

Mailing Lists

Mailing Lists

Version 101113

PERL Scripts For:
Web Based Mailing Lists, Newsletters, & Administration
Email Based Mailing Lists, Newsletters, & Administration
Public & Private Lists
Automatic Archives – View as Text or HTML
Opt In & Opt Out
Ban or Blacklist an Address
Member Moderation
Pacing by Member/Site

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Mailing Lists

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Mailing Lists

Introduction

Mailing Lists contains four PERL CGI script libraries that provide web or email based mailing lists and newsletter support for your site. Functions provided include:

- Web Based Mailing Lists, Newsletters, & Administration
- Email Based Mailing Lists, Newsletters, & Administration
- Public & Private Lists
- Membership List Restricted to Administrator
- Automatic Archives – View as Text or HTML
- Email an Archive Option
- View or Download an Archive Attachment
- Opt In & Opt Out
- Ban or Blacklist an Address
- No Mail Option (Temporarily Away)
- Digest Option
- Member Moderation
- Send Pacing by Member/Site

Note: You must have Session Manager 2 installed prior to using Mailing Lists.

Mailing Lists & Newsletters

Mailing Lists, often called forums, are used to communicate between members. Any member can post a message to the list and replies are automatically distributed to all members.

Newsletters are basically one way. You must be a list administrator to send mail to the list and all replies go to the sender (administrator) and are NOT automatically sent to other members.

Membership lists are restricted to list administrators; you must be an administrator to view the membership.

Public lists appear on the web list selection page.

Private lists must be selected by name; you must know the list name before you can access it.

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Anti-SPAM

To help prevent SPAM and comply with anti-SPAM suggestions, each email includes an **optout** option appended at the bottom. Additional information is also included in the email header that identifies details about the list:

```
List-Id: <${list{ 'Name' }. $config{ 'listhost' }>
List-Unsubscribe: <${config{ 'home' } / mailing_lists.shtml?list=${list{ 'Name' } }>,
                  <mailto:${list{ 'Name' } -request\@${config{ 'listhost' } }?subject=unsubscribe>
List-Archive: <${config{ 'home' } / mailing_lists.shtml?list=${list{ 'Name' } }>
List-Post: <mailto:${ListEmail}>
List-Owner: <mailto:${config{ 'admin_address' } }>
List-Help: <${list{ 'Name' } -request\@${config{ 'listhost' } }?subject=help>
List-Subscribe: <${config{ 'home' } / mailing_lists.shtml?list=${list{ 'Name' } }>,
                mailto:${list{ 'Name' } -request\@${config{ 'listhost' } }?subject=subscribe
```

\${list{ 'Name' } } will contain the name of the current list. **\$config** values are defined in global.ini or maillist.ini.

New members are optionally automatically moderated. An administrator can remove moderation after their first post is verified as acceptable.

META REFRESH tags are replaced to help prevent possible redirection to another site.

Image sources located at another site are redirected to a safe local image to help prevent identification of member computers.

Mail Pacing

Two types of mail pacing are included. Most hosts limit the number of emails you can send per hour. When the rate of emails nears the limit you set, new postings will be rejected until the rate reduces.

To help prevent “flaming”, SPAM, and other repeat postings, individual pacing prevents postings at a rate greater than the value you set. For example, if you set a re-post rate of 10 minutes then if someone attempts to send more than one post in that period it will be rejected. An administrator can temporarily override this limit,

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Ban & Blacklist

If a member is causing a problem or abusing your email system, there are two levels of control provided. Setting a members BAN option prevents any access to that specific mailing list. Adding their email address to the Blacklist prevents access to ALL lists.

A member that is banned or on the blacklist cannot send or receive emails. However, they can still access the archives.

You can also use wildcards in a blacklist definition:

```
~badurl.  
*@badurl.com
```

A tilde (~) will look for the string anywhere in the email address while an asterisk (*) will test the end of the address for a match. You can also define Blacklist overrides in the Whitelist. For example, if your Blacklist contains *@badlurl.com all addresses ending with @ badlurl.com will be rejected. If you add okname@badlurl.com to your Whitelist it will override the Blacklist entry and will be accepted.

Archives

All postings are automatically saved in an archive that can be accessed via the web. The archive visitor can choose to view each post in either plain text or as HTML. Attachments are automatically listed and can be viewed or downloaded. The visitor can also choose to email the posting to their address.

The email address of the originator of the posting is not included in the archive. Their name is used instead to help prevent SPAM email mining.

Digests

Members can optionally choose to receive a digest of recent posts in addition to or in place of posts as they occur. As posts are archived, an index is maintained and then sent to members choosing digests about once every 24 hours. The digest will contain links to recent posts in the archives. After following the link, the member can optionally choose to email the post to their (or another) address.

Used in combination with the (no)mail option, digest gives members the capability of receiving posts in the manner they want.

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Web Based Lists

By default, a list of public mailing lists is presented to allow a visitor to select what they want to do. For example:

Automail

Test Mailing List. You can use this list to try out the various mailing options without disturbing other members. Please LEAVE the list when you finish testing. Otherwise, you may receive unwanted test emails.

[JOIN](#)[LEAVE](#)[MY OPTIONS](#)[ARCHIVES](#)[SEND MAIL](#)

To post a message, send mail to automail@yoursite.com or click on SEND MAIL above to post a message online. You can also [SUBSCRIBE] or [LEAVE] this list by sending an email to Automail-request@yoursite.com with your request in the Subject line. To set or change your [NAME] use NAME=YOUR-NAME as the Subject. Where YOUR-NAME is the name you would like to use. To receive a [HELP] message use HELP as the Subject.

JOIN and LEAVE

These options prompt for an email address and an anti-SPAM code. When accepted, an optional email is sent to the users address with a link asking for confirmation. When the link is followed, the request is completed. If not completed within about 24 hours, the session will be reset and the request must be done again from the beginning.

You can also optionally allow join without confirm and automatically place the new member on moderation.

MY OPTIONS

This option allows the member to change or set their name as well as set or reset their no-mail, digest, and hide options.

ARCHIVES

This option presents a list of the archives collected for the selected list. The archive can then be viewed as plain text or as HTML. It can also be emailed. Any attachments can also be viewed or downloaded.

SEND EMAIL

To protect against masquerading, this option will only appear after the visitor is logged in. A form is presented to request a subject and a message for posting to the list. Web postings can be in plain text or HTML markup can be used. Attachments are also not allowed.

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Mail is sent using the mime multipart format. The post is sent as entered in an HTML part and then all HTML markups are removed and the post is sent in a plain text part. **Note:** some markup that is considered unsafe, such as meta refresh, may be removed from the HTML part.

Email Based Lists

Email based lists are implemented by defining email forwards to a pipe program. This would probably look similar to:

```
!/mysite/cgi_lib/automail.cgi
```

You should define two forwards for each list:

```
listname@yoursite.com  
listname-request@yoursite.com
```

All forwards should point to automail.cgi. The first is to handle posts and replies to the list. The second is to process email based administration requests. You should also define a global forward to handle bounced or returned mail:

```
automail-bounce@yoursite.com
```

It is important to keep “-request” and “-bounce” as part of the address; automail.cgi looks for these strings to determine how to process the email.

Requests

Requests are contained in the subject line of an email to listname-request@yoursite.com.

```
ADMIN PASSWORD – List administrator requests  
ARCHIVE PASSWORD – Add an email to the archives  
ADDCONTACT PASSWORD – Extract email addresses from a forward & add  
them to the list.  
JOIN or SUBSCRIBE - become a member of the mailing list  
LEAVE - leave the list.
```

```
DIGEST - send a digest of posts about once a day.  
NODIGEST - do not send digests.  
HIDE - do not use your email address to identify your posts.  
UNHIDE - use your name and email address to identify your posts.  
MAIL - send posts as they happen.  
NOMAIL - do not send posts as they happen.  
NAME=YOUR NAME - change or set your name. Where YOUR-NAME is the  
name you would like to use.  
HELP - receive this help message.  
HELP ADMIN - additional help for list administrators.
```

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Administrator Requests

These requests are identified by ADMIN PASSWORD in the subject line. PASSWORD is the list's administrator password. One or more requests are then placed in the body of the email – one request per line.

ADD or SUBSCRIBE followed by the email address and user name

Separated by a comma

BAN followed by the email address to be banned

BLACKLIST followed by the email address to be banned from all activity

BLIST receive a list of the current blacklist membership

HIDE followed by the email address to hide when posting

MEMBERS or LIST receive a list of the current membership

PACE current message pacing statistics

REMOVE or UNSUBSCRIBE followed by the email address to be removed

MODERATE followed by the email address to be moderated

UNBAN followed by the email address to be Unbanned

UNHIDE followed by the email address to UNhide

UNMODERATE followed by the email address to be UNmoderated

UNPACE Turn pacing off for last poster

WHITELIST followed by the email address to be white listed

WLIST receive a list of the current white list membership

Archive Request

You can forward a message to be added to the archives by changing the subject line to ARCHIVE PASSWORD. Where, PASSWORD is the list administrator's password. The first date, from, and subject found in the body of the forwarded message will be used as the archive's definition.

Addcontact Request

You can forward a message and add all of its email addresses to the membership list by changing the subject line to ADDTO PASSWORD or ADDCONTACT PASSWORD. Where, PASSWORD is the list administrator's password. The first plain text section is scanned for **from**, **to**, and **cc** email addresses. If the address is not already a member of the list, it is added.

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Directory Structure

The following directory structure is suggested:

```
/ (root)
/cgi_lib (PERL library scripts)
  automail.lib
  automaillist.cgi
  webmail.lib
  maillist.ini
  maillist.lib
  mimemail.lib
  global.ini (global information about your system)
  sessions2.lib
/public_html (web site files)
  /cgi-bin (PERL scripts executable from web pages)
    global.ini (global information about your system)
    webmail.cgi
  mailing-list.shtml – web page
  Mailing_Lists.pdf – online admin documentation
```

mailing-list.shtml

First, you need a web page that kicks everything off. This should normally be a **shtml** type. Otherwise, some hosts may not recognize that you are using a PERL script.

```
<html><head>
<title>Web Based Mailing Lists</title>
</head><body>
<!--#exec cgi="/cgi-bin/webmail.cgi"-->
</body></html>
```

global.ini

Refer to the Session Manager documentation for a description of global.ini. This is normally in your **cgi-bin** directory but a copy is also needed in **cgi_lib** if you plan to use email based lists or administration.

mailinglist.ini

This contains common configuration information for the mailing lists:

```
Sub mailconfig {
$config{'antispam'} = 'yes';

#You probably want to initially use 'OPEN' until you have your users registered.
#Setting the value to 'CLOSED' prevents any new registrations.
$config{'closed'} = 'OPEN'; # or 'CLOSED
```

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```
# If set to YES users must confirm their registration by clicking on an email link
# otherwise access is prohibited. If you do not require confirmed registrations for this
# page, set it to NO.
$config{'confirm'}='YES'; #or 'NO'

# These optional values should be set if you have a user agreement and privacy statement # you want a new
user to agree prior to allowing their registration
$config{'agree'}='agree.html';
$config{'priv'}='privacy.html';
$config{'maillists'} = 'maillists'; # where everything is stored

# This is the host name used to identify your lists
$config{'listhost'} = 'mysite.com';

# number of minutes required between posts by the same member
# set to 0 for none
$config{'repost'} = 10;

$config{'mlmax'} = 25; # max number of members to list per page (0 = no limit)
$config{'almax'} = 25; # max number of archives to list per page (0 = no limit)
$config{'newmoderate'} = 'yes'; # automatically moderate new members
$config{'newconfirm'} = 'no'; # require email confirmation for new members
# For online documentation, place the pdf in your public_html dir and name it here
# comment out or leave null to disable
$config{'adminguide'} = 'Mailing_Lists.pdf';

# You may need a stylesheet to restore formatting after displaying an archive in HTML
$config{'stylesheet'} = "<!--mstheme-->
<link rel=\"stylesheet\" type=\"text/css\" href=\"_themes/loxgroves/loxg1011.css\">
<meta name=\"Microsoft Theme\" content=\"loxgroves 1011, default\">";

# this is the HTML optout message appended to all posts
# \%listname% is replaced by the current list's name
$config{'hoptout'} = "<br>-----<br>
You received this message because you are a member of the \%listname%
mailing list.<br>
If you would like to be removed or know someone that would like to join,
please visit:<br>
<a href=3d\"$config{'home'}\mailing_lists.shtml?list=3d%listname%\">
$config{'home'}\mailing_lists.shtml?list=3d%listname%<a> or
<br>click \[
<a href=3d\"mailto:\%listname%-request@$config{'listhost'}?subject=3dleave\">
HERE</a>\] to be removed from the list.<br>
<\BODY><\HTML>\n";

#this is the plain text optout message appended to all posts
$config{'toptout'} = "
-----
You received this message because you are a member of the \%listname% mailing list.
If you would like to be removed or know someone that would like to join, please visit:
$config{'home'}\mailing_lists.shtml?list=3d%listname%\n";
}
1; # <== required by PERL
```

Mailing Lists

webmail.lib

This library contains all of the functions needed for web page based mailing lists.

automail.lib

This library contains all of the functions needed for email based mailing lists.

maillist.lib

This library contains common mailing list functions.

mimemail.lib

This library contains common multipart MIME functions to define plain text, html, and attachment parts. .

webmail.cgi and automaillist.cgi

Note: If you are using a LINUX based host be certain to upload all of your cgi scripts with LINUX line endings (ASCII mode) and execute permissions (755). Otherwise, they may not execute.

Automaillist.cgi is the same as webmail.cgi but should be located in the **cgi_lib** directory. Below is a sample script that ties it all together:

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
use strict;
use attributes;
use Email::Valid;    # needed to validate email addresses
use MIME::Base64;   # needed to decode attachments for display/download

# globals needed by Session Manager
our (%config,%form,$action);
our (@ta,$ptime,$lt,$SessionID,%session,%user,@SessionStack,$SessionIndex);
# globals needed by mailing lists
our ($mldir,%list,%member);
require "global.ini";          # <== global site configuration
&global;
require "$config{'cgilib'}maillist.ini"; # <== mailing list configuration
&mailconfig;

require "$config{'cgilib'}webmail.lib"; # <== web based mail
&webmailmain;

Or
require "$config{'cgilib'}automail.lib"; # <== email based mail
&automailmain;
```

Mailing Lists

Creating a List

Before you can create a list, you must establish a website administrator account. After that, you can create a list and define its membership.

If you want to enable posting via email, you must define a pipe with the list name. To enable email administration of a list, define a pipe using the list name concatenated with “-request”. See below for more information.

Website Administrator

Start your mailing list web page and click [LOGIN] near the bottom. If you installed the “sysop” profile, you can logon using “**password**” as your default password.

Note: you should either delete the sysop account or change the password. Otherwise, your site could be open to abuse.

Once you are successfully logged in, you can change your password, email address, and other details by clicking [CHANGE REGISTRATION].

If you want to register a new administrator account, click [LOGIN] and then [REGISTER]. When you complete the registration details, you will probably need to follow a link that was mailed to you to “confirm” the account.

In order to enable the new account, or any other account, as an administrator you must edit the profile. By default, profiles are located in the /sessions/profiles directory. Look under the [registration] section and find or add **admin=all**.

```
[registration]
admin=all
```

“all” enables the account as an administrator for all website functions including all lists. If you want to enable administration for only one account, change “all” to the list name. i.e.

```
[registration]
admin=list_name
```

You can enable more than one list by adding their names to the admin= token:

```
[registration]
admin=list_name1 list_name2
```

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Start a New List

If no lists have been defined, you must login to an administrator account with ALL authority and then you will be able to start your first list.

To start a new list, login to an administrator account (sysop), click the [ADMIN] button next to any list's options and then select [NEWLIST].

Start a New Mailing List

List Name:

Public/Private:

List Type:

Moderate All:

Confirm New Members:

Moderate New Members:

New Members Get Mail:

New Members Get Digests:

Max Message Size (KB): Leave blank for no limit

Password:

Repeat Password:

Link To:

Short Description:

START LIST

Enter the new list's **name**. This name will be used as the email account user ID as well as to identify all mailings in the subject line. Do not use spaces or other special characters that could be a problem as an email address.

Select whether the list is **public or private**. Public lists appear for selection on the List Selection page. Private lists do not appear and must be selected by entering the name in the PRIVATE LIST box.

Select the list type. Any member can post or reply to a LIST but only a list administrator can post to a Newsletter.

Setting **confirm** to yes will send a confirmation email to new members along with a link that must be followed to activate the membership. If no is selected, the new membership will be activated immediately without confirmation.

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Setting **moderate** to yes will place new members on moderation – their posts must be approved by a list administrator before they are distributed to the list.

If **New Members Get Mail** is no, posts are not sent to new members as they occur. If you select no here, you should set ...Digests to yes.

Setting **New Members Get Digests** to yes will send an index of links to recent posts about every 24 hours to new members.

Max Message Size can be used to reduce the volume of email sent to list members. If defined and a post's size exceeds this value, it will not be sent. Instead, it will be archived and a post similar to a digest will be sent. The member can then follow the link to the archive entry and read the entire post. Optionally, the post can be emailed to an individual's address.

Select and re-enter a list administrator **password**. This password is used for email administration and is not the same as your user password. Anyone with the password can request admin functions via email. To disable email administration, leave the password blank.

You can also **link** new members to another list by entering its name as the link. Any new member will also be added to the linked list's membership automatically. The reverse action is not true unless you add a link at that list also.

Enter a short **description** of your new list. This description will be displayed along with the list name.

Click [START LIST] and your list will be created and your email address will be added to the membership list along with ADMIN privileges.

Define the Members

Once you have defined a list, go to the List Select page and select the lists [ADMIN] option. From the main Administration page, you can get a list of current members or add new ones. Click on [ADD MEMBERS] and you will be presented with a text area box where you can list the new member's email addresses – one per line. Optionally, add the member's name after the email address separated by a comma.

You can verify the member list by selecting [MEMBERSHIP LIST] from the main Administration page.

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Define the Pipes

Members can use your new list immediately using the web page. To enable email posts and email administration, you must define two pipes (forwards) to **automailist.cgi**. Its default location is in `cgi_lib` so the pipe would be similar to:

```
|/yoursite/cgi_lib/automailist.cgi
```

Make certain the cgi has **execute** permissions (755) or it may fail. Email posts and replies will be sent to:

```
listname@yoursite.com.
```

Requests will be emailed to:

```
listname-request@yoursite.com
```

Bounce Pipe

You should also define a pipe to capture invalid email addresses and other network errors:

```
automail-bounce@yoursite.com
```

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Other Admin Functions

Clicking [ADMIN] on the list selection page will take you to the main administrator page:

Membership

[MEMBERSHIP LIST] Manage list membership options - moderate, remove, ban, etc.

[ADD MEMBERS] Add one or more members to the list.

[BAD EMAIL] Remove invalid email address from all lists.

[BOUNCES] View bounced email archives (n)

[MODERATE] (n) Posts are pending moderation

Message Pacing

[PACE STATS] Current Pacing Stats.

[OVERRIDE REPOST] Reset pacing repost for last member - allow an immediate new posting

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[SEND DIGESTS] Send digest of recent posts.

[EDIT LIST] Edit list definitions - password, description, etc.

[NEW LIST] Create a new list.

[REMOVE LIST] Remove this list. **Use with caution.**

SMTP

[VIEW LOG] View SMTP Log

[VIEW ERROR LOG] View SMTP Error Log - invalid email addresses

[ERASE LOG] Erase SMTP Log

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Membership

[MEMBERSHIP LIST] allows you to view and change individual membership settings.

Public List Automail Administration

SEARCH

3 Members

Email	Name	BAN	Moderate	No Mail	Digest	Admin	Post	Hide	Remove	Blacklist
don@loxgroves.net	Don Williams	OK	---	MAIL	NO	ADMIN	---	Show Email	Remove	Black List
loxgroves.net@eoves.net	ams - Web	OK	---	NOMAIL	NO	---	---	Show Email	Remove	Black List
sysop@loxgroves.net	Don Williams - Webmaster	OK	---	NOMAIL	DIGEST	ADMIN	POST	Show Email	Remove	Black List

You cannot change an email address – you must remove it and then add a new member with the correct address. Clicking on any of the other options will set or reset the selected parameter.

BAN – Prevents the member from sending or receiving emails from this list only.

MODERATE – Places the member on moderation. Any posts must be approved by a list administrator prior to distribution.

NO MAIL – The member remains on the list and can make postings but will not receive any mail from the list. This is useful if the member is on vacation or otherwise not available for some time.

DIGEST – A digest of recent posts will be sent to the member about once every 24 hours.

ADMIN – Indicates this member is a list administrator.

POST – Indicates this member can post to a newsletter.

HIDE – Hides the members email address and replaces it with the no response address. Their name will continue to be used to identify their posts.

REMOVE – Permanently removes the member from this list but they *can re-join*.

BLACKLIST – Removes the member from the list and places their address on the “Black List”. They will not be allowed to join, post, or receive mail from any list. However, they can still visit the archives.

[ADD MEMBERS] presents a text area to allow you to enter new members email addresses and names separated by a comma – one per line. For example:

```
me@here.com,My Name
him@there.org,His Name
her@theirplace.net,Mrs. Given N. Family
```

If the address is not already on the list, it will be added.

[BAD EMAIL] will prompt for an email address and then remove that address from all lists. This is normally used to handle invalid email bounces but can also be used to globally remove an address for other reasons.

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[BOUNCES] displays an archive of bounced or returned emails. You can inspect the content to determine invalid or otherwise undeliverable addresses and then use **[BAD EMAIL]** to remove them from all lists.. You can optionally delete the archive after viewing. This option only appears when the archive has content – (n) is the number of entries in the archive.

[MODERATE] displays messages waiting for administrator (moderator) action. You can **[APPROVE]** the post and it will be forwarded to the list or you can **[REJECT]** it and send it to a reject area. This option only appears when the archive has content – (n) is the number of entries in the archive.

Message Pacing

[PACING STATS] displays the current pacing statistics as well as the email address of the last poster and the elapsed time since the posting.

[OVERRIDE REPOST] allows the last posting email address to be used again without waiting for the repost pace period to expire. This is normally used by a list administrator when it is necessary to post multiple messages to the same or a different list.

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[NEW LIST] was described earlier. **[EDIT LIST]** uses a similar page that allows you to change any of your list's parameters except its name.

[REMOVE LIST] permanently removes the list.

<i>Use with caution</i> since you will need to redefine everything if you remove a list in error.

SMTP

[VIEW LOG] If `$config{'smtplogall'}` is set to 'yes, this displays the complete SMTP message log – OK as well as ERROR. If 'smtplogall' is not set to 'yes', this functions the same as **[VIEW ERROR LOG]**

[VIEW ERROR LOG] Displays the SMTP log's error messages. This would normally be invalid or otherwise failing addresses. You can use the Membership **[BAD EMAIL]** option to remove them from all lists.

[ERASE LOG] clears the current SMTP log.

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List Hash

`$list{'Name'}` = List name i.e. Automail
`$list{'Email'}` = List name i.e. automail@yoursite.com
`$list{'Public'}` = Public or Private
`$list{'Type'}` = List or Newsletter
`$list{'Password'}` = Administrator password
`$list{'Desc'}` = Short description
`$list{'NewModerate'}` = yes or no
`$list{'NewConfirm'}` = yes or no
`$list{'NewNomail'}` = yes or no
`$list{'NewDigest'}` = yes or no
`$list{'Archive'}` = Where archives are stored i.e. archive/Automail.archive
`$list{'Members'}` = Where member list is stored i.e. Automail.members
`$list{'Link'}` = Linked list name or blank i.e. AnotherList
`$list{'Maxsize'}` = Max message size in KB (1024) or blank

Member Hash

`$member{'email'}` = Email address
`$member{'name'}` = Member name
`$member{'ban'}` = BAN if banned from this list
`$member{'moderate'}` = MODERATE if posts are moderated
`$member{'nomail'}` = NOMAIL if not receiving email from this list
`$member{'digest'}` = DIGEST if digests are to be used
`$member{'admin'}` = ADMIN if list administrator, POST if can post to newsletter
`$member{'hide'}` = HIDE if email address is to be hidden