

Moderation Guidelines for the Lasqueti Email List

The Lasqueti E-mail List serves over 600 people with a Lasqueti connection. Messages sent to the list are moderated to maintain the list's nature and purpose. This document contains guidelines for moderators and the wider Lasqueti community who use the list.

What is the list's purpose?

To serve as a general bulletin board for the wider Lasqueti Community - a convenient, accessible, non-commercial channel for exchanging information relevant to us.

Values. The list is managed and moderated to maintain:

- Relevant, community-oriented content
Why? → it is what subscribers sign up for.
- Respectful discourse
Why? → it should be a safe and inclusive space
- Subscriptions from a broad base of Lasqueti Community
Why? → the value of the list lies in the breadth of the community it reaches
- Respect for subscriber preferences
Why? → the value of the list depends on continued access to subscribers' inboxes

Who can post?

Anyone with an e-mail address can post - posts from non-subscribers are more carefully moderated, and generally treated with greater suspicion, but you do not need a subscription to post a message.

Who can subscribe? (i.e., who do those messages go to...)

Anyone with a personal connection to Lasqueti and its community.

Moderators Note: a Lasqueti "connection" implies a legitimate interest in our community and its affairs based on some tangible connection to it - it should be interpreted liberally, but should be verified in some way so posters can feel confident their messages are being read by people with a genuine connection to our community.

What is moderation?

The list moderators ensure messages are consistent with the list's purpose. This involves reviewing messages sent to the list and making necessarily subjective decisions about their suitability for publication on this channel.

Content moderation is a significant challenge, tasked with the impossible balance of maintaining respectful, relevant communications on an open channel available to all. The general approach of the Lasqueti Email List is to rely on a team of volunteers to apply

“principled subjectivity” that is responsive to community feedback and preferences, and consistent with these guidelines.

What types of content are "*consistent with the list's purpose*"?

- all manner of locally-relevant announcements, news, events, comings, goings
- local products for sale, services offered, and classified ads
- relevant lifestyle questions or advice (e.g., composting, alt-energy, gardening, ...)
- recipes, jokes, poetry, or prose, or other locally-relevant content that might amuse, inspire, educate, titillate, or otherwise serve to inform the wider Lasqueti community
- local politics and activism (please keep it locally relevant)

Who can serve as a list moderator?

Any community member with an even-temperament, regular (daily) access to email, who has the confidence of the list subscribers and the rest of the moderation team.

The list is best jointly moderated to limit the influence of any individual, and bring a diversity of perspectives.

Best Practices for posting messages to the List

- post via lasqueti.ca
 - news items, events, and classified ads posted at <http://lasqueti.ca/node/add/> are automatically forwarded to the list. Posting on the website helps keep our community calendar and classifieds section up-to-date and organised
 - post longer or off-topic articles on your lasqueti.ca blog (<http://lasqueti.ca/node/add/blog>) or hold discussions on the Message Board (<https://lasqueti.ca/forum>) and send a link to your article (web address / URL) with a short description to the list for interested readers
- always use a meaningful subject line and other generally polite email etiquette
- do not CC or Forward messages to the list (your message should be written for the list readers)
- messages must be respectful (i.e., not rude, slanderous, aggressive, etc.)
- links to external sites are a challenge to moderate and pose a potential hazard for moderators and list readers.
 - Links must be obviously non-malicious - suspicious links are simply rejected;
 - A link must be accompanied by a short description so a reader has clear idea what to expect before clicking;
 - Posts with only a link are considered spam and will be discarded;

- Moderators may reject messages with external links for any reason, based on their judgement.
- do not flood the list with posts.
Posters who dominate discussions or flood the list with repetitive posts on the same topic(s) will find their messages delayed or rejected to leave room for other voices.
- commercial messages (advertising goods and services) should be limited to 1 or 2 posts per week max. Advertisers who flood the list with repeated marketing messages will find their messages delayed or rejected.
- please do not simply copy-paste text from your other email subscriptions or online articles - subscribers are interested in local content written by you, they all know how to subscribe to newsletters and find articles on the Internet
- be considerate to those who receive the "daily digest" email:
 - keep messages concise - avoid sending long articles (post them on lasqueti.ca)
 - remove irrelevant "> reply quotes" or long "signatures" from your message
- to contact the list moderators or administrator, direct your message to: moderators@lists.lasqueti.ca
(please do not reply or send administrative message to the list itself)

In general, please be mindful that your message is sent to over 600 inboxes.

If it's not worth your time to craft a concise message, specifically relevant and tailored to the community audience, it is probably not worth their time to read it.

What types of messages are likely to trigger moderation?

The purpose of most moderator interventions is to keep the list respectful, relevant, concise, accessible, and easy to read.

Moderators cannot edit posts, only accept or reject them.

Moderators may reject and ask you to edit and re-submit:

- posts that are **cc'ed** or simply **forwarded** to the list;;
- formatting that may confuse the daily digest's readability;
- overly long posts (500 words max., 50 words is better);
- posts containing a dubious or unrecognised link;
- posts containing:
 - irrelevant or missing subject lines,

- long, irrelevant extraneous text,
- incomprehensible or garbled text, or
- long or unrelated reply quote text.

(please see Best Practices above)

What types of content are likely to be rejected?

Speech is restricted in Canada by libel and hate crime legislation, so it is on this list.

Spam, scams, and aggressive marketing pitches are discarded..

List subscribers have expressed a strong preference to keep divisive debates, repetitive opinion pieces, and bickering, ranting, and raving off the list.

Moderators will reject or discard messages that:

- contain hate speech or generally direct hatred at any individual or group
- are potentially libellous or slanderous
- are rude, insulting, abusive, aggressive, violent, or otherwise disrespectful
- bully or attack a person or group (interpreted broadly)
- contain frequent, repetitive direct marketing and commercial advertising
- contain obvious spam, mass-marketing, suspected scams or suspicious content of any type
- contain content that undermines or subverts the purpose of the list
- contains even a hint of any form of doxing, including the unauthorised disclosure of 3rd party personal information or private communications (get consent!)

A message rejected can always be re-sent, but a message once accepted can never be taken back.

For this reason, Moderators apply the above criteria liberally, erring on the side of rejecting messages (though in practice very few messages are actually rejected).

List moderators are not trained to make judgments about legality, and don't take responsibility for any published or rejected content sent to the list - responsibility lies with the message's original author.

Resolving Moderation Issues and Disputes

What if no moderator is willing to moderate a post?

The list is moderated by volunteers. They receive no compensation for doing what is at best a mundane chore and at worst adjudicating between entrenched competing interests. If they do not feel they can accept a post in good conscience but see no compelling objective reason to reject it, they may leave the message in the moderation queue for others to deal

with. Thus it is possible that an objectionable message that does not overtly violate any specific guideline, may find no moderator willing to moderate it.

In such cases, where a message languishes in the queue for more than 5 days, the list administrator will take action, usually to reject the message with an explanation.

What if you disagree with a moderator's decision?

Moderators have a limited toolbox. Their only options are to accept or reject. Please do not take a “rejection” notice personally – it is not a rejection of your ideas, and it is not intended to censor your opinion. A rejection simply means your post does not conform to the list guidelines, and is generally accompanied by a suggestion for how you might improve it. This comes from a community volunteer offering assistance to keep the list functioning smoothly.

- You are welcome to make edits to your post and resend it;
- When a post is re-submitted a different moderator will adjudicate the 2nd submission (moderators will not reject a post they have previously rejected).
- If you continue to disagree after multiple rejections or feel you are being treated unfairly, you can file a grievance with the list administrator (see below)

What's the grievance or dispute resolution process?

If your message is rejected, the moderator will provide a reason. You can edit and resend your message, or contact the list administrator with your grievance:

lasqueti_maillist-owner@lists.lasqueti.ca

It seems unlikely that, if everyone is acting in good faith, there should arise a conflict that can't be resolved with rational discussion. However, in a case where no such resolution can be found, it is within the list administrator's prerogative (in consultation with the list moderation team) to simply refuse to publish the article on the list.

In most cases, the list administrator should, instead, choose a less drastic resolution, such as to publish a commentary airing concerns just ahead of the article so list subscribers get forewarning and can decide for themselves whether they wish to read or ignore it.

Ultimately, a heavy-handed moderator who repeatedly abuses their role would need to be replaced by someone more even-tempered, someone who is willing to apply principled subjectivity rather than personal opinion or prejudice.

This has never been necessary, so the process for doing so is undefined.

Conversely, a pesky poster may be restricted or even banned from posting to the list. For example, someone who repeatedly defies these guidelines or creates extra work for the moderation team when, in fact, very few subscribers wish to receive their posts.

This has come quite close to happening, but a process for doing so has not yet been established.