

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION - AMENDMENTS TO RULES
PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES SUBMITTED BY 62 GROUP

1. According to Rule 15 rules can be amended only at an AGM. It should be possible to amend Rules even at a Special General Meeting.
2. According to Rule 11(2) any member can request the Ex- Co to summon a Special General Meeting. It is better that at least a minimum number of members, (say 10,) make this request.
3. According to Rule 11(2) the Ex-Co has the discretion to accede to this request. It is better to remove this discretion and make it mandatory. This would be more democratic.
4. Rule 12 requires the Accounts to be presented at the AGM. Provision should be made for the Accounts to be circulated in advance together with the Notice of Meeting (Agenda) instead of handing it over at the AGM.
5. Under Rule 10, 14 days Notice is required to move any Motion or Resolution at an AGM. It should also be possible to move any Motion or Resolution in the course of any AGM except those that relate to an Amendment of the Rules.

6. Rule 9 (4) requires the Secretary to give 21 days Notice of the AGM and the Agenda. If so, the Notice required under Rule 10 must necessarily exceed 14 days.

7. Although the Rules require that Members must be given at least 21 days Notice of the AGM, a “Vague” Notice appeared in the Daily News paper on February 08,2002 giving the date, venue and time of the AGM and the Re-Union Dinner . Usually a detailed Notice is sent to each Member whose address is available with the Secretary. The Rules also require that the Notice be given “of the business to be transacted at the AGM”. Usually the Notice (received by the Members) contains such Agenda. This year’s Notice in the papers did not contain any Agenda Not having received any Notice personally of the AGM or it’s Agenda a fair number of members had to assume that the Agenda would be the customary one at the AGM, with the election of Office Bearers to the Ex-Co as one of the main items.

8. We had during a short period of 4 ½ months last year (i.e 2001/2002) had enrolled 40 members in our OBA. Take the case of those members. Normally no intimation of that fact is given individually. Personal receipt of Notice of the AGM was the assumption or proof of such admission. In this instance without such personal notice such members would not have an inkling of their status or whether they could attend the AGM. This is unfair and a serious error. These 40 Old Boys had not received any acknowledgement of their Applications or

subscription fees payments although some were transmitted as far back as August 2001. No individual Notices (with Agendas) of the AGM had been received by some members this year. Perhaps such Notices were not being sent. In the latter event none of these 40 members would have received Notices of the AGM. As only 80-110 or so members do participate normally in the AGM this is a fairly serious matter. We had therefore in fairness to them ourselves written individual letters to them informing them of this position and of the date of the AGM. Printed forms can be used to acknowledge receipt of Applications for Membership and also inform new Members of their admission in writing as soon as processing is over instead of notification at next AGM on when funds are required.

9. The Head Master was made the President of the Association and a Life Member under Rule 7 when Dr.Hayman was Head Master. This is no longer appropriate, relevant or desirable. Currently, the Head Master ceases to have any interest in the College after relinquishing office. There are many matters that concern Old Boys, their Association and which do not relate to, affect or concern the Head Master. All Ex-Co Meetings have hitherto been conducted in Colombo. To expect the Head Master to attend these Meetings or Preside thereat may be inappropriate now. Furthermore, there may be several issues, which (if taken up at the Ex-Co, AGM or Special General Meetings,) may be embarrassing for the Head Master as they may reflect upon his conduct and work. It must be noted however that the current Head Master (in fairness to him), who

had apparently not been briefed by the previous Ex-Co a) that the Head Mast was the President of the OBA b) that the Head Master was expected to attend the Ex-Co meetings c) of the date/time/venue/agenda of the Ex-Co Meetings, gave a categorical and solemn undertaking on the floor of the house at the last AGM that he would definitely attend all meetings of the Ex-Co in future.

10. The Head Master could be made a Joint Patron Ex-Officio of the Association together with the Warden of STC Mt.Lavinia under Rule 6.
11. There is no provision for the maintenance of a Register of Members. There is no provision for the issuance of a Membership Card. It is desirable to provide for both, and a time frame or limit for such registration etc.
12. Copies of the Rules, Minutes of any Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting or Executive Committee Meeting must be supplied to members on request and payment of charges.

We had with us a copy of the Rules certified as at July 16,1990 by the then Secretary (which were reported to be the current Rules by the Ex-Secretary). We were also subsequently made to understand that the Rules were changed and that the documentation including recorded Minutes have been misplaced by a previous Secretary. On March 02,2002 the current Senior Vice President made available to us a copy of

certain amendments said to have been made in 1993. This requires to be clarified and rectified. **No useful purpose will be served in going on a witch-hunt as to who misplaced what.** The intention should be to have firmly established the Current Rules and copies thereof be made available to Members who pay the relevant charges. The rules are not a Secret Pact not to be divulged to the membership. We have made available (to all on our Mailing list) with our Newsletter No.9 the copy we have and if there is any doubt we would like the matter clarified once and for all. We have made the OBA Rules available on our Web Site also.

13. There is no provision as to who should preside at Meetings of the Ex-Co. or AGM or Special General Meetings. This should be provided with the usual provision for presiding in the event of the absence of the usual Chairman.
14. The General impression is that an Old Boy should have been on the Roll of Students of Guru for at least 1 ½ terms or 183 days to qualify to become a Member of the OBA. The Rules do not support this position, and is an incorrect interpretation of the Rules, whatever was intended at the time of formulation. **This qualification applies only to those on the Ex-Co.**
15. The Rules also provide that only one of the elected Members of the Executive Committee can be a person who has not been a student or a Member of the Staff. This is a reference to Honorary Members or Old Boys of Mt.Lavinia.

16. An Old Boy applying for Membership should be informed whether he is enrolled or not (and in the latter event, the reasons therefor) within say 30 days. Applications given to the previous Secretary over 08 months ago with subscription fees have (apart from not being acknowledged or stamped receipts issued) not been processed and membership granted although the fees are appropriated. These are still pending and we must take care not to make the same mistakes. Furthermore the procedure for processing and verification of any matter contained in the Application must be streamlined and expedited to improve efficiency. This can only be done by discussions with the Head Master and Warden. We should not be found guilty of the same inefficiency as the last Secretary.

Every single application for new membership in the Association can be acknowledged within 3 working days and processed very early. Steps can be taken to eliminate delays and snags in processing. It is necessary for the Treasurer to coordinate with the Secretary in this matter so that receipts can be issued for Subscription Fees received early.

Prompt Receipts for all cash donations received must be issued.

17. There is also a general impression created that school leavers should await until the elapse of 2 years before becoming a Member of the OBA. **The Rules once again do not support this position.**

18. These obnoxious provisions and beliefs which do not appear to be in existence must be discarded as they are very counter-productive to the enrolling of new members as they leave school. The benefits to College and the OBA of enrolling school leavers and infusing fresh blood into the Membership of the OBA cannot be gainsaid. The interaction and the mutual understanding that can be achieved by this operation would be to the advantage of College and the OBA. As these beliefs have gained ground due to ignorance, misinterpretation by previous holders of office, and the non availability of the authentic Rules it is best to give some publicity to the correct position.

19. The Objects of the Association should be amended by the addition of the following object:-

“to assist the Board of Governors and the Head Master in every possible way in the Management of the school and to maintain its standards and traditions.”

It will obviously follow that the **NUMBER** of the Student population as well as the society from which it is drawn will be such that their **standard and traditions** are possible to be maintained. One cannot open the floodgates to all and sundry and hope to prevail.

20. It is desirable to provide/ensure that the members of the Ex-Co will be truly representative of all age groups. At present there is an informal understanding that Members are selected from certain age groups. It can be provided that where no Members

are available from any particular age group, those vacancies could be filled from other age groups.

It is desirable that provision be made to hand over the books of Accounts, Registers, files and papers at the end of the A.G M at Guru itself, to the new Office-bearers particularly the Treasurer and the Secretary. The Ex-Secretary did not hand over the OBA Books and Registers etc to the new Secretary on 02.03.2002 at the end of the AGM but handed over only some Letter Heads to the Secretary weeks later after repeated calls and requests, so that urgent letters could be sent out. There was an inordinate delay in these formalities this year. This created problems and delays in the new Ex-Co attending to its work. One reason trotted out by one previous vice president/ Secretary was that some moneys are due to be collected from the Board of Governors and so the Books will be returned after completion of that work. This is too humourous to be commented upon.

Minutes of the Ex-Co from 31.07.1997 to 21.02.2002 together with the Minutes of AGM's from 24.02.1996 to 24.02.2002 and a file containing 89 Application Forms for membership from 11.03.99 to 16.01.2002 were all that was handed over on 23.03.2002 to the new Secretary.

No other files and documents had been handed over to date. **IT APPEARS THAT ALL MINUTES OF BOTH MEETINGS AND ALL CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY AND LETTERS THAT WERE SENT FOR**

TABLING AT MEETINGS DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD FROM 1959 HAVE BEEN MISPLACED, AND/OR NOT HANDED DOWN.

No files had been maintained to file and retain letters received. There were no copies kept of any letters sent by the Secretary to others.

There was no Inward Letter Register or an Outward Letter Register.

21. At the AGM the incumbent Secretary, Treasurer, and Senior Vice President should continue at the head table until the conclusion of the Meeting. Normally, these Officers hold office till the conclusion of the meeting. On the last occasion, the newly elected Secretary and the Senior Vice President were requested to take their seats at the head table during the course of the ongoing AGM, and this created some confusion. The question of who should make a record and take down notes arose and eventually it transpired that neither had done so effectively. Some problems can be created in the taking down of Minutes i.e; whether it is the duty of the out-going or the new Secretary. It should really be the outgoing Secretary. **AS HAPPENED LAST TIME, HE MAY REFUSE TO CO-OPERATE OR FAIL OR DELAY TO DO UP THE MINUTES OR** hand over the books thus sabotaging the activities of the new Ex-Co.

22. We also made the following observation at the last AGM and Re-Union on March 2,2002. It would be good to take note of these matters to avoid any future faux pas. There was no proper co-ordination with regard to the Fellowship and Re-Union Dinner after the AGM. This aspect needs looking in to as it may be relevant to a transition period. Inviting the Head Master and Chaplain for Dinner, the Dress Code, saying of grace etc, had been overlooked. The vast majority of the participants were unaware of the form the occasion demanded. Some had almost completed their meal before the Chaplain arrived. The Chaplain who had not been made aware of these formalities, had gone back to his quarters after the AGM, had his dinner and retired to bed. **AN OLD BOY IN OUR GROUP HAD TO RUN TO HIS QUARTERS AT THE OTHER END OF THE CAMPUS AND INVITE HIM.** These are all matters which need attention. **The Programme of Events for the AGM and Re-Union must cover all these areas, and young Old Boys particularly kept advised and informed of these traditions and formalities . It is necessary for the new Ex-Co to look in to these matters and take steps to prevent a recurrence.**

23. It would be prudent for the Secretary to make all necessary arrangements for the AGM & Re-Union at Guru with the Head Master. This would include the Public Address System and the lighting (where the power supply is interrupted). **ON THE LAST OCCASION, THE SECRETARY PLAYED NO ROLE WHATSOEVER IN MAKING THOSE**

ARRANGEMENTS and it was our Group that co-ordinated with the Head Master in connection with both matters.

24. So also (as we had mentioned after the last AGM in February, 2001) there is a need for a proper Registration Desk at the entrance to the Hall so that the attendance or participation of Members is regularized. **THERE IS NO ACCURATE RECORD OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AT THE AGM ON MARCH 02,2002.** Perusing the attendance sheets, it appears that the same Member has entered his name on more than one occasion. Some have not done so at all. This can be eliminated by having the Registration Desk at the entrance.

Helper Tags must be provided for Aides at Foster Hall for the AGM and regulate entry. Presently members of the Staff whose names do not appear on the Register of Members, Members of the Minor Staff and other outsiders are permitted at the AGM and at the Fellowship.

25. The Rules should also provide that the New Ex-Co that is elected to office at the end of the AGM should through its new Senior Vice President at the first available opportunity, spell out its programme of work or projects. This is best done with an acceptance speech and before the usual get together is concluded. All members must be made aware why the New Ex-Co sought Office and they must be answerable to the membership and not misplace the trust reposed in them. After all this is not a family business.

26. After Election of new Office Bearers a Paper Add must be inserted and a Circular letter to all members must be sent.
27. We should also consider whether the Rules should also provide that all members seeking office in the Ex-Co should be personally present at the AGM and None should send their emissaries for sponsoring. Lately, this form of proxy has been utilized in the wrong situations.
28. The Rules of the OBA require the holding of an Annual General Meeting in every year on such date as may be fixed by the Ex-Co **AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION TO THE CONVENIENCE OF THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS.** It is now relevant to question whether **THE CONVENIENCE IS BEING CONSIDERED AT ALL.** Today's majority may not be in a position to go up to Gurutalawa unlike in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. Furthermore, there is a fair segment of the Membership residing out side the Country. They need to be informed well in advance in order to make their travel arrangements, taking in the Royal Thomian Cricket Match on the same visit. So also financial contributions from Members resident abroad could be on a high scale vide letters received by us. It would be unfair and improper to prevent them as generous contributors and donors from participating at the AGM by default due to no fault of theirs. **THE RULES DO NOT PROVIDE A PROXY IN THE CASE OF THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND.** This too should be looked into and may be

determine the solution to provide redress to interested members unable to attend. If the OBA could approach these Members for financial assistance for college surely it would only be fair to permit their voices to be heard and to permit them to participate in the deliberations and decision making process. Perhaps the time has come to give these matters some thought. The majority are not present at the Annual General Meeting. Hence we should discuss whether the AGM should be held in Colombo to enable the vast majority of Old Boys to participate (whilst continuing to have the traditional Re-Union celebrations at Gurutalawa). It is quite evident that the older Old Boys feel it difficult to travel up and spend a day or two at Guru particularly amidst the present conditions. The AGM being the main Annual Gathering therefore should be at a venue convenient to the majority, taking in to consideration that hitherto there has been no way the Old Boys who do not travel up to attend the AGM at Guru can participate in its important deliberations or voting and **THUS A VERY VALUABLE PART OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS GOES BY DEFAULT** and a charade was being enacted year after year in the election of office bearers. Therefore, the question of introducing the Proxy Form has also been suggested.

Dates of the AGM and Re-Union must be fixed well in advance to facilitate travel arrangement of Old Boys from abroad, and business and personal arrangements of Old Boys in Sri Lanka. Week-ends which may cause inconvenience to particular segments of the membership must be avoided. i.e In fixing dates for AGM and/or Re-

Union avoid clashing with sensitive dates of various religious communities.

We must consider whether the AGM (if held in Gurutalawa) should be on Sunday Morning instead of Saturday Evening immediately before the Fellowship and Dinner. This is a belief that participation will be poor if on Sunday, once the Fellowship is over. On the other hand having the AGM immediately before the Fellowship (and Dinner) gives a sense of wanting to be done with it as quickly as possible and no one is said to be serious about it.

To have a constructive dialogue **and seriously consider having the AGM in Colombo and the Re-Union of Old Boys at Gurutalawa,** whether this is practicable etc, etc.

29. The change of Address of Member notification, its recordal, and confirmation should be done in a professional manner.
30.
 1. The Rules of the OBA also require the holding of a Re-union of Old Boys at Gurutalawa on a suitable day as decided upon by the Ex-Co in every year.
 2. The present practice is to have the OBA AGM and the Re-Union Dinner etc, during the 3rd week end of February. For the last several years, the Head Master declares that week-end a compulsory mid-term holiday for the Boarders, firstly, in order to accommodate the Old Boys and secondly, apparently in view of the Old Boys frolics. This practice has caused considerable inconvenience to the Boarders and their Parents. Reference is made to this in our Newsletters. We are certain, as responsible Old Boys, we can conduct

ourselves in such a manner as not to cause such “disturbance” to the Boarders on the campus.

3. Only About 05 dormitories are required to be vacated by students to accommodate the Old Boys. The present number of boarders is almost 300. There was a time when double this number and more boarders were on the Roll. Thus to accommodate 100-120 Old Boys it may not be necessary to send away all the boarders on a compulsory Mid-Term. Parents have not taken to this forcible process very kindly. Their having to come, most of them by Public Transport, from far off places, take their children away for 2-3 days and then bring them back is a fairly expensive process for them. This inconvenience and expense is blamed on the OBA. WE MUST TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THIS. Keeping back the boarders or at least some segment of them will definitely improve relations between the present day Thomians and the Old Boys. More good will come out of this for both parties. The present boys could put on Science & Art Exhibitions and develop some interaction between the two parties.

4. We feel, much good can be gained by the Interaction and Communication between Old Boys, present day students, and the staff of the College if an opportunity is provided. The advantages of such communication would be far greater than any minor inconveniences suffered by temporary relocation of Boarders elsewhere on the campus where necessary depending on the number of Old Boys attending. This week-end it is felt by Senior Old Boys could be utilized

in order to have, for example, Science and Art Exhibitions, Drama or Dance Recitals, apart from the traditional Cricket, Hockey, Volley Ball matches etc, in which the entire school, if not the Boarders could participate in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. This will automatically draw the Tutorial Staff into getting involved with the Old Boys in these activities. This will hopefully re establish that respect, regard and good relationship between the tutorial staff, minor staff, present day students and Old Boys to a great extent as prevailed in the days under Dr. Hayman and Fr. Foster. Sadly, today's situation is that each party has distanced itself from the others and the school. An energetic Head Master and a like Ex-Co of the OBA could and should re-establish these traditional activities for the betterment of College in a cordial atmosphere. In this regard the attention of all Old Boys and the Headmaster could be invited to the 3rd Object of the OBA i.e. "To afford guidance and encouragement to the younger generation". Old Boys being far removed from the present students as at present, this object remains a pipedream and fanciful idea in the Rules.

5. Those are all matters for discussion. Consideration must be given to the belief that students should not be kept in the school if the Old Boys have consumption of liquor on their Agenda; whether this is a valid reason.

31. At present no designation of **Senior** Vice President is spelt out in the Rules. It is good to provide for same. The better procedure would be to enable the Senior Vice President to preside at Meetings of the Association and of the Ex-Co.

32. The Notice/Agenda of the AGM should accompany
 - a) Secretary's Report with details of attendance at Ex Co Meetings..
 - b) Reports of Vice Presidents /Conveners of Projects or sub committees progress etc, during year
 - c) Audited Accounts;
 - d) Head-Master's Report;
 - e) Draft of Minutes of last AGM

33. The OBA should have Regular informal Gatherings in Colombo, mostly for the benefit of elderly Old Boys.

34. The Secretary should be reimbursed with expenses for Postage, Stationary, Fax, Telephone, Clerical etc.

35. An Inventory of gifts must be kept at College.

36. Application Forms for Membership and a Receipt Book must be available at College for the February get-together, at Fellowship Dinners & all other functions.

37. Attention should also be paid to the role of the Manager of the School. We are of the view that considering the structure spelt out presently by the Board of Governors, he should perhaps be, the Conduit through which the Head Master (who is "assisted" not "dictated to" by the Ex-Co of the OBA) relates to the Board of Governors. He has to be in constant touch with the Head Master. According to the Head Master's Report of September 10,2001 he had visited the College only on 04 occasions other than the OBA celebration. The current Manager was also a) a

Vice President of the OBA for all intents and purposes the person running the Ex-Co and the OBA single handed; b) the Sole Representative of the OBA's of Gurutalawa, Bandarawela and Kollupitiya on the Board of Governors, c) the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Gurutalawa, (which is apparently now non functional)and by virtue of being the Chairman of the above Advisory Committee; the Manager of the School too. The Advisory Committee is required to be appointed annually by the Board. The Chairman of the Committee must be a member of the Board and nominated by the Bishop. Now, not being in the Ex-Co does pose some problems. Whether he can work in co-operation with the current Ex-Co or offer to resign and make way for another person to be the representative of the OBA on the Board are matters which the Ex-Co will no doubt consider and advise itself. The Representative of the OBA's of Gurutalawa, Kollupitiya and Bandarawela must be a **MEMBER** of one of the OBA's. The current Representative of these OBA's on the Board, we understand, came about by our own OBA transmitting a letter of Consent/Nomination signed by the Senior Vice President and the Secretary, to the Secretary of the Board of Governors (and the apparent default of the Kollupitiya and Bandarawela OBA's to nominate any person to the Electoral College). What ever the factual position may be as a Vice President of our OBA his non election was a vote of no-confidence on him. Although it may be interpreted that his appointment to the Board is for 04 years, the question does arise whether it is morally correct for him to continue as the representative of our OBA. If he decides to continue then the

Ex-Co will have to work closely with him in harmony and the Head Master in the Greater interests of the School. This can be done if the will and good intent is there. These matters need to be looked in to, although as at present there is no urgency.