

Revised OlyFriends Listserv Guidelines

APPROVED at Meeting for Worship for Business on 12-08-2019

Despite the Meeting approving for the first time earlier this year guidelines for use of our listserv, problems have continued. Having received many comments and concerns, the committee recommend the following new policy, guidelines and etiquette:

NPYM's Friendly Use of Communication Technology states:

"Email, when used carefully and thoroughly, can support good Quaker process in business and decision making. When members live at a distance from one another, Quaker committees may use email extensively. It is an efficient way to disseminate information, minutes, and agendas, and to attend to physical arrangements such as setting up the me and place for Meetings. Some committee work seems to lend itself to email Communication. Email is seldom suitable for deep listening and group discernment."

The Olympia Friends Meeting (OFM) runs the OlyFriends listserv (also known as an email list or group) to encourage and enhance Communication to and between its members and regular attenders.

OFM's main listserv, OlyFriends, is a moderated one-way announcement list. It is managed by a designated member of Care and Concerns and the OFM Hearthkeeper, under the care of the Clerk of Worship & Ministry. They will review posts most days.

OlyFriends Guidelines

Appropriate types of messages include:

- Meeting related event announcements and reminders of events such as Meeting retreats, Quarterly Meeting and the Meeting camp out.
- Meeting related announcements such as problems with the Meetinghouse.
- Meeting educational opportunities such as spiritual learning events, newcomer classes, regional Quaker educational events, and online classes.
- Meeting related planning and organizing such as requesting feedback on preferred dates for an event – with a reminder that responses should to be sent to the individual (and how) not to the listserv.
- Important life events for members and attenders such as deaths, births and graduations.
- Announcements of non-Meeting opportunities and events that a Member or Attender is doing, involved in, or that are related to Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship/service; such as the FOR Retreat, activities to help immigrants, and activities to help the homeless.
- Limited personal sharing and requests for help such as asking for a recommendation for a plumber or other professional help, a request for help moving, asking for packing materials – with a reminder that responses should to be sent the individual (and how) not the listserv.

All emails sent to OlyFriends main listserv are moderated and will be approved if they fit the OlyFriends guidelines. If in doubt, ask the Hearthkeeper at hearthkeeper@olympiafriends.org or call/text her at (360) 888-5391. The moderators will always respond to the person whose post may be blocked. In six months, the moderators will report to Meeting for Business with the number of posts that were blocked and the reasons why.

OFM's email list service allows subgroups, and those can be discussion lists.

In order to be on a subgroup, a person must also be subscribed to OlyFriends, but that can be set to "no mail" if desired – see below.

If you wish to start an email discussion group on a specific topic or issue, remember that the topic should be somehow related to the life of and community of the Meeting. An example would be the recent posts on white privilege.

Send request to the Hearthkeeper that the subgroup be created. When it is created you will be notified, and you can then send an announcement to OlyFriends to let others know that they can subscribe to it by doing that themselves or by asking the Hearthkeeper to add them. Discussion subgroup emails are not moderated but are subject to our listserv etiquette (below).

Etiquette when writing emails for OlyFriends or a discussion subgroup:

1. Be kind. Emails are best written and read with respect, tolerance, and love.
2. Humor, irony, and sarcasm seldom work well in emails and can easily cause misunderstandings.
3. Do not criticize, attack, or "elder" anyone via OlyFriends. It damages relationships in our community and it probably will not help the situation.
4. Do not send emails to the listserv that you think might be controversial and could cause others distress.
5. Write with brevity, simplicity and clarity.
6. Write a good subject line.
7. For events, include a good description of the event, the date, time and location, and the person or group in charge and who to contact for additional information. Be sure to note if an RSVP is required (and how to send it), if it is a potluck or there will be some food there, and if childcare will be provided. Attach a flyer if one is available and would be helpful. Include that it is okay to share the email outside of OlyFriends is that if the case. Otherwise assume it is not unless you ask and get permission from the person who wrote it.
8. If you want to respond to an email sent to the OlyFriends main listserv, be sure to only send to the individual person(s) intended and not to the olyfriends address. When you reply an email on a committee or discussion subgroup, the To: field will show all email addresses your response will be delivered to. Please be sure to check that, and if you do not want your response to go to the whole subgroup, please be sure to delete the subgroup address.

If you feel someone is violating the OlyFriends listserv policy or guidelines, email the Hearthkeeper, the Clerk of Worship & Ministry, or the Meeting Clerk.

The consequences of someone violating the OlyFriends policy or guidelines may include:

1. Education from the Hearthkeeper.
2. Eldering from Worship & Ministry.
3. Being removed from the OlyFriends listserv and any subgroups you are subscribed to.

Some Meeting committees have subgroup discussion lists

For example, members of the Peace and Social Justice Committee are on a subgroup. They can send a message to everyone on the committee using the subgroup email address peaceandsocialjusce@olyfriends.groups.io.

Committee subgroup discussion lists are closed so only the people on the committee are subscribed and will get the emails. The committee subgroups are not moderated.

In order to send a message to this group, a person must be subscribed to the committee's list.

Please do not also copy other people's email addresses – people not subscribed as committee members. Doing that means they would get the email but will not be able to respond to the group -- and if the email shows a discussion, it may violate other subscriber's privacy by exposing their email addresses and comments.

Joining OlyFriends

To join OlyFriends, our main listserv, a person who is a Member or a regular Attender known to the Meeting asks the Hearthkeeper to add them to the list. The request can be made by emailing the Hearthkeeper at hearthkeeper@olympiafriends.org and/or by filling out one of the yellow cards on the table containing the guestbook, newsletters, and sharing box. Write a note that you wish to be added to OlyFriends and be sure to write your name and email address legibly. Put the card/note in the Sharing Box.

After a person is added, they are notified by email and can send email to either olyfriends@groups.io or main@olyfriends.groups.io (they work the same way) to reach all the other subscribers. In order to have access to the online archived messages, they then can sign up for a password at [hps://olyfriends.groups.io/g/main](https://olyfriends.groups.io/g/main).

Subscription options for OlyFriends or any subgroup can be set to:

- **Individual Messages** - You will receive each message in an individual email. This is the default setting.
- **Full Featured Digest** - Group up to 12 messages together as one email instead of being sent individually (rich formatting).
- **Daily Summary** - A daily summary, delivered in the morning, of the group's messages from the previous day.
- **Special Notices Only** - You will only receive special notices from the moderators. (This is rarely if ever used by us.)
- **No Email** - You will receive no emails.

These settings can be done by you online or you can ask the Hearthkeeper to do it.

More Listserv Management

If your email address changes, you can change it at [hps://olyfriends.groups.io/](https://olyfriends.groups.io/) in "Account" in the dropdown menu on the top right side of the browser, or ask the Hearthkeeper to do it for you.

To be removed from the OFM email list, you can unsubscribe yourself or email your request to the Hearthkeeper at hearthkeeper@olympiafriends.org. If you unsubscribe from OlyFriends you will automatically also be unsubscribed from all committee or discussion subgroups you are on.

In response to questions, committee members clarified that the gatekeepers will divert items not Meeting the main listserv criteria to subgroup status, if the poster desires, but will not censor content. Friends were reminded that email does not take the place of face-to-face conversation, nor should it replace regular committee and Meeting process.

It was agreed that the gatekeepers will keep track of the number and type of posts that have been diverted or declined and will report back in six months.