



FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON

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Policy **Information**

From: Pat Rohan/revised Susan Bartlett
Chair, Operations Council

Date: April 20, 2010/revised October 14, 2015

Subject: **FUSN List Policies**

Purpose: To reinforce and clarify the appropriate use of the FUSN e-mail lists.

Background: These policies were adopted by the Operations Council at its meeting on October 7, 2009. Our thanks to Jud Leonard for drafting the policies and for soliciting input from the congregation last spring regarding them. Of course, we recognize that as is the case with most policies, there will be gray areas. If in doubt, please contact either the Chair of the Operations Council, currently me, or Jud Leonard. Your cooperation is appreciated.

These policies were revised by the Operations Council at its meeting on October 14, 2015. Thanks again to Jud Leonard for drafting the revised policy.

E-mail Lists

There are two un-moderated e-mail distribution lists open to members and friends of the Society.

The business list, fusn-business@lists.fusn.org, is an "official business," information-only list. Subscribers to this list look to it for news and information about activities of the Society. Everything distributed to the business list is automatically sent to the general list as well.

The general list, fusn@lists.fusn.org, is a vehicle for a broader range of conversations, including news, requests, opinions, and items of general (and occasionally even marginal!) interest. Messages on the general list range from

requests for the names of plumbers and babysitters, to suggestions for social action, to political and spiritual ramblings, poetry, and occasionally jokes.

To receive either list, send an e-mail to jud.leonard@gmail.com, and ask to be placed on the list you prefer. You may also choose to receive either distribution in "digest" form, meaning that you get a single daily summary of messages, rather than separate e-mails.

Policies:

1. Membership

The lists are open to members and friends of the First Unitarian Society in Newton. Users should assume that anything sent to the lists may become public knowledge; messages on the list have shown up in local newspapers and right-wing blogs.

The list server software will not automatically redistribute messages unless the "from" address matches an address on one of the two lists. This keeps most spam messages from being propagated. There are some addresses on the list for people who have moved away, or whose connection to the community is remote, but who want to keep up with what's happening at FUSN.

2. Signatures

Messages sent to either list should be signed with the author's name. You should put your full name (first and last names) in the body of the message. Due to spam-blocking policies used by some Internet Service Providers, the list distribution software must change the From: address on many messages, with the result that those receiving a message cannot tell who sent it unless it has been signed.

3. Use of [fusion](mailto:fusion@lists.fusn.org) vs [fusion-business](mailto:fusion-business@lists.fusn.org) lists

The distinction is that some people find the volume of messages on the general list (fusion@lists.fusn.org) distracting, overwhelming, or annoying, but still want to receive announcements of church events and activities. Those people are on the business list (fusion-business@lists.fusn.org). The business list is not intended for advertising or discussion of commercial businesses. Mail sent to the business list is also automatically distributed to the general list.

So for most of us, most of the time we should send to the general list (fusion@lists.fusn.org). The exception is that we should use the [fusion-business](mailto:fusion-business@lists.fusn.org) list when we're acting on behalf of the society to notify the community of [fusn](http://www.fusn.org)-sponsored activities or events. People are sometimes tempted to use the business list simply because it reaches more people; that's a mistake – it's spamming.

You may also receive messages from [fusion-request](mailto:fusion-request@lists.fusn.org) or [fusion-business-request](mailto:fusion-business-request@lists.fusn.org). Don't

send a note to one of those addresses expecting it to be distributed; they are just for administrative purposes.

4. Etiquette

Avoid flaming, personal attacks, and bullying. Subscribers voluntarily observe the generally accepted rules of e-mail etiquette.

As a matter of principle, there's no doubt we would all agree to this policy, but it is too easy to forget when one feels threatened or unfairly treated. We've already had a few "flame wars" on the list. Such arguments do not resolve problems, and frequently overshadow the more polite conversations that might lead to satisfactory resolution.

If you find yourself angered by something you read on the list, ask the author for a personal meeting to discuss your concerns. If you want a third presence for the discussion, ask a lay minister to join you.

Our first response to disrespectful or assaultive messages should be to identify them as such, recognizing the conflict, and reminding the author that the issue should be addressed directly, personally, and in a civil tone, rather than through public e-mail.

If that approach doesn't work, and the flaming continues, after consultation with the minister and operations council we will remove as many e-mail addresses from the list as necessary.

5. Commercial advertising

Members of the FUSN community sometimes want to advertise their own business ventures. We ask that commercial advertisements should be limited to no more than twice a year, and should be addressed to the general list (fusn@lists.fusn.org). Messages should be brief and may include a link to your business website for interested individuals to obtain additional information. We do not allow advertising by people who are not actively connected to FUSN.