NYSAPCSO Forum

Use Instructions (as of April 9, 2015)

Association members have asked for a more versatile communications tool than the existing "Reply All" to e-mail blasts. The problem with the current model is that 1) it is difficult to keep the e-mail list up to date, 2) when an out of date list is used, some members miss out on the discussion, 3) it's not practical to save all of the e-mail conversations, 4) the lack of saved messages leads to the same question being asked multiple times.

To help solve these concerns, the Association has developed an online forum & e-mail listserv to replace our traditional "Reply All" e-mail blasts using free "Googlegroups" technology.

The NYSAPCSO Forum is a private members only online group that allows Association members to communicate through two different methods:
1. Group E-mail, and
2. Online Forum

Group E-mail

The Group E-mail method works very similarly to the current blast e-mail system. If a member has a question or a request, they simply compose an e-mail and address it to the Group E-mail address. The e-mail is then sent to all members of the association using the most up-to-date list. Members receive the e-mail just like any other. They can 'Reply' to the sender individually, or selected 'Reply All' to have their response sent to the entire NYSAPCSO list.

Using the Google Group e-mail address saves members from having to cut and paste the whole e-mail list into a new message or keep using an old e-mail string to start a new discussion. No new technologies or sign-ins or memberships are required. In addition, when someone leaves the Association, they can click the Unsubscribe link at the bottom of any e-mail string to be removed (see Figure 1). Also, new members can add themselves by clicking on the membership request button (see Figure 3). The Association has total control of the list and can add or delete any e-mail addresses that need to be corrected. Members can be added directly by the webmaster, by an e-mail invitation or by a membership request.

For best results, members should add the Google Group e-mail address to their address book and check their "Trash Folder" until they can mark the e-mails as safe.

Figure 1 Text from Group E-mail Footer

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "NYSAPCSO" group.
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to NYSAPCSO+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.
To post to this group, send email to
Visit this group at http://groups.google.com/group/NYSAPCSO.
To view this discussion on the web visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/NYSAPCSO/OF1CD4ACFC.7089C569-ON85257E1
For more options, visit https://groups.google.com/d/optout.

Online Forum

The Online Forum (http://groups.google.com/group/NYSAPCSO) is intended to be a communication tool and repository of shared knowledge. The Online Forum is slightly more complicated than the Group E-mail method, but it comes with some additional capabilities.

The main advantage of the Online Forum is that members can search and reread old Posts, including attached documents and create new Posts. Whenever a Post is created, the system automatically sends a Group E-mail using the most up-to-date list. "Tags" can be added to Posts to make them more easily searchable by subject. Some of the existing "Tags" are "Civil Serve Law and Rules", "Job Specs", "Salary Requests", "Technology", "The Conference" and "Job Postings". Members can create new Tags.

Over time, the Online Forum will become a knowledge base to capture the expertise of the membership. Was a question previously asked or a survey of the membership taken? Simply search the forum's web interface and find the e-mail discussion.

Another advantage of the Online Forum is the ability of recipients to customize how often they receive Group E-mail messages. The default setting is for members to receive an individual e-mail for each response. From the "Members" section of the Online Forum home page (see Figure 3), members can choose one of four delivery options:

   a) Don't send e-mail updates (Access messages only using the Online Forum)
   b) Send daily summaries (Receive a single e-mail daily containing all messages)
   c) Send combined updates (Receive e-mails in groups of 25 messages)
   d) Notify me of every new messages (Default setting – receive all e-mails)

If a member finds the Online Forum inconvenient, they can still participate using the Group E-mail. Members will also be able to lookup the e-mail address of other members using the Online Forum.
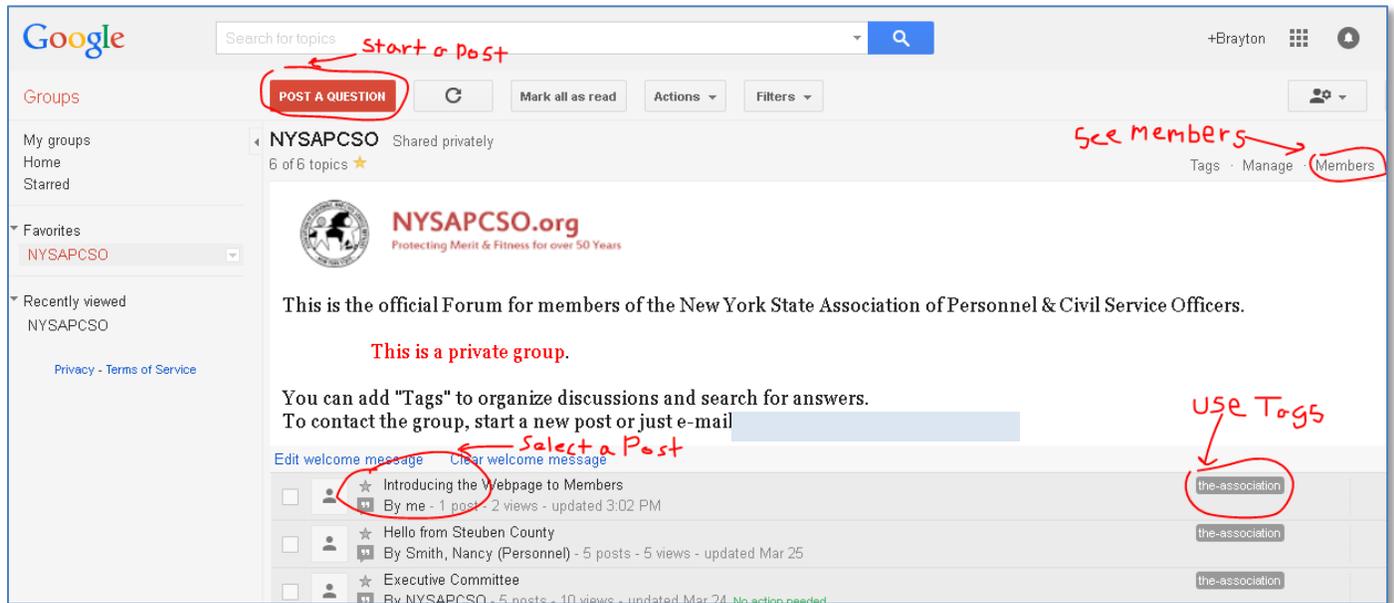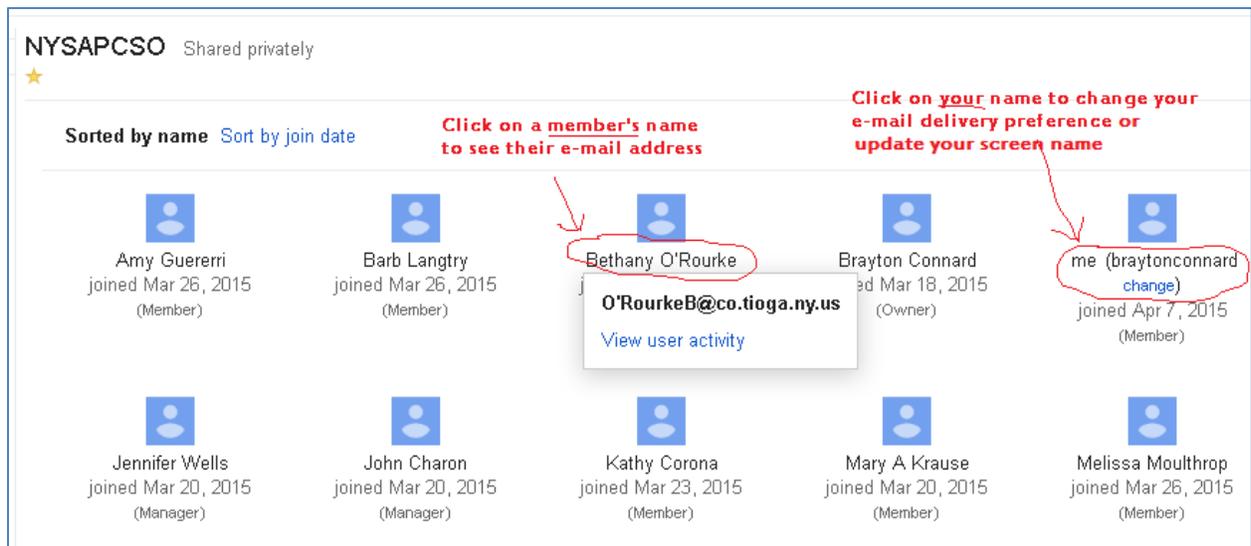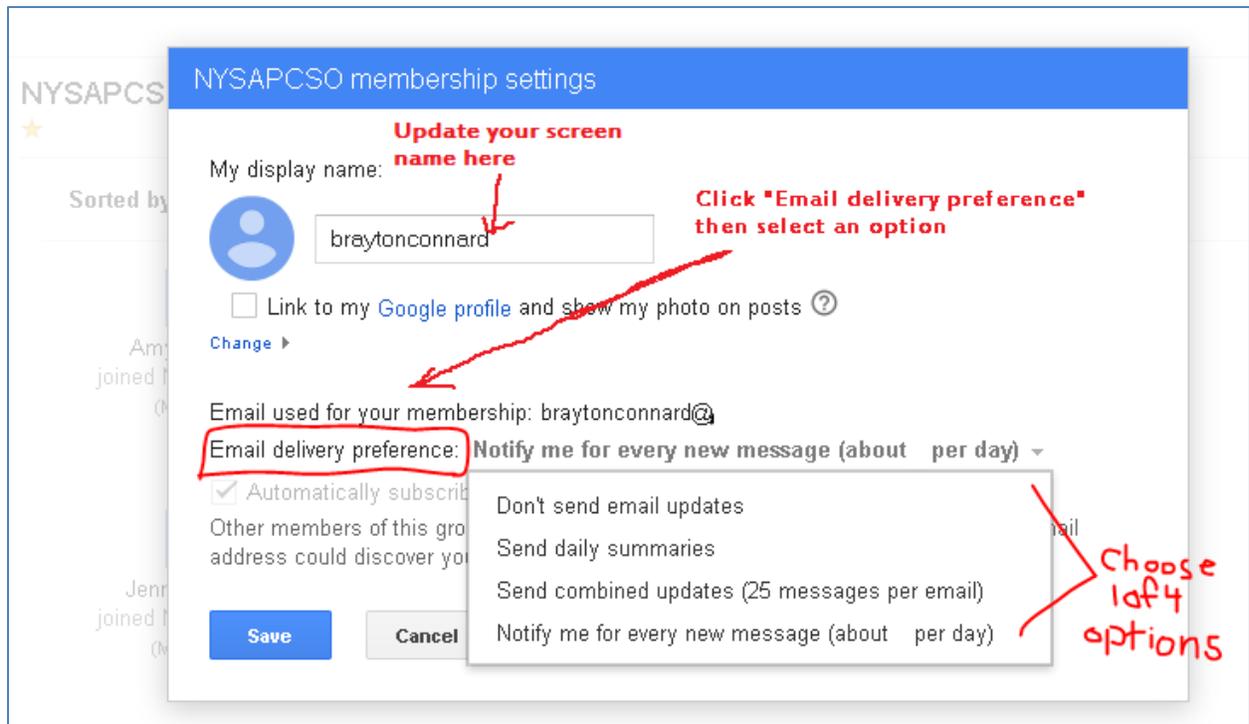
Using the Online Forum

Members can reach the Online Forum from the Members section of NYSAPCSO.org (see Figure 2) (http://nysapcso.org/membership/member-forum/) or by following a link in any Group E-mail footer (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 Member Forum section of NYSAPCSO.org
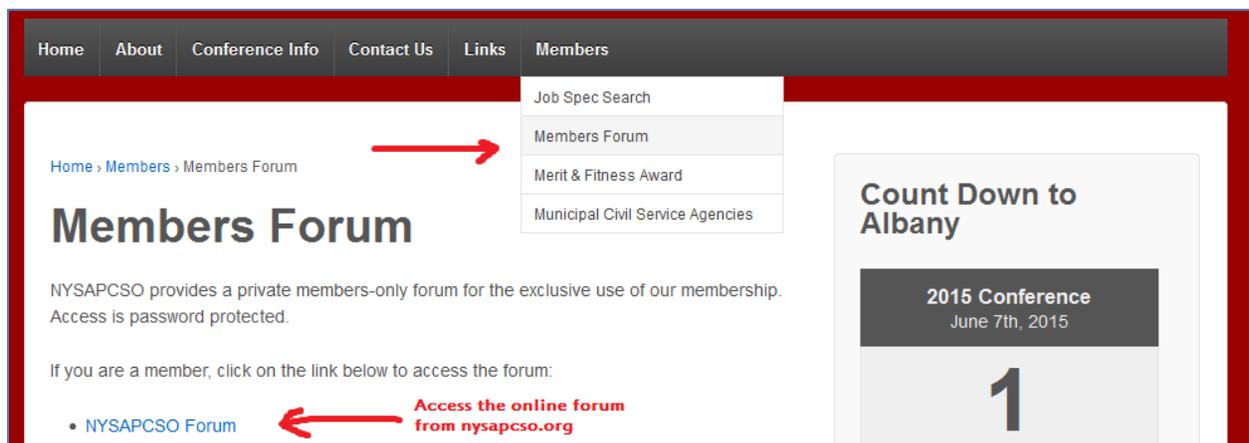
At the Online Forum home page (See Figure 3), each e-mail string sent using the Google Group e-mail address is captured as its own Post. Members can respond to the Posts or start a brand new Post. Either way, the system automatically generates an e-mail to the membership. Members can also change their delivery preference, find another member's e-mail address or search old Posts.

Figure 3 Online Forum Home Page

To change delivery options, click "Members" on the Online Forum home page (see Figure 3), then on the next screen click "change" under their own name (see Figure 4). On the next screen, the member can click "Email delivery preference" and choose one of four delivery options (see Figure 5):
  a) Don't send e-mail updates (Access messages only using the Online Forum)
  b) Send daily summaries (Receive a single e-mail daily containing all messages)
  c) Send combined updates (Receive e-mails in groups of 25 messages)
  d) Notify me of every new messages (Default setting – receive all e-mails)

**Figure 4 Members section of Online Forum**

Figure 5 Membership settings

From the NYSAPCSO membership settings page (see Figure 5) members can also update their screen name to add or format their name.

Accessing the Online Forum

To access the Online Forum, members must complete a one-time registration process that starts when they receive an e-mail from the NYSAPCSO Forum (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 E-mail invitation
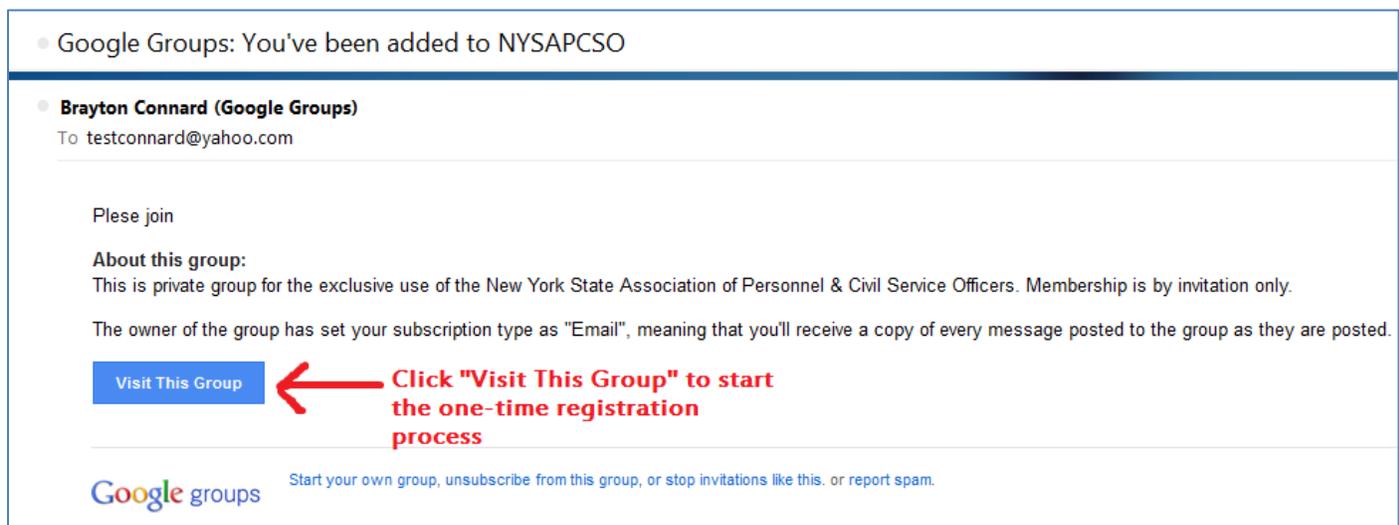
After clicking "Visit This Group" members will be redirected to the Online Forum's log-in page (see Figure 7) where they should click "Sign in to view this group".

Figure 7 Online Forum log-in page
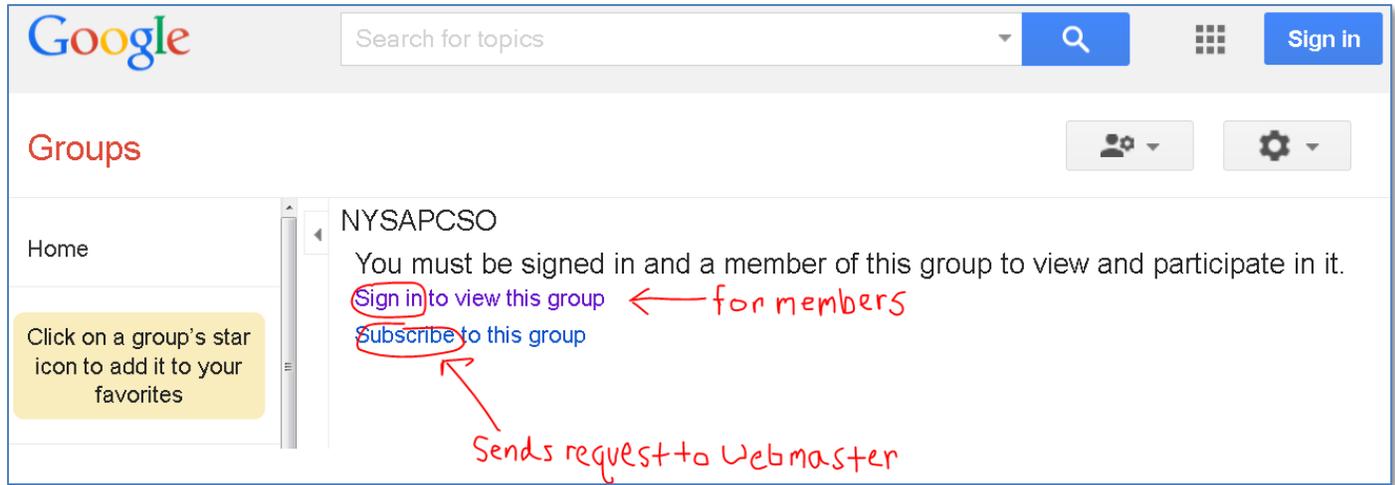
The Online Forum uses the member's work e-mail address as a unique identifier, but because it is free Google technology, members will need to establish a Google account associated with their work e-mail address. After clicking on "Sign in to view this group" members will be redirected to the Google sign-in page. There, they should click the "Create an account" (see Figure 8).

Figure 8 Google account sign-in page
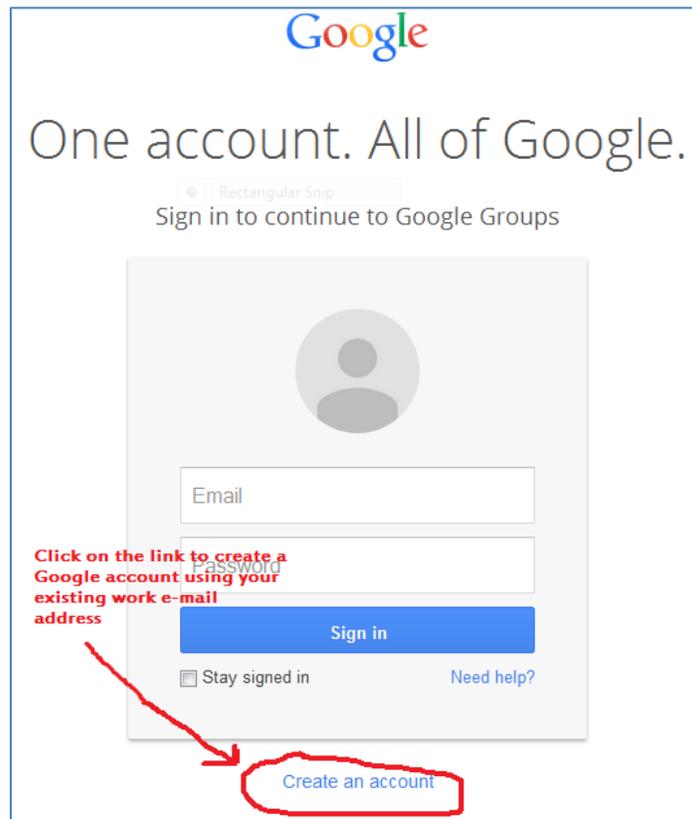
The member will then be redirected to the "Create your Google Account" page (See Figure 9) where they need to choose the option of using their current email address to create the Google Account. It is very important that the member's work e-mail address match their Google Account e-mail address.

Figure 9 Google Account creation

After the Google Account is created, the member will be required to verify their work e-mail address by using one of two methods. (See Figures 10 &11).

Figure 10 Google Account Verify now

Figure 11 Google Account verification email