



PROTOCOL

Protocol is proper etiquette for recognizing and honoring Optimists in leadership positions at the Club and District Meetings.

HISTORY OF PROTOCOL

Protocol and good order helps cultivate fellowship among Members. Our society has a reputation for being informal; however this does not mean that being familiar with and understanding protocol and customs is unnecessary. Protocol is a form of planned organization – a set of universally accepted rules and customs that help prevent tensions and chaos.

Protocol is from the Greek meaning “the first glue” – the glue that holds the official life together.

Times change and so, too, has protocol changed over the years. We adapt to changing and developing lifestyles. Customs and manners are often in flux due to the rapidly changing world in which we live.

FELLOWSHIP AND HOSPITALITY

Fellowship, hospitality, protocol and decorum help make Members and guests more comfortable and are important when planning social functions for VIPs.

It is a good idea to put yourself in guests’ shoes, when making plans. Eliminate all unknown surprises in advance. Make your guests’ stay as pleasant as possible.

WELCOME LETTER

A welcome and informational letter should be sent at least two weeks prior to the visit. Include the following in the letter:

- Official Welcome
- City and Location of Meeting – include name, address, phone numbers
- Arrival and Departure Information
- Meal Functions — All guest meals are complimentary and paid for with District funds
- Travel arrangements (airport information, driving directions)
- Name of host providing transportation to and from the airport (if applicable)
- Attach detailed Agenda
- Appropriate Dress attire required for meeting (include any theme events)
- Local weather information to help them in packing
- A separate agenda for Spouse/Partner (if applicable)
- Notification of any speaking engagement you would like them to prepare – be certain to provide them with details on your District activities to announce

Hospitality Suite

When selecting a hospitality suite, be certain that the room is of adequate size to accommodate your needs. Visit the room in person in advance. Do not take the word of hotel sales people. You know how you are going to use the room. People are not going to feel comfortable in tight, cramped quarters. Inquire about policy regarding bringing in food and drink from outside the hotel into the suite.

INVITATIONS

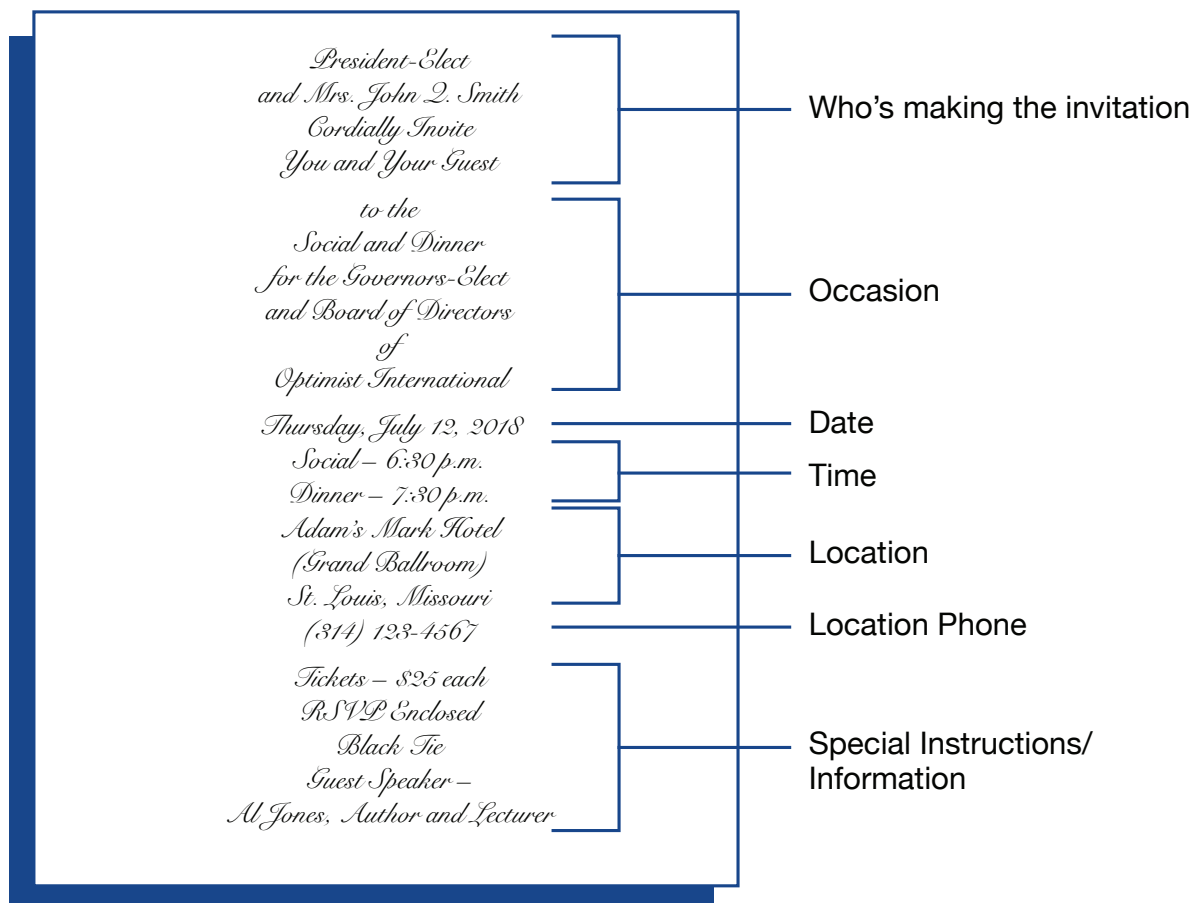
Invitations can be issued on the telephone or in writing. When inviting guests via e-mail and/or over the telephone it is nice to follow up with the invitation in writing. This way there will be no mix-up over the date, time or place.

All invitations should include the nature of the occasion, the day, date, hour, location, dress attire and who is giving the party.

If R.S.V.P (Repondez, s'il vous plait) appears on the invitation, respond promptly. This is important so your host or hostess can figure food counts, room requirements and all of the other details that go into making a successful party. Responding is important since it will save your host and hostess a lot of time or money.

You may use "Regrets Only" in place of R.S.V.P. If "Regrets Only" appears on an invitation you will track only those who will NOT attend. This is a great timesaver to handle invitations; however, this does not always allow for proper preparation.

If no mention is made of the dress for the occasion it can be taken for granted that dress is informal.



GIFTS

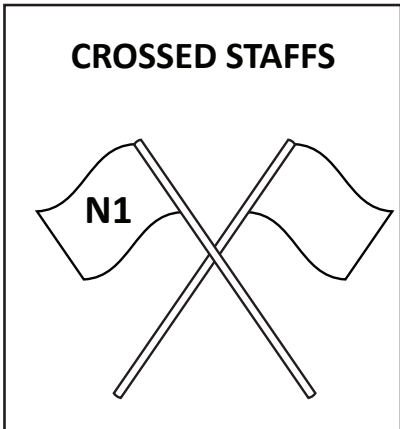
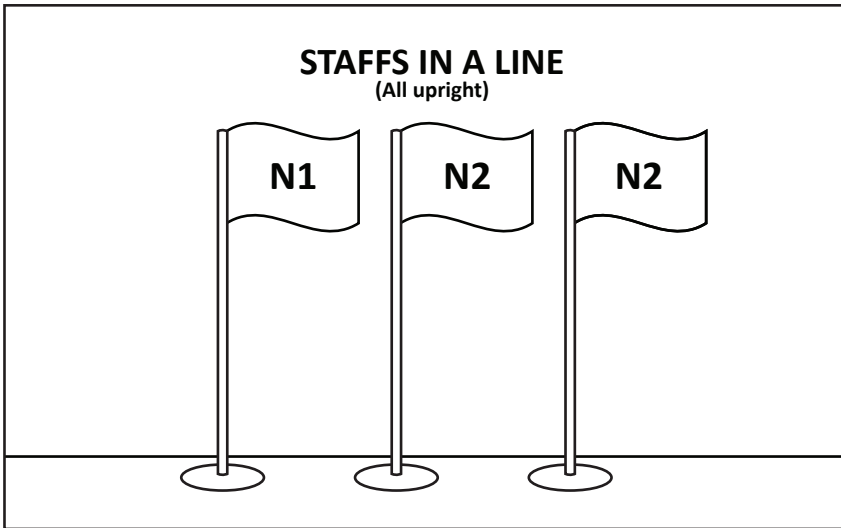
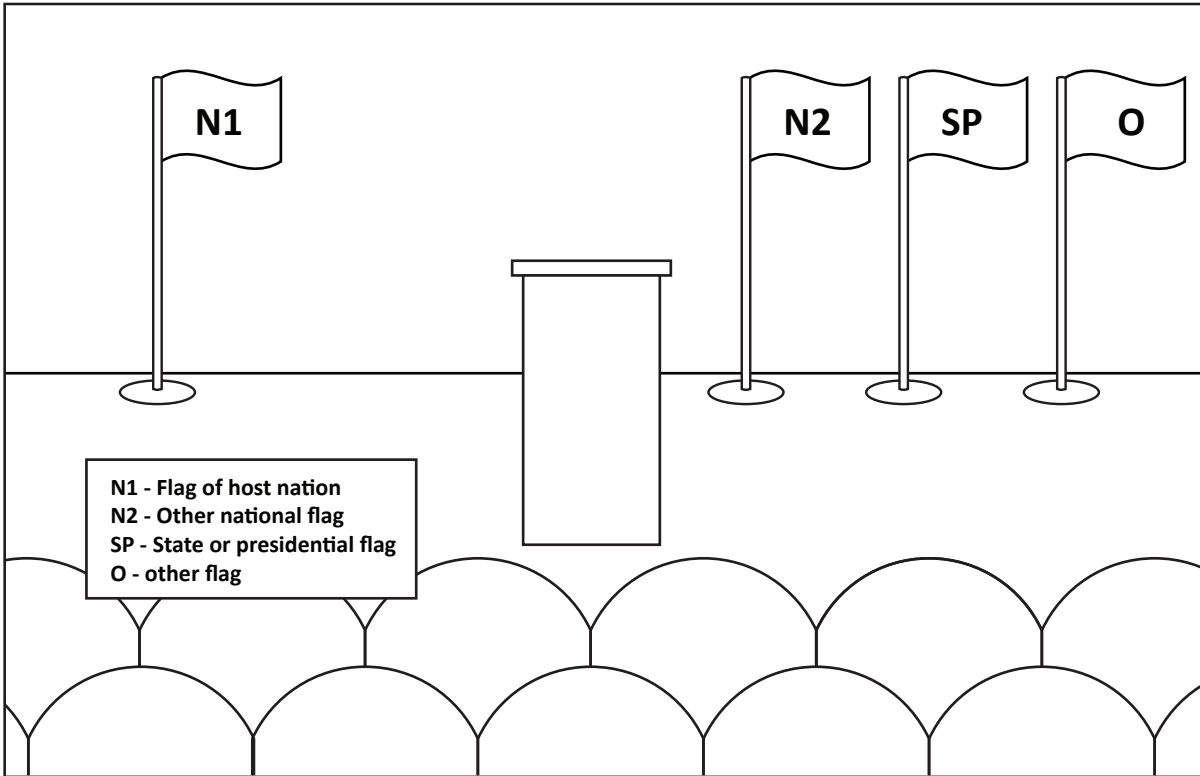
Gifts make lovely remembrances. When selecting a gift, care needs to be taken with the amount of money spent on a gift; do not overextend yourself or your Club. It is the thought that counts when selecting gifts for others. Presenting gifts should be done tastefully. If a gift is to be presented in front of a large group, it is considerate to have the lid wrapped separately for easy opening and very little tape. You may want to have scissors available. If a guest is doing extensive traveling, offer to ship the gift to their home.

Optimist International maintains suggested gift lists on current and Past International Vice Presidents.

Flag Displays

The basic guidelines for flag display are these:

- Give the position of superior prominence to the national flag of the nation in which the meeting is being held. At no time should the flag of outside nations be given the position of superior prominence.
- Fly flags of outside nations at equal size and height to your national flag.
- State or provincial flags may be flown in size equal to national flags, however their position should be secondary to national flags. If you are using a group of state/provincial flags, arrange them in alphabetical order or in chronological order of admission to the union.
- The final position in order of prominence is given to personal or special flags, such as Optimist flags. These may be flown in size equal to or smaller than national and state/provincial flags.
- Meeting Rooms: The position of superior prominence is behind the speaker, to the speaker's right as the speaker faces the audience. Your national flag should always be placed on a staff alone at the speaker's right shoulder.
- All other flags, starting with the flags of outside nations, should be placed on staffs to the speaker's left shoulder as the speaker faces the audience. State and provincial flags should be placed to the outside of national flags. Special flags should be placed outside of state and provincial flags.
- In Procession: The place of superior prominence is on the marching right. If there is a line of other flags, your national flag also may be marched in front of the center of the line.
- From Staffs in a Line: Your national flag should be at the right (to the left of an observer facing the display). If no foreign national flags are involved, the national flag may be placed in the center of the line provided it is displayed at a higher level.
- Crossed Staffs: When your national flag and another flag are displayed together from crossed staffs, your national flag should be on its right (to the left of an observer facing the display).
- Attached to a Building Exterior: Place your national flag to the right of the building entrance, from the perspective of the building. Place other flags to the left. If flagpoles are used, place them to the right of the entrance. State, provincial or special flags may be flown on the same pole below the national flag.



Head Tables and Receiving Lines

GIVING PROMINENCE TO RANKING PERSONS...

Many of the functions for which you will be responsible will require designing a head table. A head table is another opportunity for honoring those special guests you are hosting. The basic rules of precedence should be followed when seating guests at a head table. Precedence is based on one's official position or rank.

There are times when you may choose not to use a head table. In these instances you may have a few "reserved" tables toward the front of the room for special guests. You may want to combine people who have similar interests or associations so dinner conversation will be more enjoyable and pleasant for all concerned. When the time comes for introductions, the speaker moves to a standing podium and introduces those at the reserved tables in the same order as if they were seated at a head table.

Let your guests know ahead of time where they will be sitting at the head table. Use place cards to show their seats. If your guests will proceed into the banquet room, have them line up outside of the room ahead of time so they will be ready to enter when given the signal.

The person of rank is on the left and the spouse or partner walks on the right. When approaching the head table the gentleman takes the lead and is the first to approach the table. This puts a gentleman at the end of the table.

If possible avoid having a woman sit at the end of a table. It is perfectly acceptable to seat two women side by side at the head table to accomplish this. If your head table has an uneven number of people, spread apart the place settings on the short side to restore balance. (See diagram).

Pay attention to the portable steps that lead up to the head table. Be sure they are stable and are free of flags, wires or other obstructions which might cause your guests to trip. Station a sergeant-at-arms by the steps. Be sure the head table is large enough to accommodate the number of chairs you have placed at it.

HEAD TABLE SEATING

The presiding officer takes the central position at the head table. The lectern should be to the presiding officer's left. NOTE: All directions refer to left or right as if you are seated at the head table – not looking on from the audience. If there is no lectern and the number of the head table guests is even, the presiding officer sits to the right of center. Alternate highest ranking guest right, left, right, left of the presiding officer. (See diagram). Spouses or partners belong to the right of the person of rank.

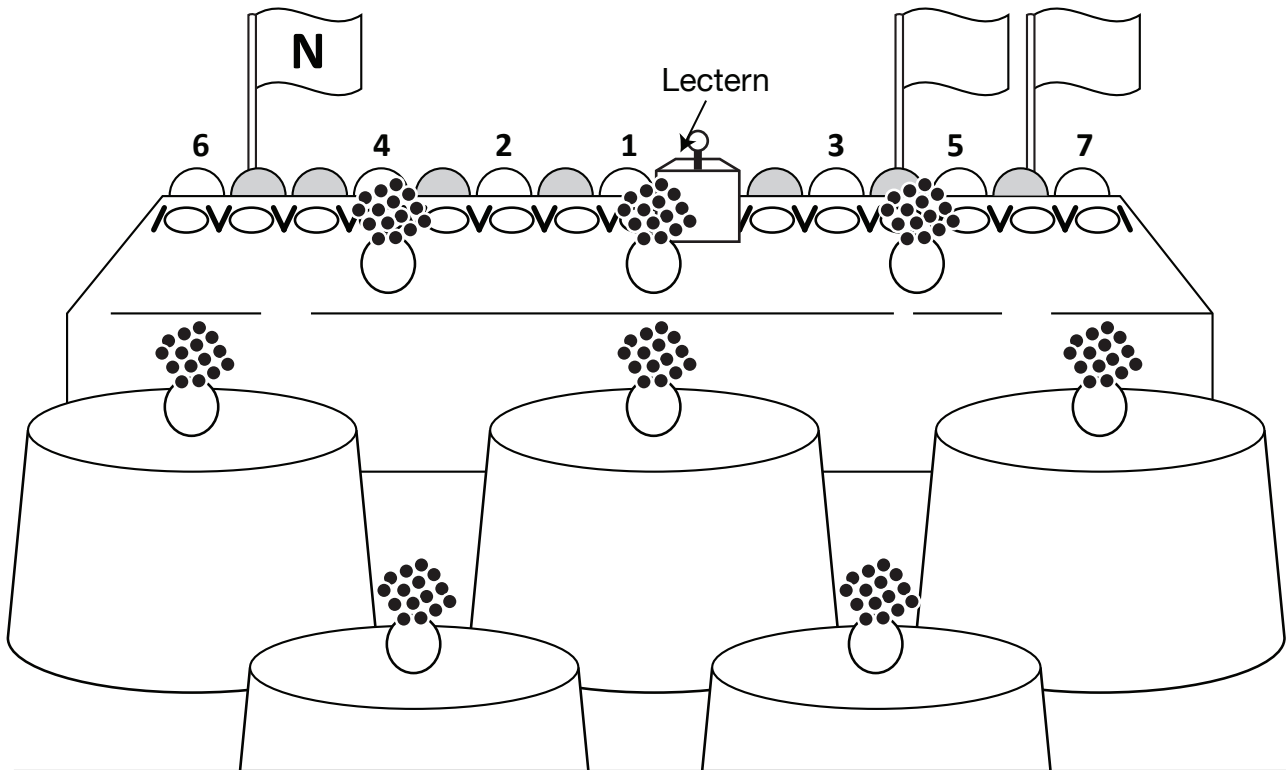
If you have a guest speaker who is not a member of the host organization, this person should sit to the right of the presiding officer. If the speaker is a Member you should place this person as close as possible to the presiding officer.

If an officer of a certain level is seated at the head table, include all the officers of that level.

National flags should be placed so they do not obstruct anyone's view and are stable. The location's national flag should be placed to the speaker's right; other flags go to the left.

Watch for flower arrangements that obstruct views of people at the head table. Flowers can camouflage ugly podiums and mikes, but should complement the room décor and head table.

If flowers are going to be used for gifts or door prizes, consider using silk flowers.



SUGGESTED SEATING ARRANGEMENT FOR HEAD TABLE

1. Presiding officer or M.C.
2. Highest ranking officer after presiding officer or M.C.
3. Next most important member and guest
4. Next most important member and guest
5. Next most important member and guest
6. Next most important member and guest
7. Next most important member and guest

 Speaker/guest sits on right of partner

 National flag

 Other flags

NOTE: If there are other guest dignitaries, these people would be placed in order of rank importance starting in position number 2. An outside person giving a main speech would be placed first after the presiding officer.

RECEIVING LINES

Either of the following procedures is correct for setting up a receiving line:

- Host/Hostess, followed by guest of honor, followed by host's/hostess' spouse or partner, followed by guest of honor's spouse or partner, or



Host/
Hostess



Guest of
Honor



Spouse or
Partner of
Host/Hostess



Spouse or
Partner of
Guest of Honor

- Host/Hostess, followed by guest of honor, followed by guest of honor's spouse or special partner, followed by host's/hostess' spouse or special partner.



Host/
Hostess



Guest of
Honor



Spouse or
Partner of
Guest of Honor



Spouse or
Partner of
Host/Hostess

Receiving lines should be times for short greetings. They are NOT the place to hold long conversations. One should never go through a receiving line holding a drink or a cigarette.

Introductions

Courteous people are concerned with addressing each other properly. Make an effort to concentrate and get the name of the person to whom you are being introduced. Nametags are really helpful. Use them often. They help everyone feel more comfortable.

The following simple guidelines should help when handling introductions. You'll find the more you follow these, the more automatic they will become:

- a. When introducing guests, start with the one of highest rank. The person of higher rank is introduced to the person of lesser rank. For example, "Mr. President, may I present John Smith." "Mr. Compton, I would like you to meet David Jones."
- b. When introducing speakers, introduce the one of the highest rank last.
- c. When introducing the head table, the presiding officer starts at his/her extreme left, then moves in toward center. He/she then starts again at the extreme right and moves in. If you will be handling introductions of the Members of the head table, be brief but be prepared. Do your homework. Take notes in case you have a slight memory lag. This is no time to stammer.
- d. A young person is introduced to an older person
- e. A man is introduced to a woman.
- f. A guest is introduced to the host or hostess
- g. A person without rank is introduced to one with rank.
- h. The presiding officer or the emcee will make the introductions. "I want to introduce the people at the head table." At this time make short introductions. Start at the extreme left and move to the center then extreme right. (Don't forget spouses and partners).
- i. If it is a Quarter Board meeting, all Lt. Governors and Past Governors in attendance should be introduced.

SPECIAL NOTES ON INTRODUCING YOUR SPEAKER

At some time you will be responsible for introducing a guest speaker. True, you may know the speaker and may have heard the person speak many times before. But there are several reasons why introductions are very important:

1. No matter how well acquainted, well liked or well known your speaker is, the moment the speaker stands up, he/she becomes separated from the listeners. The introduction of the speaker serves as a brief ritual, a ceremony marking the speaker's transition from being another Member of the audience, to standing in front of the audience to lead its thinking.
2. Introductions help make listeners more perceptive and more appreciative.
3. Even though the speaker is well-known, the introduction can help clarify why the speaker is speaking and give us insight into the topic. A well-prepared introduction helps establish the speaker's authority.
4. The introduction serves as a bridge – from where the thinking of the audience is at the moment to where it will be led. Introductions help set the tone of the speech which follows.
5. K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short & Simple) No need to list all offices held, just those relevant to the occasion.

Carefully prepared introductions are an asset to the speaker; they also are signs of tastefully recognizing this honored guest.

Invocations and Toasts

Arrangements for invocations should be made well in advance. Never call someone out of the audience and ask them to give an invocation on the spur of the moment.

If you have been asked to do the invocation, BE PREPARED. You can find many helpful resources at the public library. Consider the audience to whom you will be delivering your invocation. Be acquainted with the nature of the event at which you are speaking. You may be asked to sit at the head table or may be called forward to deliver the message from the head table. Invocations are often referred to as inspirational messages or grace. Not knowing the make-up of your audience, you should use a generic prayer. (Avoid using the phrase "In Jesus Christ" etc. which could offend people of non-Christian backgrounds. Most likely, their background was listed in the Newsletter, Program, publicity, etc.). Remember, you are not giving the speech.

Toasts are recognizing special people or honoring nations. Again be prepared ahead of time. If you are toasting a special person, know what you are going to say well ahead of time. This is no time to embarrass or indulge in inside jokes. Usually a glass is raised when toasting followed by a sip of liquid.

Toasting Canada at official functions is done by raising a glass, and reciting "To Canada" while facing the Canadian flag. It is best to have liquid poured in the glasses you will be toasting with to avoid having to fill them quickly during the toast.

Toasting another country at official functions is done by raising a glass and reciting "To (and name of country)".

Recognizing the United States is done by the pledge while facing the flag or by singing the National Anthem.

Visitations By International Representatives

When an officer or official representative of Optimist International is scheduled to visit a District, the Governor should prepare well in advance and appoint a member to provide and oversee the customary courtesies of a host. A member with some experience in protocol in District or International affairs is recommended, perhaps a former Governor or a current or former International official. The individual should be from the area being visited and should share with the Governor the various responsibilities of a host. The visit may occur at a District Convention, District Conference, or a special gathering staged by the District administration or a Club or Clubs in the city being visited.

Assign a host couple to your VIPs. The host couple can fill in the awkward gaps when the main host and hostess (governor and spouse or partner at a district function) are needed elsewhere. The host couple could accompany your VIP to the meeting place, make introductions, answer questions about the agenda, and make sure the VIP's spouse or partner is not left sitting alone in the crowd.

An information kit on the guest may be obtained from the Leadership Development Department at the International Office if the Governor does not already have one. The kit will contain a biography and photograph for use in the news media. Publicity in local news outlets and Club and District Bulletins should precede the visit. The guest's advance permission should be obtained if a media appearance is planned.

Following are some suggestions on handling such visitations.

BEFORE THE OFFICIAL ARRIVES

1. Verify the dates of the visitation.
2. Determine arrival and departure times and mode of transportation.
3. Make hotel or motel reservations; select comfortable, not luxurious, rooms. Investigate the possibility of complimentary rooms.
4. Have recommendations of nearby restaurants.
5. Check with your guest before scheduling meetings or appearances other than the standard ones.
6. Advise the guest if meeting will be for members only or member and guests. If it is for members only, explain what activities are planned for spouses or partners/guests.
7. Arrange for the spouse or partner/guest to be entertained if meetings are for members only.
8. Advise the guest on formal or informal dress.
9. Give the guest the names of District or International officials who will attend.
10. Publicize the meeting well in advance. Use the biography and introductory material furnished by the International Office.
11. Arrange for someone (possibly a Committee) to meet the guest upon arrival.
12. Arrange local transportation.
13. Arrange for a token gift or memento if the occasion warrants one.
14. Arrange for a photographer – do not rely solely on newspaper coverage.
15. Invite a few important civic officials if the occasion is appropriate.

DURING THE MEETING

16. Be sure a lighted podium and public address system are available.
17. Advise the guest of the length of the speech and allow that much time on the agenda.
18. Make brief, pointed introductions.
19. If time is available, seek the guest's advice on any District problems.
20. Use proper protocol in seating arrangements at the head table. The presiding officer or Master of Ceremonies takes the central position at the head table. The lectern should be to the presiding officer's left. (Note: All directions refer to left or right as if you are seated at the head table—not looking on from the audience.) The highest ranking member after the presiding officer or Master of Ceremonies goes to the Master of Ceremonies right. Then alternate guests left, right, etc. of the presiding officer. Spouses belong to the right of husbands or wives.
21. Introductions of civic officials and District officers should be held to a minimum.
22. Make a very brief statement of thanks to the visitor.

23. See that the guest is never stranded, but beware of scheduling too many additional meetings, sightseeing trips, etc.
24. Above all, be courteous and friendly.

AFTER THE MEETING

25. Provide transportation to the airport.
26. Personally thank the visitor for time and efforts.
27. Send a copy of programs and any publicity received.
28. Send any publicity on the President to the International Office.
29. Send a brief note of thanks shortly after the visitation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST

1. Checks on the guest's general comfort during the meeting.
2. Accompanies the visitor to meetings.
3. Responsible for items numbered 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 23.

The host's and Governor's spouses should collaborate and assume similar responsibility for the spouse of the visitor. They would have special responsibility for item number 7.

Parliamentary Procedures

Robert's Rule's of Order advises on matters of parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary procedures help smooth the progress of more formal meetings. Protocol helps make our business and social relationships easier, more pleasant and more profitable.