

# **EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**

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# INTRODUCTION

- Frances Jackson, PhD, RN, PRP
- Lifelong resident of the city of Detroit
- Graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor
- Registered nurse and advanced practice nurse
- Worked at several Detroit-area hospitals, home nurse, substance abuse nurse, clinical nurse specialist at Hospice of Southeastern Michigan
- Joined the faculty at Oakland University School of Nursing in 1982. Retired in 2012.

# INTRODUCTION

- Initiated into Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. on March 14, 1970
- Served as the Regional Syntaktes for Central Region
- National Parliamentarian on the National Board of Directors
- National Parliamentarian for NPHC
- Joined National Association of Parliamentarians in 1997
- Passed the Registration Exam to become a Registered Parliamentarian
- Passed the Professional Qualifying Course to become a Professional Registered Parliamentarian
- Married for 46 years to Frank W. Jackson, III (1906), an attorney in private practice. Have 2 children and 4 grandchildren. My daughter is National Parliamentarian.

# GROUND RULES

- No question is stupid
- If you don't understand something, chances are someone else is equally confused.
- I prefer that you ask questions while we're on a subject that needs clarification. I don't have a problem with being interrupted.
- By the end of this presentation, you should have a better understanding on how to have effective meetings.

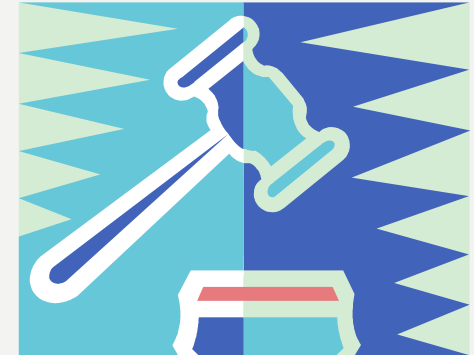


# SKIT A

- We're going to have a before and after skit.
- There are 16 mistakes in Skit A. Some mistakes are repeated, so only count them once.
- Write down the mistakes in Skit A. I'll review the 16 mistakes before we do Skit B, which will correct all the mistakes in Skit A.
- Skit B showing how proper use of parliamentary procedure can improve your meetings.
- I need 2 men and 2 women, who can speak out, and do a little impromptu acting.

# BASIC PRINCIPLE OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

- Parliamentary law exists to:
  - Enforce the will of the majority
    - Protect the rights of the minority
      - Ensure justice for all
  - Almost all motions/principles/rules in RONR are based on the above. When you are in doubt about what to do, or if your bylaws or Robert's rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) do not cover a specific situation, the above principle should be your guide.



# WHY WE NEED PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- “An association of men who will not quarrel with one another is a thing that has never yet existed from the greatest confederacy of nations, down to a town meeting or a vestry.”
- Thomas Jefferson
- With parliamentary procedure, the rules are known, accessible, and don't change just because the organization changes officers.
- Provides consistency and fairness over time.

# AGENDA

- I. Adoption of Agenda
- II. Adoption of the minutes
- III. Officer Reports
- IV. Committee Reports
- V. Unfinished Business (never use the term “old business”)
- VI. New Business
- VII. Good and Welfare
- VIII. Adjournment

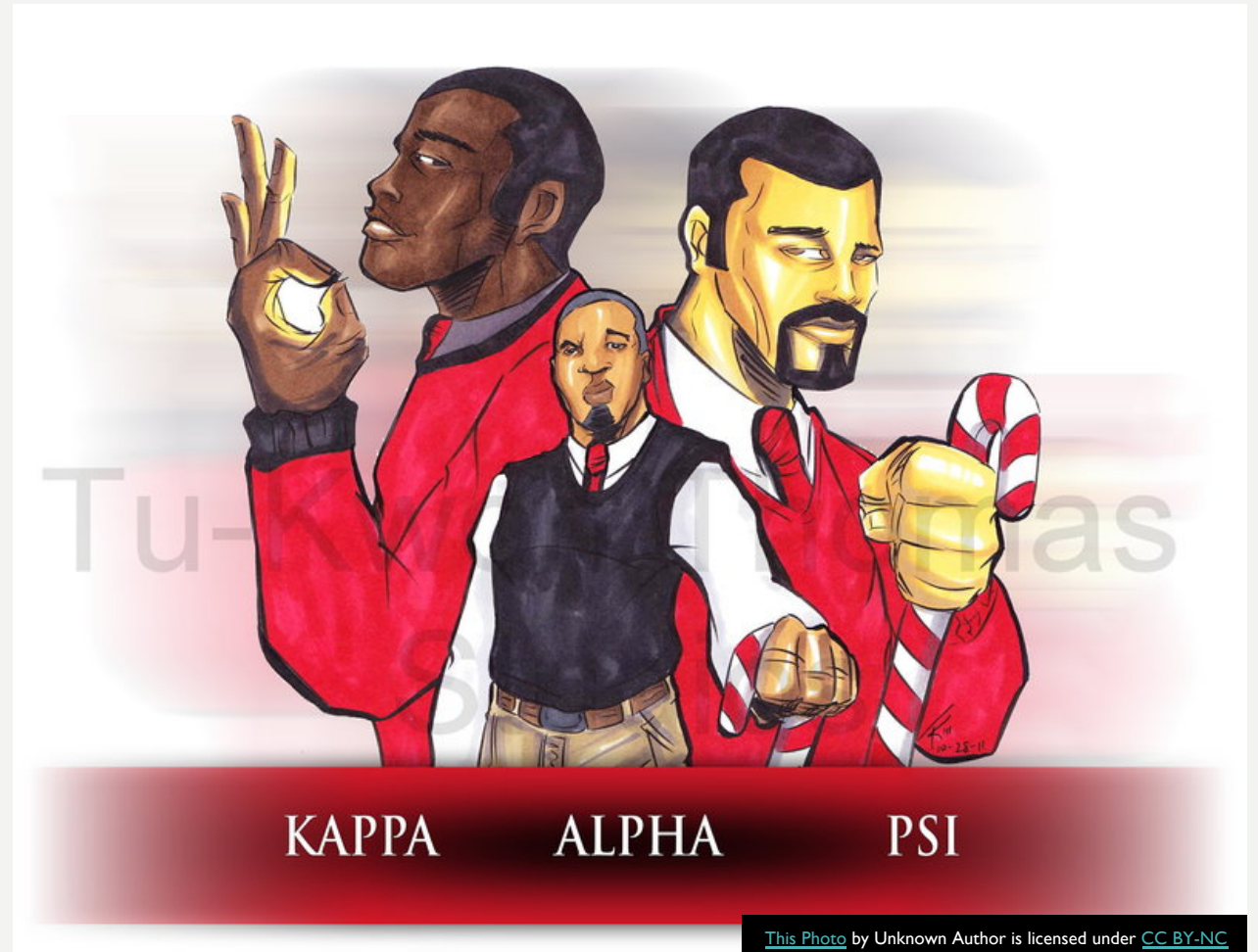


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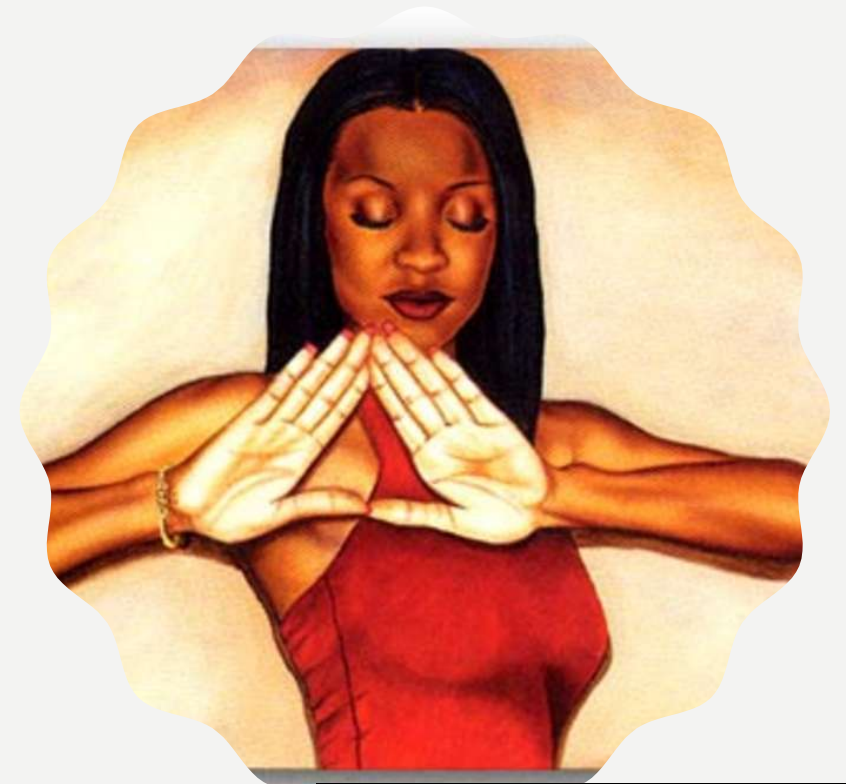
# THE AGENDA

- RONR states that God is first.
- If you open your meeting with prayer, pray first.
- Notice I said prayer, not an inspirational message.
- If your organization has a required opening, e.g., a pledge, follow those rules.



# AGENDA, CONTINUED

- Do not put “Call to order” on the agenda.
- Do not put establishment of a quorum on the agenda.
- Once the presiding officer confirms a quorum is present, simply call the meeting to order.
- Organizations can adopt their own agenda format; they are not required to follow RONR



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# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS


- Officer Responsibilities:
  - The President
    - should always have an agenda, which is then subject to approval by the assembly.
    - should speak to his/her chairs prior to the meeting to determine who has a report and who does not.
    - One of the most important responsibilities of the President is to make sure people know the motion that is before the assembly. This is also the responsibility of the parliamentarian.
    - Cannot speak in debate AND preside!!!!
- Ask for those who are in favor to vote aye and those opposed to vote no. Do not say “use the same sign.”
- Do not ask for abstentions!!! Abstentions are a non vote. People have the right not to vote, but there is no need to count it.



# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- President, continued:
  - Make sure that all remarks are addressed to the chair. Do not allow members to address each other. This is true for officer reports as well. You ask if there are any questions, not the officer.
  - Do not allow members to just complain **if** they are not speaking in debate. Ask them if they are making a motion. If not, advise that their remarks are out of order.
  - Sometimes members want to discuss a motion and give rationale for it before they make the motion. A very brief explanation can be made but if it goes on too long, interrupt the member and ask him/her to make a motion.
  - The maker of the motion has first right to speak on the motion.
  - If possible, and if you know how the members feel, alternate between those in favor and those opposed. Or, if the first couple of speakers are in favor, ask for someone who is opposed to speak next.
  - When the President appoints a committee, whoever is named first is automatically the Chair of the committee.

# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- Many items of a **non-controversial** nature can be handled by unanimous consent.
  - HOWEVER, the President must make the statement, “If there is no objection,” then pause so someone can object. If no one objects, can then state that the motion is adopted by unanimous consent.
  - This can be done with approval of the minutes, it can be done when you are ready to adjourn, it can be done with many items as long as the issue is *not* controversial and the President pauses to give members a chance to object to unanimous consent.
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# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- The recording secretary may distribute the minutes ahead of the meeting, and if everyone has received them, can dispense with the reading of the minutes. This should be a standing rule.
- However, the minutes must have the words DRAFT as a header or footer or as a watermark, to indicate that these are not the approved minutes.
- Once the minutes are approved, the word “approve” with the secretary’s signature and the date they were approved are added and the word draft is removed.



# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- All officers making reports must have a copy for the secretary to affix to the minutes. If they don't bring it with them, then they must upload it later. The secretary does NOT summarize officer reports. The draft minutes should state, "This report is attached to the official copy of the minutes." Any motions made as a result of the report ARE placed in the minutes.
- Remember, if a committee is making a motion, no second is required unless it's a committee of just one person.
- Individual officers CANNOT move adoption of their own reports.
- Consider having limits on debate in your Standing Rules. If your bylaws, special rules of order, or Standing Rules are silent on this, RONR states each member gets 10 minutes to debate.



# STANDING RULES

- Standing Rules (SR) are those administrative procedures that you don't want in the bylaws.
- Bylaws should contain only those procedures which should require more than one meeting to change and more than majority vote to adopt.
- You can suspend SR that relate to conduct during a meeting; you cannot suspend your bylaws.
- You can amend SRs without previous notice.
- SRs are good for such items as: noting the time and place of the meeting, hospitality guidelines, financial procedures (bounced checks), dues, delegate policies, etc.





# RECORDING SECRETARY

- To prepare in advance, the order of business for use by the presiding officer, showing in the exact order and under the correct headings, all matters known in advance that are scheduled to come up.
- In the absence of the president and vice-president, to call the meeting to order and immediately conduct the election of a president pro tem

# ROLE, CONTINUED

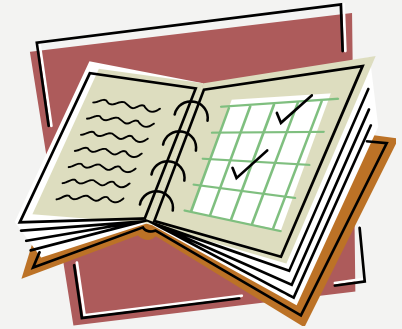
- Have available at each meeting such items as extra agendas, blank ballots and other supplies that may be needed.
- With the president, sign all official acts, orders and proceedings of the Council.
- When the bylaws, Standing Rules, etc. are updated, make those changes in the appropriate documents unless the bylaws give this responsibility to another officer.

# THE MINUTES

- Reading and approval of the minutes
  - The secretary will read the minutes. This is done standing.
  - If the minutes are sent to members in advance, the reading of them can be waived.
  - After the minutes are read, the Chair then asks, “Are there any corrections to the minutes?” After corrections, state “If there is no objection,” state either, “the minutes are approved as read (or distributed if not read), or, “the minutes are approved as corrected.”
  - If a material mistake is made in correcting the minutes, minutes can be corrected, even years later.



# THE MINUTES



- The minutes:
  - Are not a transcript. Don't try and capture the comments of individual members.
    - The minutes should mainly capture what was done rather than what was said.
  - All main motions in their final, adopted form and the maker of the motion must be recorded and the outcome of the motion (adopted or lost).
  - The name of the seconder does not go in the minutes.
  - Never use the words I, we, us, or our.
  - Always start the minutes with the date, time, place the meeting started, and whether or not the President and recording Secretary were present.

# THE MINUTES

- Instead of trying to recreate verbatim minutes, instead, state, “there was a long debate on the motion to increase the dues.” If you feel you have to include comments, state that major issues included.....and summarize those without recording who any names.
- If you are not sure about the language of a motion, ask the maker of the motion to give you the motion in writing.
- The official copy of the minutes must have all reports attached. If reports were distributed at the meeting, they do not have to be uploaded with the draft minutes.
- Minutes do not become the official record of the proceedings of a society until they have been approved, marked approved, and dated and signed by the secretary.



# BODY OF THE MINUTES

- There is a separate paragraph for each subject.
  - Officers
  - Executive Board (given by the secretary)
  - Standing Committees
  - Ad hoc and/or special committees

# BODY OF THE MINUTES

- Motions
  - **FINAL** wording of all main motions (with any amendments) or the motion to reconsider and whether each motion was adopted or lost, or temporarily disposed of; if a motion is withdrawn, that is not recorded.
  - Motions to bring a main question back before the Council
  - The complete substance of oral committee reports

# CORRECTION OF THE MINUTES

- The minutes do not include items identified as corrections when corrections are called for.
- When correcting the minutes, either put the correction in red in the margin, or underline or bold corrections so people will know the corrections have been made.



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# CORRECTION OF MINUTES

- Alaina Jackson

Soror [Frances Jackson] moved that.....

- Alpha Sigma Chapter

[Alpha Rho Sigma] chapter will host the next Boule

# LAST PARAGRAPH

- The hour of adjournment
- The minutes are closed with the signature and title of the person writing the minutes.
- The president may sign the minutes, if the organization prefers both the secretary and president to sign them.
- The words, *respectfully submitted*, are no longer used.

# MINUTES, OTHER

- The name and subject of a guest speaker is included in the minutes, but not a summary of their remarks.
- No mention of what *did not* occur in the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.
  - For example, the secretary would *not record* that there was no unfinished business, that a committee had no report or that there were no announcements.

# MINUTES, OTHER

- I strongly suggest that each council, each organization develop a template on how you want your minutes written.
  - If you don't do this, you will end up with minutes in multiple formats, missing information, and useless information.
  - Also suggest you develop a system to separately retrieve important/substantive motions so that you don't have to:
    - remember when a motion was adopted or
    - read through several years worth of minutes to find an important motion.
- Reduces the need for institutional memory

# OFFICER REPORTS

- Reports of officers
  - Officers are called upon in the order they are listed in the bylaws.
  - Any officer who does not have a report should let the president know before the meeting.
  - Officers cannot move adoption of their own report.



- Financial reports that have not been audited are never adopted. After the treasurer or financial secretary gives their report, the President asks if there are any questions, and once the questions have been asked, states, “the report will be filed for audit.” This is done without a motion. The only action that can be taken with a financial report is to file it for audit. What you adopt at your annual meeting, is the auditor’s report.
- Sometimes committees or even officers will make a report and there are no recommendations or actions that can be taken. Do NOT make the motion to receive the report. The report was received when it was heard. If there are no recommendations, simply thank the officer/member and indicate she/he can be seated. The exception is a history report. A motion to accept the historian’s report is appropriate.

# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Standing committees are called upon in the order in which they are listed in the bylaws.
- The president should know before the meeting which Chair has a report. Only call upon those who have reports.
- A committee bringing a motion does not require a second as long as it is a committee comprised of more than one person. “By direction of the X Committee, I move that.....”



# UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Unfinished Business
  - The president should know which business is unfinished. Never ask if there is unfinished business.
  - If the meetings are not separated by more than a quarterly interval, any questions still pending from the previous meeting are taken up here.





- The Chair asks, “Is there any new business?”
- Members can introduce new items of business or can move to take from the table any matter that is on the table.
- After new business has been disposed of, the Chair can call for Good of the Order, General Good and Welfare or Open Forum. Items under these headings can vary in character but relate to suggestions for improving the organization. For example, a member might make the statement that the bylaws haven’t been reviewed in 10 years and this is an issue that should be taken up this year.
- Next are announcements
- Last is Program., if you have a speaker or guest speaker. Although the program is usually placed at the end of the order of business, it can, by special rule or practice be received before the minutes are read.
- The president can state, “If there’s no objection,” then pause – “we are adjourned.”

# NEW BUSINESS

# PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS!!

- For some of you, some of the information presented is a real eye-opener.
- You are eager to let your organizations know ALL the things they are doing wrong.
- In my experience, it is a HUGE mistake to try and re-make Rome in a day. You will get push back if you try to make too many corrections at one time.
- Instead, select some low hanging fruit, and start with a couple of things that are really important.

# MY CONTACT INFORMATION

- My email address is:
- [fcjackson@aol.com](mailto:fcjackson@aol.com)
- Make sure you put NPHC or the name of your organization in the subject line or I won't open it!!!!
- I generally respond within 24 hours to all emails. If you don't hear from me in 48 hours, either call me or re-send the email.