

# Using Parliamentary Procedure

## Meeting Conduct, continued



# Using Parliamentary Procedure

## ➤ Outline for Today

- 1. Orders of Business
  - Why have a plan?
  - What's the most important factor?
- 2. Quorum
  - What's a quorum?
  - Why is a quorum?
  - What if we don't have a quorum?
- 3. Summary



# Order of Business

➤ “Order gave each thing view...”

William Shakespeare

*King Henry VIII, Act 1, Scene 1*



# Order of Business

- The most effective organizations have a standard order in which they conduct business meetings. These plans are called by such names as:
  - Order of Business
  - Agenda (SPE's typical term)
  - Meeting Plan
  - Schedule
  - Protocol



# Order of Business

- The most important factor:
  - Have a standard, written plan and follow it,
    - In preparation for each meeting, and
    - During each meeting.

“Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.”



# Why A Written Agenda?

- To make sure that everything is covered:
  - Will you have a quorum?
  - Was the last meeting recorded properly?
    - Approval of the minutes
  - Will there be any required reports?
    - Treasurer
    - Membership
    - House
    - Etc.
  - Will there be any unfinished business?
  - Will there be new business?



# Why A Written Agenda?

- To make sure events happen in the correct sequence.

*(Note that, in the list below, each item may depend upon one or more preceding items.)*

- Required items:
  - Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum
  - Minutes
  - Reports
  - Unfinished Business
  - New Business
  - Adjournment
- Other items as desired may be added



# What's a Quorum?

“A Quorum of an assembly is such a number [of participants] as must be present in order that business can be legally transacted.”

– *Robert's Rules of Order*





# What's a Quorum?

- Unless otherwise stipulated, a quorum is a majority of the members of the group.
  - For the SPE Council, a quorum is 40% of the total Council (*Bylaw Article 6.2.3*);
  - For Society-level Committees, it is a majority of the committee (*Robert's Rules of Order*);
  - For the SPE Annual Business Meeting, it is 50 voting members or 5% of the membership, whichever is smaller (*Bylaw Article 5.3*);
  - For Division or Section Boards, it is a majority of the Board (*Robert's Rules of Order*).



# What if There is No Quorum?

- Without a quorum, the only business that can legally be conducted, completed and implemented is:
  - To take action to obtain a quorum;
  - Take a recess;
  - Fix the time to adjourn;
  - Adjourn.



# What if There is No Quorum?

- At a meeting without a quorum, tentative actions (motions) can be made and ‘passed’ but they have no effect.
  - They are invalid, and therefore can’t be implemented, until a properly-conducted meeting (with a quorum) acts to validate or “ratify” them.  
For example:
    - “Mr/s President (Chair, etc.), I move that we ratify the motion, passed at the October meeting, to provide name tags for all new visitors, starting next year.”



# Ratification

- The ratification motion is like any other main motion: it requires a second, and it's debatable.
  - Note that the debate is to be about whether or not the original motion should be ratified, not the specific wording of the original motion.
    - The original motion can't be amended at this point.
  - If the original motion requires a supermajority (e.g. 2/3 majority) to pass, then the ratification motion requires the same supermajority.



## Ratification, part 2

- If it's desired to amend the original motion (*e.g.*, to have blue name tags, or to start providing name tags immediately), the ratification should be voted down and a new motion offered.
- If the ratification motion passes, then the motion made at the October meeting becomes valid in accordance with the original motion.



# Meeting Conduct, continued

## ➤ In Summary:

- Know what you want to accomplish in the meeting (What's the objective of the meeting- routine, special, etc.?)
- Have a plan, and write it down – follow a standard order.
- Make sure you have enough members of the group to conduct business (Quorum) or know how you'll handle it if you don't.
- Keep good minutes (...but that's for another session)

