On Being An Officer
FOREWORD

Congratulations on being elected to serve your organization. This is an honor which carries with it certain duties and responsibilities. Knowledge of these obligations will help you serve more efficiently and will contribute to the effectiveness of your organization. It will be necessary for you to:

- Learn the purposes of the organization you serve.
- Learn your duties and how to carry them out.
- Do your part toward the development of an informed membership.
On Being An Officer

Toy L. Smith*

IF YOU ARE PRESIDENT . . .

You are the chief executive officer of your club.

You will set the tone and pace and in many ways determine the achievements of your club. Your success will depend upon your ability to inspire others to work with you.

As president, you should be familiar with the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure, with the bylaws and/or standing rules and with the purposes of your organization. You should be gracious and tactful and, above all, impartial in decision making.

You may be ex-officio a member of all committees, except the nominating committee, if authorized by the bylaws and/or standing rules. As an ex-officio member of a committee, you have all the rights of membership, including voting, but are not required to attend and are not counted in the quorum.

Your briefcase, containing the following items, should accompany you to every meeting:

- Complete agenda for the meeting.
- Copy of the handbook or manual of procedure.
- Copy of the bylaws and/or standing rules.
- List of officers and committee members.
- List of members.
- Copy of the parliamentary authority.

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Duties of the office include:
1. Helping the organization to grow and accomplish its objectives.
2. Planning meetings.
3. Conducting meetings.
5. Appointing committees.
6. Enforcing the rules of the organization.
7. Exercising tact and impartiality.
8. Performing other duties as specified in the bylaws or standing rules.

Planning Meetings

To have more effective meetings, make a written plan for each meeting using the organization's order of business as a guide. Obtain information from the secretary, committee chairmen and others as to what should be included on the agenda.

Let those who will participate know what is expected of them.

See that needed facilities are available and that someone familiar with their operation will be responsible.

Plan for action that will need to be taken after the meeting has been held.

Conducting Meetings

Conducting successful meetings depends on the presiding officer's ability, not merely to maintain order, but to guide the meeting so that it moves toward its goal. Procedures to follow depend upon the type of meeting, but the methods of effective leadership apply in all meetings.

As presiding officer, help the members feel at ease, encourage them to take part in discussion and stimulate their interest in the topic that is being discussed.

Be yourself. Be natural and at ease and your group will sense it and respond well. The preparations you
make before the meeting will help you to be poised and confident.

Open the meeting on time. If there is a business session in the meeting, conduct it according to accepted rules of parliamentary procedure. Give members a chance to talk but, at the same time, move the meeting along to completion.

**IF YOU ARE VICE PRESIDENT . . .**

You are the president's assistant and thus must be thoroughly familiar with the president's duties.

You may be assigned other responsibilities such as being in charge of an activity or being chairman of an important committee.

**Duties of the office include:**

1. Presiding in the absence of the president.
2. Succeeding the president in the event of resignation or permanent incapacity.
3. Performing other duties as assigned.

**IF YOU ARE SECRETARY . . .**

You are the recording officer of your organization and the custodian of its records. You act as an assistant to the president by taking notes and being ready to explain at any time what business is pending.

As secretary, you do not forfeit any rights of membership by reason of holding the office. You may introduce motions, discuss them and vote on all measures.

You need to be present at all meetings. If unable to attend, you should send the record book to the president.

**Duties of the office include:**

1. Keeping the records of the organization. This includes the membership roll, minutes, bylaws and/or standing rules, list of committees and their membership and committee plans and reports.
2. Keeping the roll up to date and a record of attendance at each meeting.
3. Taking and writing minutes of each meeting.
4. Providing the president with a list of unfinished business after each meeting.
5. Reading papers or correspondence to the organization during its meetings.
6. Conducting correspondence as requested.
7. Summarizing and compiling reports.
8. Notifying members of meetings.
9. Furnishing committees with documents required to perform their duties.
10. Making the records available to members upon request.
11. Calling the meeting to order and presiding until a chairman pro tern is elected when the president and vice president are absent.
12. Performing other duties as specified in the bylaws or standing rules.

**Keeping Good Minutes**

In the first paragraph state:

- The kind of meeting; **regular** or **special**.
- The name of the organization.
- The date, place and hour of the meeting.
- The fact that the president and secretary or, in the absence of the regular officers, their substitutes were present.
- Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved or their reading was dispensed with.

In the body of the minutes include:

- Motions introduced with the name of the proposer.
- Action taken.
- Votes cast when a vote is counted.
- Summary of reports
- All points of order and appeals with action taken.
• Program topic, method of presentation, names of participants.
• Hour of adjournment.

The minutes are a record of what was done, not what was said. They should not contain discussion, personal opinion, adjectives and interpretations.

The secretary signs the minutes when they are written. The president or chairman signs them after they are approved.

Corrections to the minutes are made by marking through the word or words to be corrected and writing the correction above or in the margin.

IF YOU ARE TREASURER . . .

You are the custodian of the club's income and financial records. You work closely with other officers and all committees.

You may serve as an ex-officio member of the finance committee or any other committee whose duties involve spending the organization's money.

Duties of the office include:
1. Receiving, holding and disbursing all monies as specified in the bylaws or standing rules.
2. Making a progress report at each meeting and upon request.
3. Making a full report at the annual meeting.
4. Performing other duties as specified in the bylaws or standing rules.

The Progress Report is received for filing, never accepted until audited.

Such a report includes:
• The balance on hand at the beginning of the month.
• Income received along with the source.
• Expenditures.
• Balance on hand at the end of the month.
The treasurer should keep a day to day record of transactions. Here is a simple form for keeping your records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>OUTGO</th>
<th>BALANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 5</td>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>24 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 6</td>
<td>John Smith, sale of nuts</td>
<td>3 60</td>
<td>28 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1</td>
<td>Eagle Printshop, yearbooks</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 00 8 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF YOU ARE PARLIAMENTARIAN . . .**

You should be appointed by the president or chairman. Even though you are a member of the organization you should remain impartial by refraining from participation in the conduct of business.

**The duties of the office include:**

- Serving as parliamentary advisor to the president or chairman.
- Being available to any committee needing advice on procedure.
- Having a copy of the parliamentary authority on hand at all meetings.

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The original manuscript for this publication was authored by Bonnie Cox, former Extension organization specialist.

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