.
8. After a few seconds the website will automatically return to the Forum you were initially in.

Note: all HTML tags must be “Closed” before sending the message or the text will not read correctly. If you have used any of these features, prior to sending your message click the “Close Tags” link located on the right side of the page, near these features.

Navigating Within the Forums

There are several ways to navigate within the Forums.

1. You can always go back to the Main Forum Index page by clicking on the “Forum” link on the Main Menu.
2. You can use the navigation line found at the very top and bottom of the Forum Index page you are viewing. The format of this navigation line is HCCMD Forum Index -> Forum Name -> Topic. Click on the level or name link you wish to go back to. i.e. HCCMD Forum Index -> About This Website -> Updates

Photo Gallery

Features of the Photo Gallery

View Pictures in the Photo Gallery

Adding Pictures to the Photo Gallery

Private Messages

The private message section of the website is an area where members can send and receive message/email from other members. Non-members cannot send email or message to this area of the website.

To Read A Private Message (The Inbox)

Located along the left side of the Main Page, is a box titled "User Information". One of the items listed in this box is "Private Messages". It includes a differentiation between "Read Messages" and "Unread Messages". To read your "Private Messages":

1. Click the "Private Messages" link on the Main Menu or in the User Information box found on the left side of the Home page.
2. You will be brought to the Main User Preferences page. For more information about this page, see the "User Preferences" section in this manual. Below the User Preferences Icons is a section with "Forum FAQ", "Search", "Usergroups", "Profile", "You have XX new messages", and "Log out"
3. Below that section, click on the "Inbox" link, this will bring up a list of messages in your Inbox, if they are not already displayed.
4. Click on the message title to read the message.
5. You can:
 - a. Reply to the message by clicking on the "Post Reply" button located at the top or bottom of the message
 - b. Reply to the message while quoting the original message by clicking on the "Quote" button located to the top right of the message
 - c. Save and move the message to your "Savebox" by clicking on the "Save Message" button located at the bottom right of the message
 - d. Delete the message by clicking on the "Delete Message" box located at the bottom right side of the message
 - e. Get information about the sender using the "profile", "email", "www", "AIM", etc buttons located at the bottom left side of the message. This information will only be available if the user has set it up in their profile.

Replying to A Private Message

1. From the view messages page above, click either the "quote" or "Post Reply".
2. The "Username" box should contain the name of the person who sent you the message
3. The "Subject" box should have Re: and the title of the message you are replying to.
4. Type your reply into the large box in the "Message Body" area; if you have quoted the previous message, it will be in the box already.
5. You have several HTML coding "extras" that can be added to your message, these are not required in order to send the message, they are simply extras for people with advanced HTML or BBCode experience. Feel free to experiment with them and see what the effects are. The

simplest way to do that is to send messages to yourself. These extras include:

- a. Text styles, including:
 - i. Bold – to add bold type - indicated by the “B” button
 - ii. Italics – to add italic type - indicated by the slanted “I” button
 - iii. Underline – to underline certain text - indicated by the underlined “u” button
 - iv. Quotation marks – to place text into quotation marks - indicated by the “quote” button
 - v. Code – to insert specific HTML coding - indicated by the “Code” button
 - vi. List – to create HTML lists - indicated by the “List” button
 - vii. List= - also used with HTML lists - indicated by the “List=” button
 - viii. Img – to add a picture using HTML coding - indicated by the “Img” button
 - ix. URL – to list a website address in HTML coding - indicated by the “URL” button
 - b. Emoticons or smiley faces – to add place the cursor in the body of the message where you want the smiley and then click on the smiley.
 - c. Options including:
 - i. HTML on/off – allows you to turn off and on HTML encoding in your message
 - ii. BBCode on/off – allows you to turn off and on BBCode in your message
 - iii. Smilies on/off – allows you to turn off and on Smilies in your message
6. Click the “Preview” button if you wish to review your message prior to sending it, or click the “Submit” button to actually send the message.

Note: all HTML tags must be “Closed” before sending the message or the text will not read correctly. If you have used any of these features, prior to sending your message click the “Close Tags” link located on the right side of the page, near these features.

Sending A Private Message (The Sentbox)

You can only send a Private Message to another members of HCCM who has a user ID for the private website. To send a new “Private Message” to another user:

1. Go to the “Private Messages” page. Click the “Private Messages” link on the Main Menu or in the User Information box found n the left side of the Home page.

2. You will be brought to the Main User Preferences page. For more information about this page, see the “User Preferences” section in this manual. Below the User Preferences Icons is a section with “Forum FAQ”, “Search”, “Usergroups”, “Profile”, “You have XX new messages”, and “Log out”.
3. Below that section, click on the “Sentbox” link, this will bring up a list of all of the messages you have sent, that have not been deleted.
4. Click the “New Post” button located at the top or bottom of the message list. This will bring up a blank message screen.
5. In the “Username” box, type the “User Id” of the person you wish to message. The HCCM website generally uses the format Firstname_Lastname for User ID’s. If you are not sure of the User ID, you can use the “Find a username” button next the Username box,
6. In the “Subject” box type a title for your message.
7. Type your message into the large box in the “Message Body” area.
8. You have several HTML coding “extras” that can be added to your message, these are not required in order to send the message, they are simply extras for people with advanced HTML or BBCode experience. Feel free to experiment with them and see what the effects are. The simplest way to do that is to send messages to yourself. These extras include:
 - a. Text styles, including:
 - i. Bold – to add bold type - indicated by the “B” button
 - ii. Italics – to add italic type - indicated by the slanted “I” button
 - iii. Underline – to underline certain text - indicated by the underlined “u” button
 - iv. Quotation marks – to place text into quotation marks - indicated by the “quote” button
 - v. Code – to insert specific HTML coding - indicated by the “Code” button
 - vi. List – to create HTML lists - indicated by the “List” button
 - vii. List= - also used with HTML lists - indicated by the “List=” button
 - viii. Img – to add a picture using HTML coding - indicated by the “Img” button
 - ix. URL – to list a website address in HTML coding - indicated by the “URL” button
 - b. Emoticons or smiley faces – to add place the cursor in the body of the message where you want the smiley and then click on the smiley.
 - c. Options including:
 - i. HTML on/off – allows you to turn off and on HTML encoding in your message
 - ii. BBCode on/off – allows you to turn off and on BBCode in your message

- iii. Smilies on/off – allows you to turn off and on Smilies in your message
7. Click the “Preview” button if you wish to review your message prior to sending it, or click the “Submit” button to actually send the message.

Note: all HTML tags must be “Closed” before sending the message or the text will not read correctly. If you have used any of these features, prior to sending your message click the “Close Tags” link located on the right side of the page, near these features.

The Outbox

The Outbox is a listing of mail you have sent that has not been received, or messages that have not yet been sent. To view the contents of your Outbox:

1. Click the “Private Messages” link on the Main Menu or in the User Information box found n the left side of the Home page.
2. You will be brought to the Main User Preferences page. For more information about this page, see the “User Preferences” section in this manual. Below the User Preferences Icons is a section with “Forum FAQ”, “Search”, Usergroups”, Profile”, “You have XX new messages”, and “Log out”
3. Below that section, click on the “Outbox” link, this will bring up a list of messages in your Outbox, if they are not already displayed.
4. Click on the message title to read the message.
5. From your Outbox you can:
 - a. Edit your message by clicking the “Edit” button found on the right side of the message.
 - b. Save the message by clicking the “Save Message” button under the message.
 - c. Delete the message by clicking the “Delete Message” button under the message.
6. You can also delete and save messages from the listing of messages in your OutBox, simply place a check mark in the box to the left of the message(s) you wish to Delete or Save, then click the “Save Messages” or “Delete Message” buttons at the bottom right of the message list.

The Savebox

The “Savebox” is an area where you can save messages for future reading. These can be message you have sent or message you have received. To view and edit the contents of your “Savebox”:

1. Click the “Private Messages” link on the Main Menu or in the User Information box found on the left side of the Home page.
2. You will be brought to the Main User Preferences page. For more information about this page, see the “User Preferences” section in this manual. Below the User Preferences Icons is a section with “Forum FAQ”, “Search”, “Usergroups”, “Profile”, “You have XX new messages”, and “Log out”
3. Below that section, click on the “Savebox” link, this will bring up a list of messages in your Savebox, if they are not already displayed.
4. From your Savebox you can:
 - a. Read your messages by clicking on the message title or
 - b. Delete the message by clicking the “Delete Message” button under the message.

Public News Submissions

Please note that Public News is simply that, it is articles from news sources or articles written by fellow members that are available for reading from both our Public and Private websites. If you are submitting an article from a news source such as a newspaper, please give credit to the original author and source for the materials. All articles are screened by members of HCCM’s webmaster group for grammar, appropriateness and correct sources. Not all articles will be submitted, and the HCCM web master group may edit some articles.

Reading Public News Submissions

To read Public News Submission, you must use the “Public News Topics” link found on the Main Menu, instructions for using the “Public News Topics” link, can be found in the “Public News Topics” section of this manual.

Adding Public News Submissions

Once you have your article ready for submission, you are ready to submit it to the website.

1. Click the “Public News Submissions” link from the Main Menu.
2. Your Name is already listed on the next page.
3. Fill in the Title of your Article
4. Select A Topic from the drop down menu
5. Type in your article, within the “Story Text” box, you can use HTML coding in this field, but remember to check it thoroughly. You may also include a website address to an article found on line, be sure to include the entire web link including the “http:” part of the address.
6. If you need additional room, you can use the “Extended Text” box
7. Select the type of encoding you wish, using “Plain Old Text” if you have typed the entire article in, or HTML formatted if you have used HTML

- codes within your article, or use Extrans if you wish to have your HTML transferred from coding to actual text
8. Click the Preview box; the poster must preview all articles at least once before they can be submitted.
 9. A preview screen will allow you to see what your article will look like when posted as well as make any changes that you need to make before submitting your article.
 10. Review your article, make any corrections, you can either preview the article again, or submit it by clicking the “OK” button
 11. This will bring you to a final submission page, which explains our submission policies.

Public News Topics

The “Public News Topics” area of the website is designed to sort the Public News that has been posted. While most of these are articles actually taken from Public Sources and submitted by our members, many are articles written by our members. If you have news you would like to add to the public and private website, please see the Public News Submission section of this manual. The news is currently divided into several categories, which include:

- Legal
- News
- Events
- HCCMD
- Web

Reading Public News Topics

To read the Public News:

1. Click the “Public News Topics” link on the Main Menu
2. Browse through the topics by scrolling down the screen. The articles are listed by topics, or you can search for articles of interest by using the “Search function” at the top of the page.

Adding Public News Topics

Only administrators of the website can add “Public News Topics”. If you would like to see additional topics, please use the “Website Suggestion Box” to suggest

a new topic. Complete instruction for adding a suggestion can be found in the “Website Suggestion Box” section of this manual.

To add Public News to be read in this section, you must use the “Public News Submission” link found on the Main Menu, instructions for using the “Public News Submission” link can be found under “Public News Submissions” in this manual.

Quick Polls

Since one of the main values of HCCM is the open and honest opinion of all members, we have available Quick Polls. Quick polls are our way of getting the general membership’s opinion on something. There are 2 types of polls available: General Polls and Polls attached to articles.

General Polls are simply polls to gather information about a subject from the general membership; Article Polls are to gather information regarding a specific article posted.

All polls on HCCM are anonymous and you may only enter 1 vote per person.

Taking a Quick poll

You can participate in any quick poll by entering the Quick Poll. To do this you can either click the “Quick Poll” link in the “Main Menu” on the left side of any screen, or you can take the poll from the “Quick Poll” box on the right hand side of the Home Page.

To participate in a quick poll:

1. Enter the poll
2. Click the link for the poll you wish to enter
3. Answer the question
4. Click the “Vote” button

Setting up a Quick Poll

1. Enter the “Quick Poll” page by clicking the “Quick Poll” link on the Main Menu.
2. Click the “Create New Poll” link
3. Enter a title for your poll
4. Enter the options for your poll; currently you can have 12 options.
5. Click the “Create Poll” button, this will create your poll and return you to the Quick Poll page. From here you can participate and vote in your poll.

Reviewing Results of a Quick Poll

To view poll results, enter the quick poll screen. To do this you can either click the “Quick Poll” link in the “Main Menu” on the left side of any screen, or you can take the poll from the “Quick Poll” box on the right hand side of the Home Page.

1. Click the “Results” link at the end of the title of the poll you wish to check the results on.

Recommend Us

As a member of HCCM you have the option of using this section of the website to let your friends know about us. To tell a friend about us and direct them to our website, simply:

1. Click the “Recommend Us” link on the “Main Menu”
2. Fill in Your Name
3. Fill in Your Email Address
4. Fill in Your Friend’s Name
5. Fill in Your Friend’s Email Address
6. Click the “Send” button; this will generate the following email to your friend’s email address.

Hello <Friend’s Name>:

Your Friend <Your_Name> considered our site Homeschool Connections of Central Maryland interesting and wanted to send it to you.

Site Name: Homeschool Connections of Central Maryland
Families Educating and Learning Together
Site URL: <http://www.hccmd.org/>

Search

There are 2 ways to search the HCCM website for information. One is to use the search box found at the top of each page; the other is to use the “Search” link on the “Main Menu”.

Using the “Search” found at the top of the page

You can search articles, comments, files, users and web links using the search area n the top of each page within the site.

To search:

1. Type the words you are looking for in the search box.
2. Choose what you are searching for (articles, comments, files, users, web links)
3. Click "Search"
4. If you cannot find what you are looking for, try using the "Advanced Search" function.

Using the Advanced Search function

To search using the "Advanced Search" found on the top of each web page or the "Search link on the "Main Menu"

1. Click "Advanced Search" at the top of any page, or the "Search" link on the "Main Menu"
2. Type your search words into the box next to the word search.
3. If you want, you can narrow your search by selecting:
 - a. Topics
 - b. Categories
 - c. Authors
 - d. Date
4. Click the "Search" button.

Top 10 Lists

On the "Main Menu" you can access the Top 10 lists. These lists include:

- 30 most read stories
- 30 most voted stories
- 30 best rated stories
- 30 most commented stories
- 30 most active news submitters
- 30 most voted polls
- 30 most active authors
- 30 most downloaded files

From this page you can click the title of the link you wish to view and go directly to the article or news.

To get to this page:

1. Click the "Top 10 Lists" link on the main Menu
2. Click the list link you want
3. Click on the item you wish to view.

User Preferences

The “User Preferences” section of the website is where you can tailor the site to your specific likes as well as manage most of your personal user information.

Click the “User Preferences” link on the Main Menu.

You will come to the main “User Preferences” page, from here you can change (each of these functions is detailed below):

- “Your Info” – the information you provided during your first visit
- “Your Home” – the information provided on the page when you click “Home” on the Main Menu
- “Messages” – check your “Private Messages”
- “Themes” - change the look of the website, i.e. the color of the site or
- “Logout/Exit” – you can logoff of the website from this page.

Under the icons for each of these functions, you will see a summary of the information you provided previously in “Your Info”, to edit that information see the instruction below under “Your Info”.

Next on this page is the “Broadcast Public Message” feature. To see complete instruction on this feature, see the “Broadcast Public Message” section of this manual. Please remember that this feature will send a public message to everyone on the site. This message will be displayed to all online users in the next 10 minutes. Any user online will see your message just once in a red bar under the site's logo. Please don't abuse. HTML code is not allowed in Broadcast Messages.

You may also turn off Broadcast Message in this area.

Next on this page is an area to begin sending a “Private Message” to another user. You can enter a user's name and click the “Search Users” link to search the website for information related to this user, or you may go directly to the “Member User List” by clicking on the “Browse Users” link. For complete instruction on using Private Messages, please see the “Private Messages” section of this manual.

Lastly, on this page, you will see the last 10 items you submitted for “Public News”. For more information on Public News, see the “Public News Submissions” or “Public News Topics” sections of this manual.

Your Info

This section of the “User Preferences” is where you can change your personal information:

1. Click on “Your Info”
 - a. Enter or edit your information:
 - i. Real Name – This is your name, not a family name.
 - ii. Real Email – This is a functioning email address and will be used by the website you keep you connected.
 - iii. Fake Email – This is the email address that will show up when other members look up your information in user preferences, it is best to keep this address the same as you Real Email.
 - iv. Your home page – If you have a personal website you would like to share with other members, enter it here.
 - v. Your Avatar – If you would like to have an avatar, this can be changed here
 - vi. Your ICQ – If you use ICQ and want you user ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - vii. Your AIM – If you use AOL Instant Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - viii. Your YIM – If you use Yahoo! Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - ix. Your MSNM – If you use Microsoft Network Messenger and want your ID displayed to members, enter it here.
 - x. Your Location – Enter you city and state here
 - xi. Your Occupation – Enter your occupation here, this information will be displayed in the family directory
 - xii. Your interests – Enter you interests here, this information will be displayed in the family directory
 - xiii. Receive Newsletter by Email – choose yes or no
 - xiv. Always Show my Email Address - choose yes or no
 - xv. Hide Your online status - choose yes or no
 - xvi. Always notify me of replies - choose yes or no
 - xvii. Notify on new Private Message by email - choose yes or no
 - xviii. Pop up window on new Private Message - choose yes or no
 - xix. Always attach my signature - choose yes or no
 - xx. Always allow BBCode - choose yes or no
 - xxi. Always allow HTML - choose yes or no
 - xxii. Always enable Smilies - choose yes or no
 - xxiii. Forums Timezone – Maryland’s time zone is GMT –4 hours
 - xxiv. Forums Date format – This is the format used to display dates within the Forums and does not need to be changed
 - xxv. Signature – If you would like all of your messages to include a personal signature from you, enter it here and click the “yes” radio button above for always attach my signature
 - xxvi. Extra Info – Any additional information you would like the other members to know about you.

- xxvii. Password – where you change your password by entering it twice.
- b. Review what you have entered then click the “Save Information” button

Your Home

In this area you can make changes to several items that show up on your home page on HCCM.

Click the “Your Home” link or the icon for Your Home; this will take you to the “Home Configuration” page.

Messages

Clicking on this icon or the “Messages” link will take you to the “Private Message section of the website. For more complete direction on using the Private Message feature of the site, please refer to the “Private Messages” section of this manual.

Themes

Themes are available to all users. Themes are another way to customize the appearance of the website for your viewing. To change your “Theme”:

1. Click the “User Preferences” link on the Main Menu.
2. Click the “Themes” icon or link.
3. In the drop down box “Select one Theme” select the theme you wish to use.
4. Click the “Save Changes” button, to save your choice.

Themes can always be changed back by choosing the “Default” theme.

Logout/Exit

Clicking on this icon or the “Logout/Exit” link will log you off of the private HCCM website. This is especially useful for members that have multiple users of the site on one computer, or for members who access the site from a shared work computer, or public access computer, i.e. a library. If you use the site from any public resource, please always remember to log off the site prior to leaving the computer. Simply closing the web browser will not log you off the site.

Users

The “Users” section of the website, is just that, a listing of all the users with access to the private website. On this page you can:

- Private Message a user - click the “PM” button, for further details on PM, see the section on Private Messages
- Send an Email to a user – click on the “Email” button
- Visit a user’s website, if they have one – click on the “website” button
- See where a particular user is from
- See when a user joined the HCCM website
- See how many posts a user has made to the website

You can also sort this information by any of the above parameter by using the sort boxes located at the top of the table of users.

Web Links

As a community connected via friendships, common activities, common interests and the internet, most of us use the internet as a vital resource in our schooling. In this section, you can share those websites with all of the other members of our community.

There are currently 4 categories within the Web Links sections, these categories are subject to change as needed:

- a. Curriculum – Links to Curriculum Providers including on-line curriculum retailers
- b. Government Sites – links to any government site with information regarding homeschooling or activities for homeschooling
- c. Groups and Associations – links to any group or association that is related to homeschooling
- d. Resources – links to any homeschooling resource, including lesson plans, museums, or educational resources

Viewing Web Links

Viewing web links shared by other members as well as yourself:

1. Click the “Web Links” link on the “Main Menu”; this will take you to the “Web Links” main page.
2. You can search, using the search box:
 - a. Enter your search words
 - b. Click the “Search” button
 - c. View results
3. You can browse links by clicking on one of the category links, currently there are 4 categories, these categories are subject to change as needed:

- a. Curriculum
 - b. Government Sites
 - c. Groups and Associations
 - d. Resources
4. Click on a category
 5. View the list of links and descriptions available
 6. Click the link you wish to visit; all links will open another browser window, so that you can return to the HCCM simply by closing that window.

You can also browse categories by clicking one of the main links found directly under the "Search " box, these include:

New – recently added links

Popular – most commonly viewed links

Top Rated – top links as voted on by our members

Random – just as the description says, randomly goes through the links

In order that our members can have additional information, namely how useful a link is, it is always appropriate to rate a website you have looked at. To do this:

1. Click the link "Rate this Site"
2. Enter a 1 from 1 – 10, 1 being poor, 10 being excellent
3. Enter any additional comments regarding that particular file
4. Click the "Rate this Resource" button next to the number you assigned
5. This will take you to a Review screen, from which you can return to the Web Links page by clicking the "Links Main" link toward the top of the page

Please note, once you have a list of links on your page, you can sort the links by Title (alphabetically), Date added, Rating (as determined by other member votes) or Popularity (As determined by number of times the site has been viewed by other members. Each of these categories can be sorted Ascending or Descending

Adding Web Links

All members of HCCM have the ability to add new web link to the site, this is encouraged, as it is helpful to all members to have easy access to the wonderful resources available on the internet. Remember when posting links:

- Submit a unique link only once.
- All links are posted pending verification.
- Username and IP are recorded, so please don't abuse the system.

To add a web link:

1. Click the “Web Links” link on the Main Menu.
2. Click on the “Add Link” link in the top section of the main Web Links page.
3. In the “Page Title” box, list a brief title of the page you will be listing.
4. In the “Page URL” list the exact web address of the link you are posting, this address should be complete including the **http://** part of the address, i.e. **http://www.hccmd.org**.
5. Use the drop down box to pick a category, there are several categories, see description above under “Web Links” which are reviewed periodically for appropriateness, if you would like to see a new category, please see the “Website Suggestion Box” on the main menu, instructions for using this box can be found within this manual.
6. In the “Description” box, write a description of your link, be as detailed as possible, so others can find your link helpful.
7. Verify your name in the “Your Name” box.
8. Verify your email address in the “Your Email” box.
9. Click the “Submit URL” button to submit your link.
10. After submitting your link, you will be returned to the main “Web Links” page.

Currently, the approval process for Web Links is turned off, so you should be able to view your link immediately.

Website Statistics

This section of the website will provide users with some statistical information regarding the website. The information currently available in this section is:

- Number of individual page views since March 2004
- Type of browsers used by visitors, members and non-members alike while accessing the site
- Operating Systems used by visitors, members and non-members alike while accessing the site
- Misc Statistic like:
 - Registered Users
 - Active Authors
 - Stories Published
 - Active Topics
 - Comments Posted
 - Links to Web Links
 - Categories in Links
 - News Waiting to be Published
 - PHP-Nuke Version

These are general statistic used by the technology people of the group to watch the website information

Website Suggestions Box

The Website Suggestion Box is an area of the HCCM website that allows users to report problems with or request changes to the website. If you are using the site and encounter a problem that needs to be fixed, you can report that issue to the webmaster directly. You can also make suggestions for changes to the website in this area. To make a suggestion to the web master group:

1. Click the “Website Suggestion Box” link on the Main Menu
2. Click the “List Suggestions” link near the bottom of the request form to review all previous suggestions made.
3. To review the suggestions previously made, you might want to use the filtering functions available on this page. For more information on Filters, see the “Using the Filter Function” section near the end of this manual.
This list is filterable by:
 - a. Request Title – Short description of issue
 - b. Status – Open or closed
 - c. Priority – High, Medium or Low
 - d. Type - i.e. Website Bug/Defect, Emergency Problem, Fix Now!, or Change in Website Design
 - e. Module – Area of the website
 - f. Requestor – Who reported the issue
 - g. Assigned To – Who from the web master group is fixing the problem
4. If your issue is not listed in the previous suggestion list, then proceed by clicking on the “Add Suggestion” link found at the bottom right of the suggestion list or clicking the “Website Suggestion Box” link on the Main Menu
5. Select the suggestion type, Website Bug/Defect, Emergency Problem, Fix Now!, or Change in Website Design
6. Select the “Module” – the area of the site you are reporting
7. In the “Request Title” box, type in a short title for your request
8. In the “Request Text” box, type in a detailed description of the problem or suggestion.
9. Click the “Save” button to save your request
10. This will bring you to an edit screen, if you have made a mistake in typing in your request, you can edit it here.
11. Make any changes and click the “Save” button at the bottom of the request form.
12. You can also cancel your request, to cancel the request click the “Cancel” button near the bottom of the request form.
13. ***** Please do not change the Priority, Date Resolved, Resolver, or Resolution Text fields; these are for use by the web masters when the issue has been resolved.

Using the Broadcast Message Feature

The Broadcast message feature is helpful when information needs to be sent to all members on-line instantly. This feature will send a message inside a red box to all members. The message will be displayed at the top of any page they are on. There are some restrictions to the use of this feature.

- Message must be less than 255 characters, including spaces.
- Messages will be displayed only to users currently on-line.
- Message will appear once for each user.
- Any User can deactivate this message in the “Your Info” section of the “User Preferences” area.
- HTML code is not allowed.
- You can only send 1 message every 10 minutes.

A benefit to this feature is the ability to get an urgent message out to all on-line members, like – “Since it is raining, the event XYZ has been cancelled”.

To send a Broadcast Message:

1. Click “User Preferences” on the Main Menu.
2. Half way down the page s the Broadcast Public Message Box, enter your message in the box.
3. Click the “Send” button.
4. You should see the message on your screen shortly.

Using the Filter Functions

Many areas within the HCCM website have a filter list feature. While the exact parameters of the filter are different for each screen the general use is the same.

Some of the areas that have filterable lists are:

Event Calendar – list events

Website Suggestion Box – list events

Family Directory – Member List

Users – although not as extensive a search as the other areas

Once you are on a page that is filterable you use the drop down menus to pick how you would like to filter each category. Each page has a default filter already set, if you would like to change that filter, click the “Clear Filter” button located at the top of the list. After you pick your parameters from each of the drop down

menus (you may pick as many or as few choices as you like), click the “Filter” button at the top of the list.

You can also filter each column ascending or descending. To sort a specific column, click on the column heading, by clicking on the column heading again, you will switch from ascending to descending or descending to ascending, whichever is the case.

Appendix A – Website Posting Guidelines

1. **Do not post our content on another site without permission** - This of course does not include already public material like public web links, public news or other public non-HCCMD events, but most definitely includes all other material including member directory information, files, photos, HCCM sponsored events, and member postings in discussion forums.
2. **Do not post any obscenities, profanity or inappropriate comments, files, photos, or events.**
3. **Please use virus checking software** that checks both your email and files you wish to upload to avoid spreading virus to everyone in your address book.
4. **Do not use the member directory for anything other than HCCM business.** Be considerate with everyone's email address. Do not use them to post spam, chain letters or other inappropriate materials.
5. **In discussion forums, be considerate. No personal attacks.** We can disagree with each other without deriding other's opinion. We can respect each other's view even if we know it's terribly wrong. And if you can't, in your heart, respect the opposing view, pretending that you do is enough. What we don't know won't hurt us. 😊

Content that violates these guidelines will be subject to immediate removal by the administrator.

Appendix B – Definitions

Website Definitions

Avatar – a small character, sometimes animated, similar to a smiley.

Home Page – the main page of the HCCM website, from which you can navigate to all other pages, as well as gain information on the latest information available on the site.

Icon – a graphic symbol that denotes an area on the website.

Index – a general listing of information, mainly used in the forums area, this is a listing of all the available information for the specific section you are visiting.

Link – a word or group of words that are underlined and when clicked, will direct you to the area of the website described.

Main Menu – the box found at the top left side of every page within the website.

Member – Any person who has joined HCCM and is current with their dues.

User – any member or family member who has requested and gained access to the website.

User ID – the unique name used by all users while using the HCCM website, the standard User ID format for HCCM is “Firstname_Lastname” i.e.
John_Homeschooler

Event Calendar Definitions

Status – the current status of an event

1. Open – these events are currently available to attend or RSVP
2. Closed – these events are full
3. Planning – these events are in the planning stage and may or may not happen.
4. Complete – these events have been completed and are usually in the past.

Event Type – the type of event that is planned, currently, these are the types of events allowed on the calendar, these event types are subject to change, if you feel another event type is needed, please use the “Website Suggestion

Box” on the Main Menu to submit the suggestion. Complete directions for the “Website Suggestion Box” can be found in this manual.

1. Classes – local home school classes, either ongoing (i.e. dance), short term (i.e. art classes) or one time classes hosted by a member
2. Co Op – co-op’s are usually regular meetings of small groups of members to discuss or teach a specific materials
3. Family Event – these are events to which the entire family is welcome and are usually arranged by a HCCM member
4. Field Trip – general field trips, which include 1 time field trips to local places or events or multi-part field trips or tours to museums other places
5. Local Event – these are events that are planned and happen outside of HCCM, they are usually placed on the calendar because a member feels the information would be of interest to other members
6. Meeting – these are meetings planned
7. Scouting – these are events planned for the scouting members of HCCM
8. Special Day – these are Special Days, including holidays, birthdays or anniversaries.

Title – the name given to a specific event by the coordinator of the event.

Location – the place where an event is scheduled to take place.

Event Date – Month Date and Year, the actual date the event will take place.

Event Time – the actual time an event will take place.

Duration – the expected amount of time the event will run.

Coordinator – the HCCM member who set up the event or entered it into the calendar.

Fee Description – a listing of any fees that may be associated with the event.

Other Information – any other details pertaining to the event.

Member – any current family member of HCCM, only HCCM members and family members can RSVP to events that are not open to the public.

Non-Member – any person that is not a current member or family member of HCCM, non-member cannot RSVP to events that are not open to the public

Forum Definitions

Forums – areas on the HCCM website that allow members to openly discuss items of interest to them or the community at large. These discussions are

grouped by topics and subjects, to allow the reader to see the entire dialogue from the first post through to the most current post within one discussion.

Topics – also called subjects, these are the individual discussions or conversations related to one original post.

Posts – a member's message.

Types of Forums:

- Field Trips and Events – an area to discuss any field trips or events, as well as posting of general information about local events, including programs at the local Howard County libraries
- Curriculum Review – an area to discuss and give opinions about different types of curriculum, divided by subjects as well as providers
- Teachers Exchange – an area to discuss, share and exchange your teaching skills, equipment and ideas.
- Business Exchange – an area to discuss and list any services and/or businesses that are run by home schooling families, including home based businesses.
- Kids Konnection – an area to allow our children a safe place to discuss whatever they want.
- About This Website – an area to discuss this website, this would include notices of maintenance being done as well as discussing improvements that may be considered.
- HCCMD Organizational Business – an area to discuss issues relating to the HCCM organization, including notices of general meetings and/or workshops.
- General Discussion – an area that is for everything else.
- Public Forum – an area where members and non-members can post information. This is the only forum that is viable to non-members.