

# Florida State Association of PARLIAMENTARIANS



## ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

By Phyllis Wood, PRP (deceased)

### What if?

- The presiding officer has called for a majority vote when I am sure the vote should have been a 2/3 vote.
- The presiding officer has allowed one member to speak four times although I am sure we have adopted rules that state we may speak only twice to any motion.
- The presiding officer has allowed two members to speak longer than the two minutes which we have adopted in our Special Rules of Order.
- One member just called another member a name which was not nice.
- A member is not showing proper respect to the presiding officer nor to the other members.
- The presiding officer just shut off all debate and further amendments because a member hollered "question" from his seat.

**In every case, you, as a member, can rise and make a point of order even when another has the floor and can interrupt the speaker if the point must be made at that time. A point of order must be made when the breach occurs. The member rises, and without waiting for recognition states "I rise to a point of order (or) I call the gentleman to order (or) I make the point of order that..." The chair states, "State your point" and must rule on whether the point is well taken or not well taken. If the point involved the presiding officer and he knows he was out of order, he immediately takes steps to follow the correct rules. He will ask the assembly if a member may speak more times or longer than the rules permit (using unanimous consent) and he will warn members who are speaking improperly. (RONR 23:1, 23:2(3), 23:12-16.)**

What if?

I made a point of order and the presiding officer rules that the point was not well taken.

**You can appeal from the decision of the Chair. It will need a second. The Chair states the appeal in this manner: "Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the assembly?" The assembly is asked to vote aye if they think the Chair (presiding officer) is correct or if they think the member is correct. An appeal takes a majority vote; however a tie vote sustains the Chair. (RONR 24:3(7), 24:9-13)**

What if?

I have exhausted my right to debate (our rules state two times of two minutes each).

# Florida State Association of PARLIAMENTARIANS



**If the motion to postpone indefinitely is in order (no higher ranking subsidiary motions pending), you may wish to make this motion and it brings the merits of the main motion back into debate. You can make a request for information, "I have a request for information." Chair states "State your question." You must be careful not to debate, but in the receipt of information, sometimes your goal might be achieved. (RONR 11:2-5, 33:6-10)**

## **What if?**

I want to make a motion to refer a motion to a committee but I am not sure if the motion to refer is in order.

**You can rise to a parliamentary inquiry "I rise to a parliamentary inquiry." Chair states "State your question." Chair will give an opinion on whether the motion is in order or not. (RONR 33:3-5)**

## **What if?**

The opinion of the Chair was that the motion to refer to a committee was not in order. I really think that it is.

**You can rise, address the Chair, wait to be recognized and make the motion to refer to a committee. This must be seconded. Now the Chair must rule that the motion is out of order. After the ruling, you can appeal from the decision of the Chair. (RONR 33:5)**

## **What if?**

We do have an adopted order of business but the presiding officer has allowed items of business before they were scheduled to come on this order of business. We are talking about all sorts of things, not a part of the business at hand.

**You may call for the orders of the day. This does not need a second, is not debatable nor amendable. The presiding officer must return to the regular order of business or the assembly by a 2/3 vote can permit the order to be put aside. (RONR 18:1, 18:4(5)(6)(7).)**

## **What if?**

It is impossible to hear what is going on in the back of this room--the door is open and there is noise outside--in addition it is so hot we are having difficulty breathing.

**You can rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly. Chair states "State your question". The Chair asks someone to close the door and perhaps turn the air conditioner to a lower setting. There may be a choice between closing the door, which will make the room hotter but less noisy (rooms without air conditioning) and the assembly may be asked to make the choice. (RONR 19:1-2,**

# Florida State Association of PARLIAMENTARIANS



19:6(7), 19:9-10)

## **What if?**

I made a motion that I thought sounded good but after I stated it, I wish I hadn't. It was seconded and the Chair has stated the motion.

**You can request permission to withdraw the motion. The Chair will usually use unanimous consent by stating "If there is no objection, the motion will be withdrawn". If nobody objects, the motion is withdrawn. If someone objects, he puts the question of withdrawing the motion to the assembly. If the assembly, by a majority vote, allows the motion to be withdrawn, it is. If there is not a majority, the motion remains. (RONR 33:11-19)**

This article was written in 2004 and has been updated to the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of RONR. Phyllis Wood was a Past President of FSAP and also served as parliamentarian for several other FSAP presidents. She was a prolific writer and an extraordinary teacher of parliamentary procedure.