

Moderating the Lasqueti E-mail 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 way to send and receive information relevant to us.

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.

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

Anyone with a personal connection to Lasqueti and its community.

Moderators: 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.

What is moderation?

A list moderator simply ensures messages sent to the list are *consistent with the list's purpose*. List moderation is never used to censure opinion or block access.

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

- all manner of announcements, news, events, comings, goings, services offered, or "classified ads"
- opinion pieces or political diatribe, appeals for activism or good recipes, satire or entertainment, poetry or prose, advice or admonition, ...
- anything at all that might amuse, inspire, educate, titillate, or otherwise serve to inform the wider Lasqueti community (but please keep posts brief / concise)

Who can serve as a list moderator?

Any list subscriber with an even-temperament, regular (daily) access to e-mail, who has the confidence of the list subscribers. The list is best jointly moderated.

Best Practices for posting messages to the List

- post via lasqueti.ca
 - news items, events, and all classified ads you post at <http://lasqueti.ca/node/add/> are automatically sent out to the list. Posting on the site helps keep our community calendar and classifieds section up-to-date and organized.
 - post long articles on your lasqueti.ca blog (<http://lasqueti.ca/node/add/blog>) and just send the link to your article (web address / URL) to the list for interested readers
- always use a meaningful subject line (good e-mail etiquette in general)
- **do not** CC or Forward messages to the list (your message should be directed towards the list readers)
- **do not** forward links to the list without providing context (your message may use a link to support or provide extra details, not as the primary content)
- **do not** add images or attachments to messages (these cannot be sent to the list for security reasons)
- messages should be respectful (i.e., not rude, slanderous, aggressive, etc.)
- **do not** dominate the discussion / flood the list with repetitious posts. Posters who flood the list with repetitious 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.
- be considerate to those who receive the "daily digest" e-mail:
 - keep messages concise - avoid sending long articles (post them on lasqueti.ca)
 - post a link rather than pasting complete texts from online articles
 - remove irrelevant "> reply quotes" or long signatures from your message
- to contact the list moderators or administrator, do not reply or send a message to the list itself - direct your message to: moderators@lists.lasqueti.ca

In general, be respectful that your message is sent to over 600 inboxes. If it's not worth your time to craft a concise, helpful message, 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 civil, useful, 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 without context;
- formatting that may confuse the daily digest's readability;
- overly long posts (500 words max., 50 words is better);
- posts whose primary purpose is to distribute a link, without sufficient context;
- posts containing:
 - irrelevant or missing subject lines,
 - attachments or images;
 - 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?

Free speech is restricted in Canada by libel and hate crime legislation, and the list subscribers have expressed a strong desire to keep spam, scams, and marketing pitches (not to mention an excess of ranting and raving) off the list.

Moderators will reject messages that are:

- hateful or contain hate speech or generally direct hatred at any individual or group
- potentially libelous or slanderous
- rude, insulting, abusive, aggressive, or violent
- bullying or attacks on a person rather than an issue
- frequent, repetitious direct marketing and commercial advertising
- obvious spam or mass-marketing
- suspected scams or suspicious in any way

Moderators apply the above criteria liberally, erring on the side of rejecting messages that might be so interpreted by a layperson. List moderators are not trained to make judgments about legality, and in no way take responsibility for any published or rejected content sent to the list - responsibility lies wholly with the message's original author.

What if you disagree with a moderator's request?

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 as censorship. 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. Try to see it as intended – a community volunteer offering assistance to keep the list working smoothly.

- You are always free to make edits to your post and re-send it;
- If you disagree with the rejection or feel you are being treated unfairly, please file a grievance or petition to have your post published as-is (see below);
- A moderator who rejects a message should refrain from rejecting it a 2nd time if the post is re-submitted – another moderator should adjudicate the 2nd submission.

What's the grievance or dispute resolution process?

If your message is rejected, the moderator will provide a reason. You can edit and re-send 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 moderators' prerogative to simply refuse to publish the article on the list. In most cases, moderators should, instead, choose a less drastic resolution, such as to publish a comment airing their concerns just ahead of approving the article so list readers 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 objectivity 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 banned from posting to the list. For example, someone who repeatedly defies these guidelines and cries injustice over the ensuing rejections, when, in fact, very few wish to receive their posts. This has come quite close to happening, but a process for doing so has not been established.