

# A View from the Judges' Table



The following information is offered for those interested in parliamentary procedure – whether or not you use it for competitive purposes. While it is not advised to study or perform to a test, this information is organized according to the Judge's Rating Sheet for Parliamentary Procedure as found elsewhere on this HOSA website.

## Part A. Proper Order of Business

**Call to order.** The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) does not make specific mention of the use of a gavel when calling a meeting to order, but most parliamentarians using RONR (10th ed) agree that one firm rap of the gavel is sufficient before announcing, "The meeting will come to order" or "The meeting will be in order."

RONR (10th ed.) p. 24, I. 17-18. (The footnote on page 25 states, "The order of business is separate and distinct from the procedure of calling a meeting to order, which is not a part of the order of business.")

**Reading and approval of minutes.** Minutes are the record of proceedings of a deliberative assembly. For the complete content of minutes refer to RONR (10th ed.) p.452-454. The secretary signs the minutes, but the practice of using Respectfully submitted on the minutes or reports is outdated. Proper wording by the presiding officer when seeking to approve the minutes is, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" (Since an addition of information is a correction, the phrase 'additions or corrections' is not proper.)

**Treasurer's report.** This report may consist of a verbal statement of the cash balance on hand – or of this balance less outstanding obligations. Such a report requires no action by the assembly. RONR (10th ed.) p. 459 I. 27-30

**Committee report(s).** A report of a subordinate board or committee is an official statement formally adopted by, and submitted in the name of, the reporting body, informing the parent assembly of action taken or recommended, or information obtained. RONR (10th ed.) p.485 I.10-14. Reports are generally not adopted. RONR (10th ed.) p.490 I.10-21

**Unfinished business.** This is business carried over from the previous meeting via committee or postponement. The presiding officer should know if there is any unfinished business to come before the assembly. Several competitive teams improperly use the motion Lay on the Table to carry business over to the next meeting. Lay on the Table enables the assembly to lay the pending question aside temporarily when something else of immediate urgency has arisen. Please refer to RONR (10th ed.) p.201-210.

**New business.** This is the time to bring a new item of business before the assembly through a main motion.

**Adjournment.** When all business is completed the meeting is adjourned. The adjournment may be signaled by a single rap of the gavel, if desired. RONR (10th ed) p.234 I. 16-17. (While necessary for closing a meeting, adjournment is not part of the order of business.)

## Part B. Motions.

For competitive purposes, each team is assigned six (6) specific motions it must use. For a judge to give maximum credit for these motions, the following items must be considered: making the motion, seconding, stating the question by the chair, debate on the question, putting the question, and announcement of the voting result. A judge



may not credit a team with a high score if a motion is made but carried no further because it does not receive a second, since the team has not demonstrated that it knows the proper action for such a motion.

As a judge it would be interesting to see teams use 'general' or 'unanimous consent.' RONR (10th ed) p 51-54. My recommendation for using general consent would be for approval of the minutes or when adjourning the meeting.

Proper verbiage for the presiding officer to use when the minutes have been read is "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" (Pause briefly to allow for corrections. If no one offers a correction, proceed.) "If there are no objections, the minutes are approved as read." Again pause briefly, and if there are no objections, state, "The minutes are approved as read." If someone objects to approving the minutes as read they say, "I object," and the chair will then call on that member for a correction to the minutes.

To adjourn a meeting using general consent the chair says, "Without objection, the meeting is adjourned." Pause briefly to be sure there is no further business to come before the assembly and then say, "The meeting is adjourned."

For competitive teams who operate under a strict timeline, as well as for regular business meetings, general consent is a means of speeding things along. No member's rights are infringed upon, yet this process is much quicker than asking if the assembly is ready for the question, taking the vote, and announcing the result.

## Part C. General Parliamentary Procedure.

The quality of debate among HOSA competitive teams is generally very good; there are innovative comments, and the chair knows to take alternate views. All the members have ample opportunity to speak, so there is no need for everyone to jump up and address the chair at the same time. As a team, you are familiar with each other and know what you are saying, but sometimes it is difficult for the judges to hear you, so please speak loudly and clearly.

Most of the presiding officers are very knowledgeable and do a terrific job of guiding the teams, but once in a while the chair forgets to stand when presiding – perhaps you are too informal when practicing? Occasionally a team develops nervous giggles. No judge will deduct points if the chair calls a short recess or 'stand at ease' so the team can get themselves under control. RONR (10th ed) p.80 l. 29. Use it as an opportunity to show your knowledge of another parliamentary motion!

I have been asked how a team is judged if it makes a mistake and corrects it immediately. My answer is that as a judge we are looking for your knowledge of parliamentary procedure. The competitive team shows its knowledge by making the proper correction.

Terry Biles  
National Association of Parliamentarians

## HOSA Members Participate in National Parliamentary Procedure Convention

One of HOSA's valued partners, the National Association of Parliamentarians, held its 34th National Biennial Convention on September 21-24, 2003 at the Hyatt Regency Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas. HOSA National Officer, Kay Speer, Postsecondary/Collegiate Board Representative, represented HOSA at the event. The HOSA parliamentary procedure team from Northside Health Careers High School performed a demonstration for the convention delegates.

HOSA wishes to thank Terry Biles, RP, NAP Youth Committee Liaison for HOSA, and all the registered parliamentarians who annually serve as judges for the HOSA Parliamentary Procedure competitive event.

HOSA members from  
Northside Health Careers  
High School



Kay Speer addresses the delegates during the Opening Session of the NAP convention while Alice Ragona, NAP President, looks on.



Partnerships