

The Annual Conference: A Guide for New Delegates

ICSOM conferences are times of intense discussion and information dissemination. Many topics are examined and many duties assigned and undertaken. During four days of this, it's easy to become confused and frustrated, to overdose and burn out, especially if one is a first-time delegate. The following remarks are provided in an effort to alleviate some of the psychic and emotional disorientation that can occur.

Conference business activities are divided into two major areas: agenda items and special presentations.

Agenda items are specified in the bylaws. These include the roll call, preliminary niceties, review of minutes of the previous conference, reports by officers and committees, unfinished business (including negotiation reports), new business, elections, selection of date and site of the next conference, and good and welfare.

The most time-consuming agenda items are reports by officers, committees, delegates from orchestras in negotiation, and discussion of motions and resolutions. To save floor time, those giving reports are required to prepare them in writing and to offer a brief spoken summary as necessary; delegates can read the more detailed written reports at their convenience.

As a general guideline to officers' reports: the chair will address interaction with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and other agencies: the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA), the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM), the Recording Musicians Association (RMA), the Theater Musicians Association (TMA), the League of American Orchestra (LAO), and others. The president will address orchestra negotiations and internal programs. The secretary will stress ICSOM communications. The treasurer will report on ICSOM's financial state. The editor of *Senza Sordino* will encourage delegates to submit material for future issues. Orchestras facing problems particularly acute or having serious ramifications for the community of orchestras may be given floor time.

Agenda items are supplemented by special presentations: reports by the AFM Symphonic Services Division and AFM Strike Fund trustees; workshops and panel discussions led by ICSOM general counsel and others; and addresses by AFM officers and experts in fields of special interest to orchestra musicians.

ICSOM business sessions are conducted in accordance with standard rules of order, but some latitude and informality is allowed to avoid getting bogged down in complicated parliamentary procedure. While effort is made to accommodate full discussion and exchange of information, it is often necessary to push things along, reach for consensus, and take action so that all the business of the conference is completed on schedule. This is best accomplished if delegates allow some sense of sentiment and thought to develop before making motions for action.

It is also extremely helpful if delegates with charges from their orchestras to bring certain issues or questions to the floor, or to make motions or submit resolutions for consideration by the conference, notify the chair as soon as possible of this intent and provide the wording of proposed motions and resolutions as far in advance as possible. The chair and the Governing Board can then work to see that these actions take place at the most appropriate and effective times during the conference.

The *ICSOM Delegate Manual* is provided to make the work of delegates easier at the conference and throughout the year. It provides a complete overview of the organization, as indicated in the table of contents. Many questions asked from the floor, especially by new delegates, are already answered in the manual. **Delegates are encouraged to consult the manual first.** In addition, ICSOM Governing Board members are always willing to answer questions and assist new delegates.