

2019 - 2021
Constitution & Bylaws
Committee



Southern Division
June 2020

Greetings Southern Division Constitution and Bylaws Chairmen!

The very mention of bylaws in a board meeting is usually met with dread. It typically means either that a conflict has risen to the point where the bylaws must be consulted, or it means that someone is pointing out an area of noncompliance. As we all have been leaning more on the language in our governing documents due to Covid-19, what have we learned and where do we go from here? There have been many discussions around electronic meetings and voting. Is it legal, is it not legal, how can it be done? Below is some helpful information shared by the National Association of Parliamentarians as it relates to electronic meetings.

Except as authorized in the bylaws, the business of an organization or board can be validly transacted only at a regular or properly called meeting – that is...a single official gathering in one room or area. An electronic meeting that is properly authorized in the bylaws is treated as though it were a meeting at which all the members who are participating are actually present. Assuring that meeting electronically is allowed at the state level is the most important element when considering the legality of electronic meetings.

When Holding an Electronic Meeting

Notice for meeting must say

- How to participate in the meeting, for example
 - Provide URL for videoconference using Internet meeting software
 - Provide Telephone number and access code for teleconference (or potentially audio portion of videoconference)

Best Practices for Meetings and Social Distancing

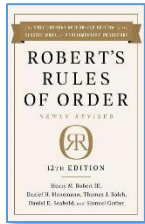
- Decide Which Items of Business are Urgent and Which Can Wait
- Focus On the Most Pressing Items First
- If Items Can Wait, Let Them Wait

Parliamentary Advice for Electronic Meetings Do's and Don'ts

(as provided by Weldon L. Merritt, PRP)

DO provide guidance on what authorities such as RONR and the organization's bylaws provide	DON'T assume that rules of parliamentary procedure are necessarily the highest authority
DO recommend seeking legal advice if authority to conduct business electronically is unclear	DON'T provide legal advice if you are not a properly licensed attorney
DO advise on best practices for conducting electronic meetings properly	DON'T assume you cannot provide services such as script writing because an electronic meeting is not explicitly authorized
DO help minimize the risk of decisions being successfully challenged	DON'T lead members to believe that they can back out of decisions later
DO provide proactive advice	DON'T feel the need to repeatedly inform about concerns
DO maintain evidence you have provided proper advice	DON'T write down anything you would not want to be public

CORRECTION



Robert's Rules of Order – 12th Edition

We incorrectly stated in the last bulletin that the release of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised -12th edition is slated for Thursday, August 27, **2021**. Although the edition will be available in August 2020 at the National Association of Parliamentarians Leadership Conference in San Antonio, the official release date is **September 1, 2020**. We apologize for the error.

Just Who Was Henry M. Robert ?

San Francisco in the mid-to-late 19th century was a chaotic place, with people of many nationalities and traditions thrown together. Meetings of any kind tended to be tumultuous, with little consistency of procedure. A U.S. Army officer, Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923), saw a need for a standard of parliamentary procedure. The first edition of the book, whose full title was Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies, was published in February 1876 by the then-Major Robert, with the short title Robert's Rules of Order placed on its cover. In his later work as an active member of several organizations, Robert discovered that members from different areas of the country had very different views regarding what the proper parliamentary rules were, and these conflicting views hampered the organizations in their work. He eventually became convinced of the need for a new manual on the subject, one which would enable many organizations to adopt the same set of rules. Henry Martyn Robert, passed away May 11, 1923 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



Get Busy with Your Camera!

Announcing a \$50.00 Gift Card Challenge



I have been busy taking photos of our team in action! Everything from ALA members reading the Constitution and Bylaws in interesting places to activities occurring at conferences and meetings. Be sure to get involved! We continue to encourage everyone to forward their great pictures of members engaging with Constitution and Bylaws in a fun and interesting way!

Call to Southern Division...as of this writing, we had no responses to the challenge issued in the May newsletter for a picture of the team reading the Constitution and Bylaws in front the assigned location in their state. Therefore, the challenge continues! We have now upped the ante for the challenge. The first to send me the photo with approved content, will receive a \$50.00 gift card to be used to support the ALA mission.

Alabama	US Space & Rocket Center (in front of sign)
Arkansas	William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum (in front of building and/or signage)
Florida	Walt Disney World (In front of Castle)
Georgia	Georgia Aquarium (in front of signage or background of aquatic life)
Kentucky	Mammoth Cave National Park (in the cave)
Louisiana	New Orleans (Bourbon Street in the background with Bourbon Street sign)
Mississippi	Vicksburg National Military Park (Main sign in background)
North Carolina	Wright Brothers National Memorial (in front of the granite monument)
Oklahoma	Tiger Safari Zoological Park (Big cats in the background)
Puerto Rico	Fort San Cristobal (Fort in the background or signage)
South Carolina	Fort Sumter (fort canons and/or signage)
Tennessee	Great Smokey Mountains National Park or Graceland (in front of identifiable signage)
Texas	The Alamo (fort and/or signage in the background)
Virginia	Mount Vernon (House and/or signage in the background)

The criteria:

- The identified monument/location must be identifiable in the photo
- The bright blue ALA Constitution and Bylaws booklet must be in the shot along with member(s) reading it

Tips:

- *Take the photo from a low angle...shooting up from the ground...catch the member and booklet with the location or signage in the background.*
- *Take several pictures and send them all. We will select the best one to use!*
- *Get your members involved. Challenge them to help you out and encourage the team to support the C&B team with getting your Department on the big screen at national convention!*

We will announce the winner once the photo has been received and it achieves the required criteria!

Although the 2019-2020 administrative year threw some curve balls at us, we continue to work hard, help our members and keep Constitution and Bylaws in the forefront of our work. Solid governing documents are critical to our success as an organization and help create an environment of goodwill. Our governing documents protect us and provide a framework for assuring we are operating appropriately and in accordance with non-profit best practices. Keep up the GREAT WORK!

Sincerely,



Trish Ward
Constitution and Bylaws
Committee
National Chairman
2019-2020

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Mrs. Callie B. Heider. (Oregon)
National Chairman
Constitution & Bylaws Committee
1931-1932

Wise Words from Past Leaders

"With so many things of vital and throbbing interest to the membership of the American Legion Auxiliary, one rather hesitates to mention a matter that might be considered of less human interest – our Constitution and Bylaws. And yet, with the great number of regular meetings of Units, county organizations among the Units and the Departments, it is very necessary that these meetings be conducted in a manner proper and dignified and altogether in harmony with the importance of this growing organization. Our organization is a growing organization, expanding in many fields of interest, and although our document of rules and regulations should be carefully guarded as to changes, it should also be somewhat elastic and meet the needs of the organization."