PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

And The Winner is...

Years from now you may not remember the details, but chances are you will recall something about the biggest mistake in the history of the Academy Awards.

If you did not watch the 89th Academy Awards Program on February 26, 2017, you probably saw, heard or read about the horrendous, and embarrassingly awkward error during the final minutes of the show. A PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) representative mistakenly gave the wrong category envelope to one of the presenters. "La La Land" was incorrectly announced as the best-picture winner, when Moonlight actually took home the prize.

PwC has tabulated the votes and monitored the awards distribution for the Academy Awards for 83 years. It has procedures and checks and balances to avoid such blunders. From a security standpoint, the mishap should never have happened. The names of the winners are kept in sealed envelopes. The accountants (ballot counters) hold and maintain the envelopes throughout the evening and hand them to the presenters just before they walk onstage.

What caused the debacle? Did the accountants fail to do what they were paid and expected to do. One explanation is that one of the accountants was "distracted" -- tweeting photographs of celebrities.

Distractions occur at meetings and come in a variety of forms. In its more than 87 years, the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) has always been aware of the importance of rules and order, handling one motion at a time, being attentive to details, having governing documents or adopting rules to handle problems or potential problems.

Some common distractions are noise (external and internal and members engaging in personal conversations), ubiquitous use of electronic devices, and the environment. If the lighting is poor or the room is stuffy, too hot or too cold, or has an unpleasant odor, members will reflect on their own discomfort, rather than the training or business being conducted.

Additionally, if something else is attracting a member’s attention or the member is taking notice of someone else, the member changes his focus and becomes engaged in the object or person contending for his/her attention.

Among the best solutions for disarming distractions are following rules of logic and order, and knowing how and what motion to use ( e.g., how to get the meeting back on track or ask a question), and being aware of your rights and responsibilities. Further, familiarity with the parliamentary authority (e.g., RONR), special rules of order, standing rules, and policies and procedures are a must.

If all members are knowledgeable about parliamentary procedure, proper decorum, and the rules of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, there will be no reason for blunders to occur, or the Chair or Sergeant-Arms to take measures to ensure that order is enforced.
MEETINGS VS. SESSIONS by DONALD GARRETT, PRP

Members studying for the RP exam know how particular the wording of the test questions can be. Sometimes we understand the concept with 100% clarity, but choosing the correct answer to the test question requires knowing the exact wording in Robert’s (for example, knowing when “Presiding Officer” is a more suitable answer choice than “Chairman”). Part III of the RP exam tests Meetings, Sessions, and Related Procedures. Do you know the difference between “meeting” and “session?”

RONR defines meeting as “a single official gathering of...members in one room or area to transact business” (p. 81). The definition of session is “a meeting or series of connected meetings devoted to a single order of business, program, agenda, or announced purpose, in which—when there is more than one meeting—each succeeding meeting is scheduled with a view to continuing business at the point where it was left off at the previous meeting” (p. 82).

This is an important distinction because at conventions it is a common misnomer to refer to the different meetings as sessions (e.g. the Opening Session, General Session II, General Session III, etc.). However, for the technically correct answers to the RP exam, think of a meeting as a single unit. Hopefully keeping this in mind will allow you to not miss points on questions where you fully understand the concept.

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

The month of March, which was Women’s History month, has come and gone. Let's continue to remember, honor, applaud and celebrate the achievements, accomplishments and dedication of women -- trailblazers and unsung heroes -- every month of the year. Women have done much, often unrecognized, to contribute to the richness and value of the United States of America’s history and all facets of life. Despite untold trials and tribulations, discrimination and inequality, they remain steadfast and refuse to give up the fight. While much has been done to recognize women's rights and close the pay gap, much work remains to be done at home and throughout the world to protect the rights of girls and women.

The National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) has been blessed and honored to have had many strong and knowledgeable women, who with the support of spouses, and families and friends, have served as president and in leadership positions at the state and national levels. Their vision, hard work and leadership have strengthen NAP, and helped pave the path to provide greater opportunities for others.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Gifts do not have to be monetary and often the best gifts are not. There are many ways to show that you care; e.g., a smile, random act of kindness, plant cuttings, sharing of information, celebrating another success or being there to hold another's hand. How many gifts will you give today?

EIGHT GIFTS THAT DO NOT COST A CENT (Author Unknown)

1. The Gift of Listening: But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listen.

2. The Gift of Affection: Be generous with appropriate hugs kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.
3. The Gift of Laughter: Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

4. The Gift of a Written Note: It can be a simple, "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime, and may even change a life.

5. The Gift of a Compliment: A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

6. The Gift of a Favor: Every day go out of your way to do something kind

7. The Gift of Solitude: There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

8. The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition: The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone; really it's not that hard to say, "Hello" or "Thank You."

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

NOVAMAGS' Meetings: The next two meetings are Thursday, May 25, and Thursday, June 29. Both meetings are at the Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield, VA 22150, telephone, (703) 451.8055.


NOVAMAGS does not traditionally meet in July and August.