

SFTGG COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES INCLUDING SPAM PROBLEM

Since communicating by email is much less expensive and time consuming than sending letters, the Guild almost never sends messages through the U.S. Mail. This article discusses important issues relating to electronic communications in the Guild.

Official announcements sent by the Board will have a return address of either info@sftgg.org, members@sftgg.org or programs@sftgg.org. These announcements can only be sent by Board members. The messages are sent to all members who have an email address listed with their membership information, whether or not they have subscribed to the Yahoo! Group (discussed below). Remember to let us know if you change your email address!

Totally separate from the official emails sent by the Board, many members of the Guild also participate in a Yahoo! discussion group. On the Yahoo! Group, any member can post a message, and this message is sent to all subscribers. Messages from the Yahoo! Group will have "[SFTGG]" at the beginning of the subject line, while the official Board announcements do not.

Due to the high volume of traffic to the Yahoo! Group, some members have chosen not to subscribe, and therefore it is generally *not used for official Guild announcements*. (Note, however, that Yahoo! provides users the ability to receive fewer messages. You can receive each posting as an individual email, or receive one Digest at the end of each day, or not receive emails at all but view messages on the Yahoo! Group website.)

The Yahoo! Group has always been intended to be an open forum, and you will find that discussion ranges from tour guiding to politics. Thus, it is not an "official" program of the Guild, but many members find it useful.

Craig Smith donates his time to manage the Yahoo! Group. To subscribe to the Group (or for related issues), please send Craig an email at palmedo@aol.com.

RECEIVING OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are two things that all members should do to ensure they can receive the official Guild emails:

- First, verify that your email address is correct in the membership roster. If your email address is not up-to-date, you will not receive announcements.
- Then, add info@sftgg.org, members@sftgg.org, and programs@sftgg.org to your address book. Most email tools will allow you to receive messages from addresses that are in your address book.

To Test

An easy way to test if you are receiving emails is to go to the sign-in page for the members-only section of the website: <http://sftgg.org/members/>. Near the bottom right of the page, you will see "Forgot your Password." In the box there, type in your email address and click "Get Password." (If you have never accessed the members-only section of the website before, you may need to "Register." See the directions on that page.)

The email address you use must be the one that is on file for you in the membership database. If it is not, you will see "Invalid email" in red after you click. If it is, you will see "password sent to you." Then check your email. You should receive an email message in the next 5 minutes from members@sftgg.org with the subject line "SFTGG Members Only Section." The text of the email will say "Your password is: " and then give your password. If you received this email, then you are receiving emails from the Guild. However, see below!

Spam

Spam is unsolicited bulk email sent out by the thousands. Because spam is so annoying, most email tools try to identify it, and they may separate the spam from your inbox or even delete it automatically. Unfortunately, sometimes legitimate message are mis-identified as spam and moved to a different folder or deleted. This is

probably why some Guild members do not receive the official SFTGG messages. Also, you may not be receiving messages from friends and prospective employers if your email program improperly identified them as spam, so it is in your best interest to be familiar with how this works.

In this message, we will explain how to tell if your email is being deleted or moved into a spam folder. Since there are so many email programs, there is no way this message can be comprehensive. It is intended to show several examples so each person can investigate their own email program. Even if your email program is not listed here, please read over these descriptions, because most programs handle spam similarly.

As stated above, sometimes a legitimate message goes into the spam folder. So even if you find that you do receive emails from the Guild, it's still possible that you might not be receiving *all* of them. Therefore you should check the spam folder occasionally to see if there are any real messages in there (from the Guild or anyone else). If you see any messages from the Guild, use the procedures described below to identify these as "This is not spam" or "safe senders" so they won't be blocked in the future.

AOL

When you read mail, underneath where your messages are displayed, you will see links for Spam Folder and another one for Spam Controls. First, look in your Spam folder to see if SFTGG messages are being incorrectly identified as Spam and transferred to the spam folder. If you see a message there that is not spam, click on it and click "This is not Spam." Then click on the Spam Controls link. (You can also get there by going to keyword Spam Controls.) The setting for AOL's Advanced Spam Filter should be medium or low. Beneath this, the Additional Spam Filters should all be set to off. Click on Edit next to Sender Filter, underneath Blocked email should be: click Delivered to my spam folder. Click save. After you do these steps, do the password test again to see if you are now receiving email from SFTGG.

Yahoo! Mail

Yahoo! Mail will either put mail it identified as spam in a Bulk mail folder or delete it. When you login to Yahoo! Mail, you normally come to the Welcome Page, which tells you how many unread messages you have, and has a link to your inbox. On the left side of this page, you will see a list of folders. You will see

Inbox Draft Sent Bulk

Click "Bulk." On this page, you may see "You have chosen to immediately delete all messages that SpamGuard identifies as Spam." If this is the case, some messages sent to you may be automatically deleted without your knowledge! Click on "Edit Settings." You may want to turn SpamGuard On, and click "Save these messages in the Bulk Folder for 1 month." Click the 2 checkboxes underneath this, in the Mark Spam + Not Spam section. Then click "Save Changes."

Email programs can be trained to identify spam more accurately. To train your program, tell it which email are spam and which are not. In your inbox, click the checkbox to the left of any messages that are spam, and then click the Spam button. When viewing the messages in your Bulk folder, click on the subject of a message that is not spam to view it, and then click the "Not Spam" button. If you do this consistently, your email program will get better and better at properly identifying spam.

Microsoft Outlook

Outlook has a folder called "Junk Email." Check this folder for legitimate email. For spam controls, go to the Tools Menu and select Options. On this dialog, click the Preferences Tab, and then click the "Junk E-mail..." button. In particular, make sure the checkbox for "Permanently delete suspected junk e-mail instead of moving it to the Junk E-mail folder" is *unchecked*!

If a spam message shows up in your inbox, right click on it (Windows) or click and hold the mouse button on it (Mac), so a menu pops up. On that menu, select Junk Email, and then drag right to select "Add sender to blocked senders list." This will train Outlook to identify emails like this as spam.

If a non-spam message is in your Junk E-mail folder, bring up that menu in the same way, and select Junk Email -> "Add sender to safe senders list."

Eudora

Eudora has a folder called Junk as well. Check this folder for messages from the Guild. If a spam message shows up in your inbox, right-click on it (Windows) or click and hold the mouse on it (Mac) to bring up a menu. From this menu, select "Junk." This will identify the message as junk and move it to your Junk folder. If you see a legitimate email in your Junk folder, bring up the menu in the same way and select "Not Junk."