Recommended Practices for OCNA Listserv

Preamble

The OCNA Listserv (or List) is a service to the neighborhood provided through UMBC. The current recommended practices and contact information are posted on the OCNA web pages and can be found by searching "OCNA Catonsville." Questions, reports of malfunction, complaints, and requests to add or delete subscribers to the list should be directed to the List Manager. Issues may be referred to the OCNA Board for resolution.

The List consists of 350 diverse members representing diverse races, religions, cultures, and sexual orientation. The intent of the Recommended Practices is to help promote a culture within OCNA that we are a tribe and we adhere to high standards of polite and respectful discourse.

Periodic reminders (recommended twice yearly) of the Recommended Practices will be shared with List members.

Code of Conduct

Violations of this Code of Conduct may be brought to the attention of the OCNA Board and may result in removal from the List.

1. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated - nor language that targets or is deemed offensive to religious, political, racial, ethnic, gender, disabled, or social groups.
2. No "flames" or personal attacks.
3. Do not share personal information or personal correspondence (unless all parties have given consent).
4. **No business use**, either for profit or promotion of a for-profit business.
   a. Examples of prohibited use:
      i. Ads for businesses; ads for products; offers of for-pay consulting services.
      ii. Automated "signature files" which provide more than contact information.
   b. Examples of permitted use:
      i. Services, such as babysitting, by minor children in OCNA households.
      ii. Yard sale notices, household items for sale, apartments for rent within OCNA.
      iii. Announcements of free services or opportunities.
      iv. Non-profit fundraiser notices or event notices.
5. **No partisan political use**.

a. Examples of prohibited use:
    i. Political ads, partisan notices in the interest of a political party.
    ii. Notices of partisan political meetings.
  b. Examples of permitted use:
    i. Notices of "meet the candidate" open meetings at election times, discussions around issues, or debates within the neighborhood or sponsored by OCNA.
    ii. Notices on legislative or executive branch issues of local impact within OCNA.
    iii. Information on voting, election rules, or other notices facilitating civic duty.
6. **Responsible computing**: no spamming, promulgation of malware, malicious posts, nor posts in violation of the law.

Etiquette and Recommended Practices

Remember that your message will go to more than 350 busy people. It may not be clear in some cases whether a message is "appropriate"; use your best judgment and be prepared to apologize if others are offended.

The purpose of the List is to promote neighborhood identity, cohesion, and common interests of neighbors; to exchange information that contributes to improving the neighborhood.

Some general rules of thumb:

1. Use a **subject line** indicative of message content – this allows others to determine whether to delete before reading.
2. **Reply to individuals**, not to the List, unless the reply is clearly of interest to a large portion of List members. The List default is to send replies to the sending individuals. So use "Reply" but not "Reply All" unless it is important for all members of the List to see your reply.
3. **Do not send trivial messages** or pro forma remarks to the List as you might to an individual, e.g. "hey, that was funny," "thanks" or "OK, I got your message." Do not post human interest stories, jokes, or cool stuff.
4. Note that you remain **anonymous** if you only read messages; but, once you reply to a message, people see who sent the reply and have your email address. "Lurking" on the List is OK.
5. **Consult with others** prior to posting any personal information about them. Respect others' privacy.
6. **Notify the List Manager** when your email address changes or when you drop an email address that is on the List. Also, notify about technical problems with the List.
7. **Be polite** at all times, you idiot (… just checking to see if anyone has read this… sorry).

Background

OCNA had no records of any systematic OCNA-wide promulgation of List rules through the end of 2012. There have been several discussions of rules on the List, in offline conversations, and at Board meetings, but no documents arose from these.

There have been disagreements over the proper use of the List, but the List has been respected by its users. While some List uses may have been improper, most cases have been debatable and we have no evidence of malicious intent on anyone's part, or even of intentional misuse. OCNA does not consider the above rules to be sufficient to resolve all future issues regarding the use of the List. Instead, it is hoped that they will serve as a guide for those who want to police their own use in good faith.

As the host institution for the listserv, UMBC requires that the List not be used for "personal gain" which we may interpret as business use and self-promotion. Also, UMBC requires that the List not be used for partisan political purposes. Finally, UMBC requires that its computing resources be used responsibly. Beyond these basic requirements, the use of the List may be determined by its community of users.

The above rules were amended, then approved by the OCNA Board on February 25, 2013.

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