

# **Constitution and Bylaws**

## **Program Action Plan – 2016-2017**

### **Sally Wilhelm, Chairman**

Constitution and Bylaws and the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan – Properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures strengthens our organization at all levels through clarification of roles and responsibilities. This creates an environment that allows goodwill to develop and grow.

All organizations are “organized” and conduct their business and mission service according to the organization’s governing documents. Governing documents, simply stated, “govern” the organization.

The Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are one of the key governing documents of the ALA.

- The Constitution includes the ALA’s official name, location, type of organization, core purpose and its’ governing structure. It states the fundamental reason the ALA entity was incorporated. The Constitution should rarely be amended.
- The Bylaws include our fundamental structure and rules. They describe how our organization governs itself. The Bylaws should only be amended every five to ten years.
- Standing Rules are the processes and detailed rules that “stand” for all to follow, yet can be amended as frequently as needed to keep the organization functioning well.

Items included in the Program Action Plan are:

- Information on how to write a resolution
- Information on how to write a standing rule
- How to be an effective parliamentarian
- Constitution and Bylaws Awards

The District Chairmen have been given copies of the following:

- Information regarding nominations and elections
- Several Constitution and Bylaws activities
- Copy of a suggested amendment regarding the third delegate to National Convention
- Check with your District Chairman if you would like any of this information

### **Resources**

#### **Available through Emblem Sales**

- Unit Guide – 2014 Revised Edition
- Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised
- Parliamentary Procedure
- National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules – 2014 Revision

#### **Available through ALA website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)**

- National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules – 2014 Revision
- See the Constitution and Bylaws page

With the information in this packet, information from your District Chairman plus the resources available from Emblem Sales, you have been well equipped with enough material to make an

A-1 Constitution and Bylaws Chairman. **That's ALA member pride as well as pride in serving our organization.**

Our National Chairman is Indiana's Vickie Koutz so she will be watching closely what we do. The other two members of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee are Lavelle Black and Irma Ward. If we can help you in any way, please call or drop us a line. **We are looking forward to a banner year!**

### **Department Awards**

- A citation will be presented to each Unit Chairman sending in a copy of their revised Unit Constitution and Bylaws to the District Chairman by May 1, 2017.
- An award will be presented to each Unit Chairman who sponsors a Constitution and Bylaws Activity.
- A citation will be presented to each District Chairman turning in a copy of their revised District Constitution and Bylaws by May 15, 2017.
- An award will be presented to each Unit Chairman who sponsors a Constitution and Bylaws Activity.
- Since there is no Past Department President's Award for the Constitution and Bylaws program, for the **2016-2017 year only**, the Department Chairman would like to present the following: A Monetary Award to the Unit and to the District Constitution and Bylaws Chairman submitting the best year-round narrative report on their program. Send all entries to Sally Wilhelm at the address listed below by May 1, 2017.

**Sally Wilhelm, Department Chairman**  
1281 Columbus Avenue  
Batesville, IN 47006  
812-934-2660

**Lavelle Black, Committee Member**  
101 N. Truitt Road  
Muncie, IN 47303  
765-284-4690

**Irma Ward, Committee Member**  
2140 Lombardy Drive – Apartment 110  
Clarksville, IN 47129  
[Ward2100@att.net](mailto:Ward2100@att.net)

**Vickie Koutz, National Chairman**  
211 W. Sycamore Street  
Boonville, IN 47601  
812-897-2689  
[vkoutz@aol.com](mailto:vkoutz@aol.com)

**Cathi Taylor, National Headquarters Liaison**  
8945 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
317-569-4509  
[ctaylor@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ctaylor@ALAforVeterans.org)

## How to Write a Resolution

Contact Information for Questions: Sally Wilhelm, Department Chairman or [constitution&bylaws@alaforveterans.org](mailto:constitution&bylaws@alaforveterans.org)

1. A resolution is a written formal motion. Resolutions are used because the motion may be present in written form with some of the reasons included in the document. If written well, the resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal. Importance, length and complexity of the motion, and size and formality of the assembly are major considerations in using resolutions.
2. A resolution has two sections – the resolving clauses and the reason. Resolving clauses tell the specifics of the proposal. The main reason a motion should be adopted is included in the “whereas” clauses. Neither section should include more clauses than are absolutely necessary. Simple, but specific is best.
3. When developing a written motion or resolution, consult with members who can be of assistance to improve the wording and whose support will assist in its adoption.
4. The two sections of a resolution can be written in either order, but many believe it is better to write the main motion first and then write the reasons it should be adopted. This way, you first determine what is to be done. Focus on the most crucial specifics essential in the motion. Say it in one or two sentences. A third sentence should include who is responsible and a timeline.
5. Once the main motion is determined, develop three to five statements to support the adoption of it. These are worded as “whereas” clauses. These points should be the most important and least controversial arguments for the motion. Less than three points may not make the case depending on the motion, and more than five may become too complicated and confuse the issue. Again, it is important to stay focused on the points that are strictly necessary. Leave other points for the discussion.
6. When the resolution is finally written, it begins with the “whereas” clauses and ends with the resolved clauses. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, prescribes the proper format, capitalization and punctuation. Again, it is a good idea to consult with members who can be of assistance and most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, to ensure your resolution is correctly formatted.

## Guideline for Writing Unit Standing Rules

Standing Rules are rules and regulations, which are related to details of the administration of a society for the guidance of an assembly, which have been adopted, the same as ordinary resolutions, by a majority vote without previous notice.

The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, in all questions not governed by articles of the National, Department, District and Unit Constitution and Bylaws, shall govern this Unit.

1. State time (day and hour) of meeting, place of meeting and notification of meeting. Are you meeting all 12 months?
2. Dues – Senior, Junior, Gold Star Mothers, Life Members
3. Process for selecting Life Members
4. Elections:
  - a. When will elections be held?
  - b. Secretary/Treasurer – elected or appointed?
5. Election of delegate for Department Convention, Fall Conference, District Meetings. When and how selected?
6. Installation of officers. When, where and who is in charge?
7. Finances:
  - a. Working fund for officers, chairmen or any of the programs.
  - b. Annual gifts for the District President's visit, retiring officers, etc.
  - c. Flowers and/or gift cards for illness, death, etc.
  - d. Expenses for delegates to Department Convention, Fall Conference, District Meetings, etc. (Mileage, per diem, registration, lunch, banquet, etc.)
  - e. How bills are paid and who signs the check.
  - f. Contest prizes: how much for poppy, essay, etc.
  - g. Department and District mandatory fees/funds
  - h. Arrangements for special dinners, funerals, etc.
  - i. Annual donations to special programs or charities,
8. The fiscal year of this Unit/District will be (select dates – usually July 1 through June 30)
9. Audit – when and by whom.
10. These Standing Rules may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regularly scheduled meeting, or if notice has been given, by a majority vote. Standing Rules are usually adopted from time to time, as they are needed, in the form of resolutions.
11. The date of the Unit meeting at which these Standing Rules were approved **must** be shown. Also, the signature of the Unit Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and the Unit President or Unit Secretary **must** appear on the bottom of the list. See example below.

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Date Approved

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Unit President or Unit Secretary

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Unit Constitution and Bylaws Chairman

## How to be an Effective Parliamentarian

- **Be Impartial** – The Parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and make sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the Parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate, or vote (except by ballot).
- **Know the Rules** – Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a Parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and for the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the Parliamentarian. A Department Parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules and parliamentary procedures much better than a Unit Parliamentarian.
- **President's Appointment** – The President appoints the Parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The Parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The President and Parliamentarian should have a good working relationship.
- **Varied Rules** – The Parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meeting with members, committee, officers and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.
- **Duties Before a Meeting** – Review the agenda with the President to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the Bylaws and Standing Rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who require assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.
- **Duties During a Meeting** – The duties of the Parliamentarian for a convention include those listed for the meetings. Also be prepared to advise the convention committees such as resolutions, credentials, rules and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer. Stay focused, steady, patient and fair.
- **Parliamentary Authority** – any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically, these include a Corporate Charter, Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order such as *Robert's Rules* and Standing Rules. The Charter, Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are written specifically for a given organization. Those rules take precedence in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in those documents, the Rules of Order specified in the Bylaws are the parliamentary authority. This is usually the most recent edition *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. A Parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.
- **Help Members Learn** – During your year of service as Parliamentarian also consider working with members to educate them in parliamentary procedure. This can be as you counsel them in their roles of teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.
- **Develop Your Knowledge** – Good Parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. Resources are available through Emblem Sales, through parliamentary associations online.