



Rules of Order

SOUTH EASTERN NEW YORK AREA COMMITTEE AND ASSEMBLY OF AA



We are
guided by
AA principles

- ▶ **Step 12 and Tradition 5** remind us why we are here, our **primary purpose** “to carry this message to alcoholics . . .”

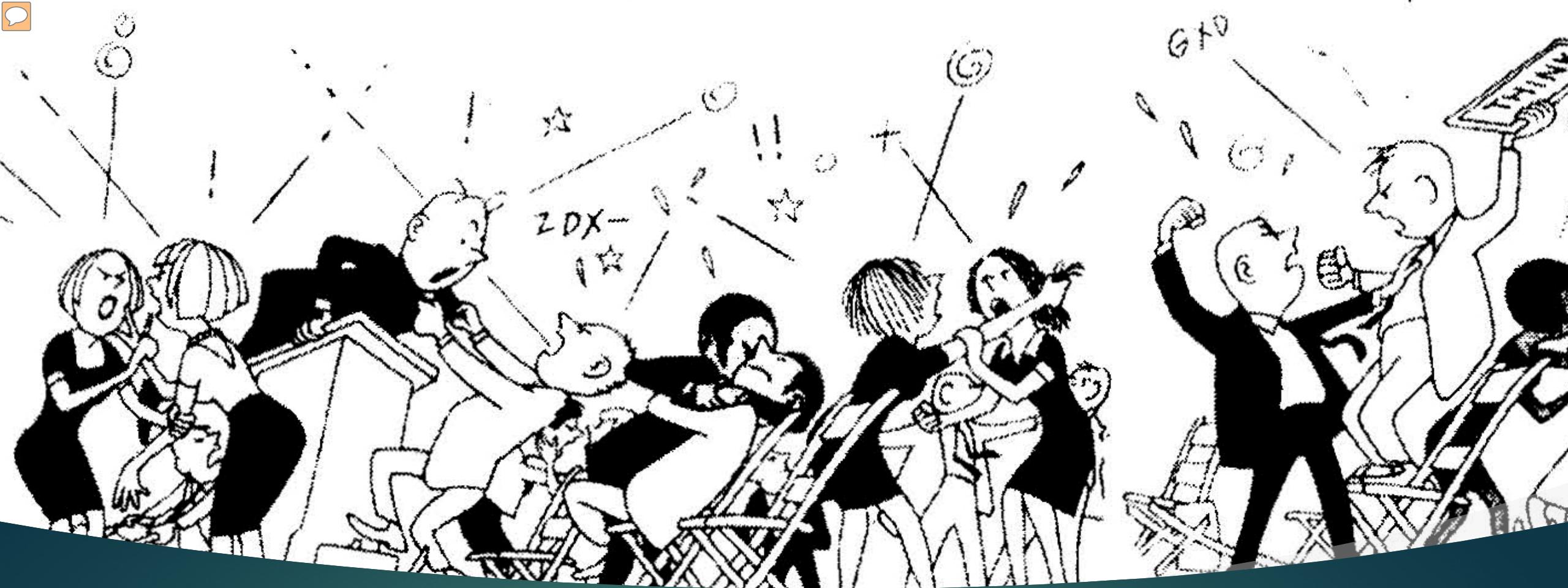
- ▶ **Traditions 1 and 12** suggest we act with humility for the greater good.

- ▶ **Tradition 2** reminds us to act with faith in the group conscience.

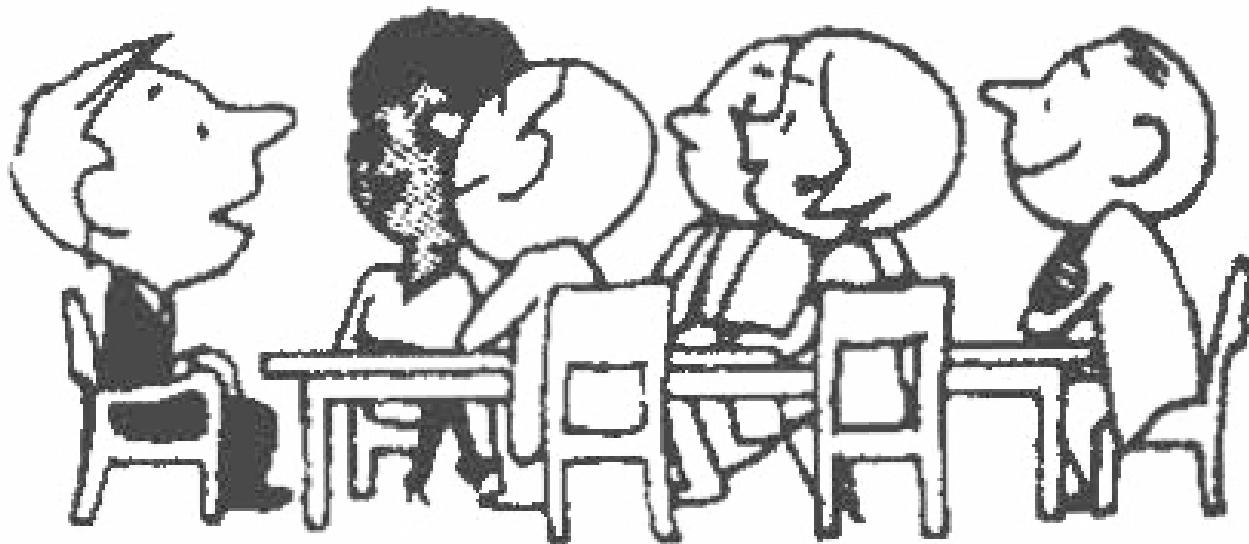


But why have rules of order?

- ▶ Common sense and common courtesy alone work well for small groups.
- ▶ The larger the group, the more the need to add some agreed upon structure.
- ▶ That structure is the **Rules of Order**.



With no agreed upon rules . . .



With
some
rules . . .



SENY's Rules of Order

- ▶ Respect the principles in AA's Steps, Traditions and Concepts.
- ▶ Try to be simple yet effective consistent with our By-Laws to help get business done.
- ▶ Rely on good leadership and member cooperation and courtesy.
- ▶ Are subject to the will of the meeting, the "Group Conscience."



Some basic ideas and terms

- ▶ An assembly makes its own rules.
- ▶ We should be sure all members are aware of current suggested procedures.
- ▶ Changes to the rules, if any, need to be made before business is conducted.
- ▶ A **sense of the meeting** may sometimes be enough if **without objection**.



More ideas and terms

- ▶ Come to the microphone.
- ▶ With few exceptions, wait to be recognized **in turn** before speaking.
- ▶ Keep comments to the matter at hand.
- ▶ Only voting members may offer or second motions.

About motions

- ▶ A motion, **the question**, brings business before the assembly.
- ▶ Good motions are simple and clear.
- ▶ Compound motions can make discussion more difficult.





More about motions

- ▶ Motions not coming from a committee need to be seconded.
- ▶ The **second** may simply be called out.
- ▶ Without a second, the motion cannot be considered.

Amendments to motions

- ▶ Motions may be changed, **amended**.
- ▶ Good amendments improve the question.
- ▶ Changes must involve the same question.
- ▶ Small changes may be accepted by the motion maker as a **friendly amendment**.
- ▶ Larger changes needs to be seconded, discussed and decided before proceeding with the **main motion**.

Considering the question

- ▶ Once seconded, the motion is discussed.
- ▶ **Discussion** should continue until all points have been heard, but may be limited.





More on the question

- ▶ When the chair feels the matter has been fairly heard, they may suggest a move to a **vote**.
- ▶ If without objection, the motion is restated by the recording secretary.
- ▶ The vote is held counting **yes** votes, **no** votes and **abstentions**.
- ▶ The motion carries if it receives a **$\frac{2}{3}$ yes** vote.



Calling the question

- ▶ A member may in turn motion to **call** or **move the question**, which will end discussion on the motion.
- ▶ The chair may suggest such a move is premature, and disallow it.
- ▶ If allowed and seconded, the motion goes to a vote without discussion.
- ▶ The motion carries if it receives a **$\frac{2}{3}$ yes** vote.
- ▶ If carried, the assembly moves to a vote on the **main motion**.



Reconsideration and the minority voice

- ▶ At the end of some votes, the chair asks if there is a **minority voice** or **opinion** on the settled question.
- ▶ This is an invitation for limited additional new sharing on the settled matter from the non-prevailing side of the question.
- ▶ This is not a reopening of discussion on the matter.

More on reconsideration

Having heard the **minority voice**, the assembly is asked if anyone who voted on the prevailing side of the matter wishes to change their vote.

If **yes**, this is taken as a motion to **reconsider** which must be seconded, is debatable, and requires a **simple majority** to carry.

If **carried**, the settled question is reopened to further discussion allowing for a new vote on the matter.



Motion to postpone

- ▶ A member may, in turn, seek to **postpone** the question to a specified future time.
- ▶ This will end discussion on the motion and reschedules the motion.
- ▶ If seconded, the motion may be discussed before it goes to a vote.
- ▶ The motion to postpone carries if it receives a **simple majority** yes vote.



Motion to table

- ▶ A motion to **table** is used to set aside *the current question in favor of more pressing business*.
- ▶ It must be made in turn, be seconded, is not debatable and requires a **simple majority** to carry.
- ▶ If carried, the tabled motion is set aside until a motion to **take it from the table** is made and carries.



Some additional points



Point of order



- ▶ A **point of order** need not be made in turn, and calls to the chair's attention a presumed violation of the rules.
- ▶ It is not seconded, and is usually ruled on by the chair.
- ▶ The ruling of the chair may be **appealed** to the assembly, but that appeal needs to be seconded.
- ▶ The appeal may be discussed within limits, and requires a **simple majority** to pass.



Point of information

- ▶ A **point of information** asks for information on the question, not a procedure or rule.
- ▶ It need not be made in turn, but must be recognized by the chair before being stated.



In conclusion

- ▶ SENY's rules of order exist to help us get things done.
- ▶ We seek a fair discussion and process.
- ▶ AA principles should always prevail.



References

- ▶ ***AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W.***, 2018-2020 Ed., AAWS, 2018; found at www.aa.org > "AA Literature" > "Books"
- ▶ ***Service Handbook and Articles of Association and By-Laws***, 11th Rev., SENY, 2018; found at www.aaseny.org > "Resources"
- ▶ **"SENY Rules of Order: How we run our meetings,"** SENY, 2006; found at www.aaseny.org > "About"
- ▶ ***Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised***, 11th Ed., De Capo Press, 2011; found at www.robertsrules.com



Questions or
comments?

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