

BRAINTEASERS #4 - ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER Q&A

Jim Slaughter, JD, CPP-T, PRP

OLDER BRAINTEASERS HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO THE CURRENT *ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED (12TH EDITION)*

For current parliamentary procedure brainteasers, visit www.jimslaughter.com/brainteasers

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, there are two types of questions of privilege. What are they, and what is their order of importance?

Answer: "Questions of privilege are of two types: (1) those relating to the privileges of the assembly as a whole; and (2) questions of personal privilege. If the two come into competition, the former take precedence over the latter." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 19:7.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, "a member who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has _____ his right to debate that question for that day."

Answer: "Exhausted." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 4:28.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: You are attending a meeting that closely follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. During debate, a member raises a Point of Order that a rule of debate has been violated. Upon the member resuming his seat after making the point of order, what should the chair do?

Answer: "The chair then rules whether 'the point of order is well taken' or 'is not well taken,' stating briefly his reasons, which are recorded in the minutes. If the chair desires, he can review the parliamentary situation without leaving the chair, but standing, before giving his ruling." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 23:15.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: What is the term applied to a committee that is appointed with the authority to take all the steps necessary to carry out its instructions, according to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)?

Answer: "A committee appointed 'with power.'" *RONR (12th Ed.)* 50:5.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: You are a delegate at a convention that follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. Two bylaws proposals have been noticed for consideration concerning dues--one to set the annual dues at \$100 per member and one to have varying amounts of annual dues based on membership factors. These two proposals represent different approaches to solve the same problem. After extensive debate, the proposal to set the annual dues at \$100 per member passes. Does the other bylaws proposal still need to be considered?

Answer: Yes. "The rule that, when a main motion is adopted, no other conflicting main motion is thereafter in order is not applicable to the motion to amend the bylaws, since several notices of proposals representing different approaches to the same problem may have been given, and all such bylaw amendments are entitled to be considered." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 57:1(4).

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: You are attending a meeting that closely follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. A series of independent resolutions dealing with different subjects has been offered in one motion (and must be divided upon the demand of a single member). Instead of dividing the question, the assembly decides to consider the material seriatim (by paragraph). Later during the debate, a member moves to divide the question. Is the motion to divide the question in order?

Answer: No. "If it has been decided to consider divisible material seriatim, even if the material was divisible on the demand of a single member, it is too late to move or demand a division of the question." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 28:9.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: Complete the following sentence using Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition): "Except for the corporate charter in an incorporated society, the _____ (as the single, combination-type instrument is called in this book) comprise the highest body of rules in societies as normally established today."

Answer: "bylaws." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 2:12.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* is your parliamentary authority. A roll-call vote has been ordered, and the roll is being called in alphabetical order. If you do not wish to vote in the affirmative or negative, how should you answer?

Answer: "If he does not wish to vote, he answers *present* (or *abstain*)." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 45:48.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: You are a member of a committee and your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. The chairman of the committee refuses to call a meeting. Is there any action you can take under RONR to force a meeting?

Answer: "When a committee has been appointed, its chairman (or first-named member temporarily acting—see 13:18) should call it together. If some members of the committee believe that the chairman has failed to call this initial meeting or any subsequent meeting when necessary, a meeting of the committee may be called by any two of its members, unless (such as for very large committees) the assembly's rules or instructions prescribe, or empower the committee itself to require, a larger number." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 50:21.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* (and except in a small board or a committee), when should the presiding officer stand?

Answer: "Except in a small board or a committee, the presiding officer should stand while calling a meeting to order or declaring it adjourned, and while putting a question to vote. He should also stand--without leaving the chair--while explaining his reasons for a ruling on a point of order (if the explanation entails more than a few words) or when speaking during debate on an appeal or a point of order that he has submitted to the judgment of the assembly." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 47:9.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*("Sturgis"). A main motion has been moved and seconded. The maker of the motion chooses not to speak to the motion. The first person called upon for discussion moves to close debate. Is the motion to close debate in order, given that there has been no debate whatsoever?

Answer: Yes. "If the motion to close debate is proposed as soon as a main motion has been stated to the assembly, its adoption prevents any discussion of the question." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)*, p. 66.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*("Sturgis"). A main motion has been moved and seconded. Discussion has continued for several minutes. A member obtains recognition and says, "This motion is not worth the time we have spent discussing it, and I move to close debate." Is the motion to close debate in order?

Answer: No. "Similarly, it is out of order for a member to debate the issue and end the remarks with a motion to close debate." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*, p. 66.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, should minutes be signed with the words "Respectfully Submitted" as a closing?

Answer: "Minutes should be signed by the secretary and can also be signed, if the assembly wishes, by the president. The words *Respectfully submitted*--although occasionally used--represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 48:7.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Using *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* as your parliamentary authority, by what motion can a member "require the assembly to conform to its agenda, program, or order of business, or to take up a general or special order that is due to come up at the time, unless two thirds of those voting wish to do otherwise"?

Answer: Call for the Orders of the Day. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 18:1.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Our board meets three (3) times per year. Our parliamentary authority is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition). Is it possible for me to postpone a matter that is currently pending to our next board meeting?

Answer: It depends--because the motion to postpone is not restricted based on how many times your assembly meets during the year, but by how long an interval will pass between this meeting and the next. "If two business sessions are separated by more than a quarterly time interval—or if the term of a specified portion of the membership expires before the start of the later session (as may happen in an elected legislative session or in a board)—then business can go over from the earlier session to the later one only by means of referral to a committee." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 9:8. As a result, unless your meetings are unevenly spaced during the year, it would NOT be appropriate to postpone (in that such a period would be longer than a quarterly time interval).

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: You are a member of the Santa Claus Society and are attending one of your quarterly meetings. An important motion is being discussed. Because it is Christmas Eve, the meeting has

to adjourn right NOW. What happens to the motion under discussion, if your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*?

Answer: The motion will come up at the next meeting under the heading of "Unfinished Business." "The term *unfinished business*, in cases where the regular business meetings of an organization are not separated by more than a quarterly time interval (9:7), refers to questions that have come over from the previous meeting (other than special orders) as a result of that meeting's having adjourned without completing its order of business (21:7(b)) and without scheduling an adjourned meeting (9, 22) to complete it." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 41:21.

(Difficulty level = 1)

Question: What is the name of the form of amendment that seeks to strike out an entire paragraph, section, or article--or a complete main motion or resolution--and insert a different paragraph or other unit in its place, according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*?

Answer: A "substitute." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 12:69.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Using *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* as your parliamentary authority, which is the only subsidiary motion in which debate on the motion can go fully into the merits of the main question?

Answer: Postpone Indefinitely. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 11:2(5).

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the effect of adopting a motion that conflicts with a motion that has been adopted by the society and has neither been rescinded, nor reconsidered and rejected after adoption?

Answer: "Such conflicting motions, if adopted, are null and void unless adopted by the vote required to rescind or amend the motion previously adopted." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 39:5.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)* ("Sturgis"), is the motion to refer to committee fully debatable?

Answer: No. "Debate restricted to brief discussion on the selection, membership, or duties of the committee, or instructions to it." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 58.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)* ("Sturgis"), is the motion to refer to committee fully debatable?

Answer: No. "Debate restricted to brief discussion on the selection, membership, or duties of the committee, or instructions to it." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 58.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, can the vote on a motion to Rescind or to Amend Something Previously Adopted be reconsidered?

Answer: "A negative vote on these motions can be reconsidered, but not an affirmative vote." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 35:2(8).

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, by what method can a member of an organization speak during a meeting and criticize a prior act that is not pending at that time?

Answer: "In debate, a member cannot reflect adversely on any prior act of the society that is not then pending, unless a motion to reconsider, rescind, or amend it is pending, or unless he intends to conclude his remarks by making or giving notice of one of these motions." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 43:24.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* has a motion by which a motion relating to a single subject containing several parts, each of which is capable of standing as a complete proposition, can be separated to be considered and voted on as if they were distinct questions. What is the name of the motion with this purpose?

Answer: "Division of a Question." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 27:1.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: The *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)* ("Sturgis") does not recognize the motion Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn. If a privileged motion to adjourn is pending under the Standard Code, how can another meeting be established?

Answer: "Under the Standard Code, if the privileged motion to adjourn is pending, it can be amended to specify when the meeting is to be resumed. The amendment is also privileged, meaning that because of its urgency it may interrupt for immediate consideration." *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 233.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what motion and vote are required in order to make the assembly conform to an adopted agenda, program, or order of business?

Answer: The motion Call for the Orders of the Day is a privileged motion by which a single member can require the assembly to conform to its agenda, program, or order of business, unless two thirds of those voting wish to do otherwise." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 18:1.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, at what point does an election to an office become final?

Answer: "An election to an office becomes final immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline, or if he is absent but has consented to his candidacy. If he is absent and has

not consented to his candidacy, the election becomes final when he is notified of his election, provided that he does not immediately decline." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 46:46.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is necessary following a ballot election to hear the actual number of votes cast for each candidate (instead of just who won)?

Answer: Nothing. The actual number of votes cast for each candidate is a part of the tellers' report (see *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* § 45, p. 417. "The tellers' report is entered in full in the minutes, becoming a part of the official records of the organization. Under no circumstances may this be omitted in an election or in a vote on a critical motion out of a mistaken deference to the feelings of unsuccessful candidates or members of the losing side." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 45:39.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Your organization, which follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, has a Bylaws provision that prohibits officers from serving consecutive terms in the same office. Jane was recently appointed by the Board to fill out the remaining nine months of the Vice President's 2-year term. Can Jane be elected to the office of Vice President in the upcoming election to serve for two more years?

Answer: Yes, Jane can be elected, in that she has not served a "full term" in office. "In filling vacancies for unexpired terms, an officer who has served more than half a term in an office is considered to have served a full term." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 47:4.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: If you are following *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is typically the first item of business immediately following the call to order of a mass meeting?

Answer: "A chairman and a secretary are in general the only officers required by a mass meeting. Their election takes place immediately after the meeting is called to order, a convenient method of electing them being by voice vote." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 53:11.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* states that with respect to board or committee reports, the terms "adopt," "accept," and "agree to" are equivalent. However, which term is the recommended choice in RONR?

Answer: "It is usually best to use the word *adopt*, however, since it is the least likely to be misunderstood." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 51:14.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the maximum amount of time that a member can speak at one time on a debatable motion?

Answer: 10 minutes. "In a nonlegislative body or organization that has no special rule relating to the length of speeches (2), a member, having obtained the floor while a debatable motion is immediately pending, can speak no longer than ten minutes unless he obtains the consent of the assembly." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 43:8.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* emphasizes that the use of members' names should be avoided. Does this mean that a speaker should refer to himself in the third person, such as "this member"?

Answer: "There is no need, however, to refer to oneself in debate in the third person as by the use of such expressions as 'this member.' A member's debate is expected and intended to be partial, and the first person is quite acceptable." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 43:23.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: What is the name given to a deliberative assembly that *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* defines as follows: "[A] meeting of an unorganized group that is announced as open to everyone (or everyone within a specified sector of the population) interested in a particular problem or purpose defined by the meeting's sponsors, and that is called with a view to appropriate action to be decided on and taken by the meeting body"?

Answer: A mass meeting. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 1:10.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: In a disciplinary trial held pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the title given to the members of the society who have the task of presenting the evidence against the accused?

Answer: "Managers." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 63:27.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what standing rule of a convention cannot be suspended?

Answer: "[N]o standing rule which has only a single application can be suspended, since this would be equivalent to rescinding the rule, and the case would have to be treated accordingly." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 59:37.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: A voice vote is taken at a meeting following *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, followed by a standing uncounted vote (division). A member doubts the result as announced by the Chairman. Can the member demand a counted vote?

Answer: No, but the member can move that the standing vote be counted. Such a motion is not debatable and requires a majority vote. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 30.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, is it appropriate to seek recognition from the presiding officer to seek the floor for discussion, and then make a motion following your remarks?

Answer: Yes. "When assigned the floor, a member may use it for any proper purpose, or a combination of purposes; for example, although a member may have begun by debating a pending motion, he may conclude by moving any secondary motion, including the Previous Question (16), that is in order at the time. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 42:5.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. If an upcoming election for office is by ballot (and the Bylaws are silent on the matter), do you have to be nominated to be elected to office?

Answer: No. "Strictly speaking, nominations are not necessary when an election is by ballot or roll call, since each member is free to vote for any eligible person, whether he has been nominated or not. In most societies, however, it is impractical to proceed to an election without first making nominations." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 46:2.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: After some debate on a resolution at a club meeting, a member asks if there is a method by which the discussion and meeting can be continued to another time and place, but before the next monthly meeting. The President responds that *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* has a means of continuing the meeting to another convenient time before the next regular meeting. What is the name for such a meeting?

Answer: An adjourned meeting. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 9:17.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: You are attending a national convention that operates under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*("Sturgis"). A Bylaws amendment which required previous notice of 60 days is under discussion. During debate, a member states that several other

articles and sections need to be amended to comply with the noticed amendment under discussion. He then makes an amendment to amend these other sections. Does Sturgis allow such amendments to other parts of the Bylaws not specified in the notice?

Answer: "An amendment to another part of the bylaws not specified in the notice is admissible only if it is reasonably implied by the amendment as stated in the notice. Using the same example, if the original amendment provided for the creation of an associate membership class, the necessity of fixing the dues for associate members would reasonably be implied, although the subject of dues is covered in another part of the bylaws and might have been omitted unintentionally in the proposed amendment. An amendment providing the dues for associate members would therefore be admissible." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 208.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Edition)*("Sturgis"), can a member discuss a motion and then move to close debate?

Answer: No. "[I]t is out of order for a member to debate the issue and end the remarks with a motion to close debate." *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 66.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: *Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law* places the motions Reconsider, Reconsider and Enter, Rescind, Expunge, Ratify, and Take from the Table into a class of their own, like the subsidiary, privileged, and incidental classes of motions. What is the name for this class of motions?

Answer: Restoratory Motions. *Demeter's*, p. 152.

(Difficulty level = 1)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the name of the motion that allows a short intermission in the assembly's

proceedings, commonly of only a few minutes, which does not close the meeting and after which business will immediately be resumed at exactly the point where it was interrupted?

Answer: Recess. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 20.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, to be in order, an amendment must in some way involve the same question that is raised by the motion to which it is applied. What is the name given to this principle?

Answer: "Germane" or "germaneness." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 12:16.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, should a motion that is later withdrawn by the maker show in the minutes?

Answer: "The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter and should show: 6) all main motions (10) or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly (6:25-27; 34-37)—except, normally, any that were withdrawn" *RONR (12th Ed.)* 48:4. Instances in which a main motion that is withdrawn might require mention in the minutes are shown in *RONR (12th Ed.)* 48:4(6)n3.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Under *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the name given to "written rules of parliamentary procedure formally adopted by an assembly or an organization" which "relate to the orderly transaction of business in meetings and to the duties of officers in that connection"?

Answer: Rules of order. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 2:14.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law states that the business part of the order of business can be remembered by the initial letters: R, R, R, S, U, N, G. What do these letters stand for?

Answer: Reading of the minutes of the last meeting; Reports of (1) officers, (2) boards, and (3) standing committees; Reports of special (temporary) committees; Special orders (specially scheduled business); Unfinished business; New business; Good of the order. *Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law*, p. 14.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what motion requires a two-thirds vote against to be sustained?

Answer: Objection to the Consideration of a Question. "A two-thirds vote against consideration is required to sustain the objection." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 26:2(7).

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, which of the following does not meet the definition of a "deliberative assembly":

convention, mass meeting, committee, legislative body, board, assembly of an organized society?

Answer: Committee. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 1:9.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: In cases where a board is constituted so that a specified portion of its membership is chose periodically, what happens to unfinished business when the outgoing portion of the board vacates membership, according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*.

Answer: "Consequently, when the outgoing portion of the board vacates membership, all matters temporarily but not finally disposed of (see 9:8-11; 38:8), except those that remain in the hands of a committee to which they have been referred, fall to the ground under provision (c) in 21:7." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 49:22.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, is a second required for nominations?

Answer: "No second is required, but sometimes one or more members will second a nomination to indicate endorsement." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 46:6.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: In *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is described as a "board within a board"?

Answer: An executive committee. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 49:13.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the term for a motion that "seeks to obstruct or thwart the will of the assembly as clearly indicated by the existing parliamentary situation"?

Answer: Dilatory. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 39:1.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, there are three situations in which the motion Appeal is NOT debatable. What are they?

Answer: If the appeal "(a) relates to indecorum or a transgression of the rules of speaking; (b) relates to the priority of business; or (c) is made when an undebatable question is immediately pending or involved in the appeal. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 24:3(5).

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. If a motion is made while no question is pending that proposes to change the regular limits of debate, is it debatable?

Answer: Yes. Such a motion “is not the subsidiary motion to Limit or Extend Limits of Debate, but is an incidental main motion (although it requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption, just as the subsidiary motion does).” *RONR (12th Ed.)* 15:4.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: A trial of a member is being handled using the disciplinary procedures outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. The accused member has notified the organization that she will appear at trial with a non-member attorney representing her. Must the organization allow the attorney to appear under RONR?

Answer: No. "Defense counsel can be attorney(s) or not, but must be member(s) of the society unless the trial body (that is, the assembly or the trial committee as the case may be) by vote agrees to permit attorney(s) who are not member(s) to act in this capacity." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 63:30.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. A committee makes a report to a board, and the report only contains information. Following the report, what parliamentary action should be taken?

Answer: Likely none. "Even if a report contains only an account of work done or a statement of fact or opinion for the assembly's information, it should be in writing. Apart from filing such a report, however, no action on it is necessary and usually none should be taken." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 51:53.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: In *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, does the motion Request to Be Excused from a Duty require a second?

Answer: "Does not require a second except when moved formally by the maker of the request. A motion to grant the request of another member does not require a second since the maker of

the request and the maker of the motion--two members--wish the question to be considered." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 32:2(4).

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: An organization is required to hold regular meetings each month. At the February meeting date, there are not enough members present for the meeting to be held. Has the organization violated its bylaws by not meeting in February, according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*?

Answer: "But if a quorum fails to appear at a regular or properly called meeting, the inability to transact business does not detract from the fact that the society's rules requiring the meeting to be held were complied with and the meeting was convened--even though it had to adjourn immediately." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 40:6.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, is it in order to move to a Division of the Question on an amendment if the amendment contains several parts, each of which is capable of standing as a complete proposition if the others are removed.? Can the motion Division of a Question also be applied to a main motion while an amendment is pending?

Answer: "If applied to an amendment, it also takes precedence over that amendment; but a motion to divide the main question cannot be made while an amendment to the main question is pending." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 27:3(1).

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: A motion and amendment are pending at a meeting that follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. The presently pending amendment proposes to strike several words from the main motion. What type of amendment can be made to the pending amendment?

Answer: "The motion to amend by striking out certain words can be amended only by striking out words from the primary amendment. The effect of such a secondary amendment is that words struck out of the primary amendment will remain in the main motion regardless of whether the primary amendment is adopted or rejected." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 12:49.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: An organization that follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* is holding its annual multi-day convention. At the end of each day, the assembly recesses until the following morning, at which point there are introductory ceremonies, including an invocation and a supplemental report of the Credentials Committee. Should this be a "recess" or an "adjournment"?

Answer: Adjournment. "From the viewpoint of the effect of a recess or an adjournment on the procedure the next time the assembly is called to order, the difference is that at the conclusion of a recess there never are any 'opening' proceedings, but business is always immediately resumed where it was left off, just as if there had been no recess." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 8:7.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Your organization follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. You have proposed a motion that "The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall each receive a \$100 gift certificate to Smith's Department Store." The motion has been amended so that it now reads: "The Treasurer shall receive a \$1 gift certificate to Smith's Department Store." Can you speak against the pending motion, since it is quite different that you originally intended?

Answer: No. "In debate, the maker of a motion, while he can vote against it, is not allowed to speak against his own motion. . . . If he changes his mind while the motion he made is pending, he can, in effect, advise the assembly of this by asking permission to withdraw the motion (33:11-18)." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 43:25.

(Difficulty level = 2)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*.

If a motion is coming from a committee, does it need a second?

Answer: Yes, although this question is a bit tricky. The question is better asked, "does it need an additional second?" "A motion made by direction of a board or duly appointed committee of the assembly requires no second from the floor (provided the subordinate group is composed of more than one person), since the motion's introduction has been directed by a majority vote within the board or committee and is therefore desired by at least two assembly members or elected or appointed persons to whose opinion the assembly is presumed to give weight regarding the board's or committee's concerns." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 4:11.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: You are at a convention that uses *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* as its parliamentary authority. If a roll call vote is taken, should the doors be closed and no one allowed to enter or leave the room?

Answer: Not unless the convention rules so provide. After all, the concerns in counting a standing vote (that members moving around may confuse the count) are not present in taking a roll call vote (no one can vote unless called upon, and no one who has voted will be called upon a second time). In contrast, this language exists in the section on counting a rising vote: "In all but small assemblies, the doors should be closed and no one should enter or leave the hall while a count is being taken." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 45:15.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: You are a delegate to a convention that follows *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. Various committees for the convention have been appointed by the President (and approved by the convention) to make proposals to the assembled delegates. The Convention Committee is composed of five members, but only one is an elected delegate. When the Convention Committee presents its recommendations to the convention, is an additional second needed from the floor or does the committee report carry its own second?

Answer: Despite the fact that only one member of the committee is a delegate, the language in RONR suggests that no additional second from the floor is absolutely necessary (but may be politically wise).

"A motion made by direction of a board or duly appointed committee of the assembly requires no second from the floor (provided the subordinate group is composed of more than one person), since the motion's introduction has been directed by a majority vote within the board or committee and is therefore desired by at least two assembly members or elected or appointed persons to whose opinion the assembly is presumed to give weight regarding the board's or committee's concerns." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 4:11. Following this provision, the motion is "made by direction" of a "duly appointed committee of the assembly," "the subordinate group is composed of more than one person," and the "motion's introduction has been directed by a majority vote within the" committee, and is "therefore desired by at least . . . appointed persons to whose opinion the assembly is presumed to give weight." In further support of this argument, the authors of RONR could easily have used the phrase, "provided the subordinate group is composed of more than one MEMBER," but instead used the word "person."

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, how are the usual rules of debate modified during a debatable Appeal?

Answer: "When an appeal is debatable, no member is allowed to speak more than once except the presiding officer--who need not leave the chair while so speaking, but should stand." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 24:3(5).

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)* ("Sturgis"), what is the name given to the five motions that do not present a new proposal "but concern actions that were previously taken"?

Answer: Restorative Main Motions. *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 16.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: Under *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (4th Ed.)* ("Sturgis"), name the five "Restorative Main Motions."

Answer: (1) Amend a previous action; (2) Ratify; (3) Reconsider; (4) Rescind; and (5) Resume Consideration. *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, p. 16.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, name at least one action that cannot be rescinded.

Answer:

"(a) When it has previously been moved to reconsider the vote on the main motion, and the question can be reached by calling up the motion to Reconsider.

(b) When something has been done, as a result of the vote on the main motion, that is impossible to undo. (The un-executed part of an order, however, can be rescinded or amended.)

(c) When a resignation has been acted upon, or a person has been elected to or expelled from membership or office, and the person was present or has been officially notified of the action." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 35:6.

(Difficulty level = 1)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, what is the title of the first article in basic bylaws?

Answer: Name. *RONR (12th Ed.)* 56:17.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* is your parliamentary authority (and there are no other applicable rules). If a member desires to give notice of a motion that requires previous notice, how does he do so?

Answer: "In such cases, the member desiring to give the notice writes a letter to the secretary alone, requesting that the notice be sent with the call of the next meeting; and the secretary then does this at the expense of the organization." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 10:51.

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: If your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)* and you make a subject THE special order for a meeting, what is the effect?

Answer: "The special order for the meeting will then be taken up as soon as the minutes have been approved, and the remainder of the order of business will not be taken up until this special order has been disposed of." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 41:57.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: Your parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*. On an Appeal, what is the effect of a tie vote?

Answer: "A majority or a tie vote sustains the decision of the chair on the principle that the chair's decision stands until reversed by a majority." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 24:3(7).

(Difficulty level = 4)

Question: Can a Request for Information be raised following the adoption of an order for the Previous Question (to close debate)? The parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*.

Answer: Yes. "The adoption of an order for the Previous Question does not prevent the making of privileged or incidental motions as applicable, and, strictly speaking, it does not prevent a special order set for a particular hour from interrupting the pending business (see also pp. 204-4). *RONR (12th Ed.)* 16:2.

(Difficulty level = 3)

Question: During a meeting, a member obtains recognition and states "this motion we're discussing is a complete waste of time and I move to table it." If the parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, how should the presiding officer respond?

Answer: The motion to Lay on the Table should be ruled out of order. "The motion to Lay on the Table enables the assembly to lay the pending question aside temporarily when something else of immediate urgency has arisen" *RONR (12th Ed.)* 17:1. "It is not in order to move to lay a pending question on the table if there is evidently no other matter requiring immediate attention." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 17:14.

(Difficulty level = 5)

Question: According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*, if a motion to Reconsider is made at a time when it is not in order for it to come before the assembly for debate and vote, should the motion be seconded at that time or later (when the motion is "called up" for consideration)?

Answer: "Must be seconded at the time it is made. . . . The calling up of the motion to Reconsider does not require a second." *RONR (12th Ed.)* 37:9(4).

Jim Slaughter is an attorney, Certified Professional Parliamentarian, Professional Registered Parliamentarian, and past President of CAI's College of Community Association Lawyers (CCAL) and the American College of Parliamentary Lawyers (ACPL). He is author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Parliamentary Procedure Fast-Track* and lead author of *Notes and Comments on Robert's Rules, Fourth Edition*. Jim is a partner in Law Firm Carolinas. For more information, visit www.jimslaughter.com.