

Just A Few Minutes, Please...



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

- **QUESTION: What are “minutes”?**
  1. A pain in the neck
  2. A legal record of what happened
  3. Something to keep the Secretary busy
  4. A verbatim record of everything that happened or was said
  5. Something that SPE Headquarters needs



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

## ➤ ANSWER:

All but “4.” We don’t need a verbatim record of what was said or done, but we do need an accurate summary.



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

## ➤ Why do we need minutes?

- They are the legal record of what happened at the meeting.
- If it’s in the minutes, it officially happened; if it’s not in the minutes, it didn’t officially happen.



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

What needs to be in minutes?

- When was the meeting?
  - Day, Date, and Time
- Where was the meeting?
  - *E.g.* “Notell Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA
- What kind of meeting was it?
  - Regular
  - Special
  - Board, Section, SIG, committee



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

What needs to be in minutes?, cont'd

## ➤ Who was at the meeting?

- In the case of a Board or small group meeting, it's best to record everyone's name (including a list of who's absent).
- In the case of a large group, the fact that it is a “regular monthly meeting” or some such is generally sufficient.
- Someone, generally the Secretary, must declare that there are sufficient members to conduct business (a “quorum”).



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

What needs to be in minutes?, cont'd

- Who presided (Name and Title)?
- What actions were taken, and by whom?
  - “Mr. Jones moved, it was seconded and voted that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved.”
  - “Ms Smith moved to change the brand of cola in the vending machine to store brands, for cost reasons. The motion was seconded and, after extensive discussion, the motion was passed. The discussion centered on Pepsi versus Coke versus store brands. Justin Case wished to be recorded as dissenting.”



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

What needs to be in minutes?, cont'd

- What (significant) information was shared, and by whom? (Copies of such information should normally be attached to the official minutes.)
  - Treasury reports
  - Correspondence reports
  - Committee reports
- Who took the minutes (Name and position)?





# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

- Keep the minutes safely recorded. Many organizations use three-ring binders or store the minutes digitally.
  - If your organization is a
    - Section,
    - Division,
    - SIG, or
    - Society-level Committee,

Your minutes should be promptly forwarded to SPE Headquarters, preferably electronically.



# The Art and Skill of “Minutes”

- The most important point: remember that minutes are being taken for the future. Minutes are taken as a reminder for those who attended and as information for those people who were not at the meeting and will be reading them later.
- Based upon the minutes of the meeting, opinions will be developed and, possibly, decisions made. Sufficient information should be provided to do that, without overwhelming the reader with minutia.

