Question: Can ex-officio members vote, and are they counted in determining whether a quorum is present?

Answer:
"Ex officio" is a Latin term meaning "by virtue of office or position." Ex-officio members of boards and committees, therefore, are persons who are members by virtue of some other office or position that they hold. For example, if the bylaws of an organization provide for a Committee on Finance consisting of the treasurer and three other members appointed by the president, the treasurer is said to be an ex-officio member of the finance committee, since he or she is automatically a member of that committee by virtue of the fact that he or she holds the office of treasurer.

Without exception, ex-officio members of boards and committees have exactly the same rights and privileges as do all other members, including, of course, the right to vote. There are, however, two instances in which ex-officio members are not counted in determining the number required for a quorum or in determining whether or not a quorum is present. These two instances are:

1. In the case of the president, whenever the bylaws provide that the president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees (except the nominating committee); and

2. If the ex-officio member is not a member, officer, or employee of the society (for example, when the governor of a state is made ex officio a member of a private college board).

Again, however, it should be emphasized that in these instances the ex-officio member still has all of the rights and privileges of membership, including the right to vote. [RONR (10th ed.), p. 466-67; p. 480, l. 18-27.]
**Question:**  Is it true that, once a quorum has been established, it continues to exist no matter how many members leave during the course of the meeting?

**Answer:**
No. Once a quorum at a meeting has been established, the continued presence of a quorum is presumed to exist only until the chair or any other member notices that a quorum is no longer present. If the chair notices the absence of a quorum, he or she should declare this fact, at least before taking any vote or stating the question on any new motion. Any member noticing the apparent absence of a quorum can and should make a *Point of Order* to that effect whenever another person is not speaking. It is dangerous to allow the transaction of substantive business to continue in the absence of a quorum. Although a Point of Order relating to the absence of a quorum is generally not permitted to affect prior action, if there is clear and convincing proof no quorum was present when business was transacted, the presiding officer can rule that business invalid (subject to appeal). [RONR (10th ed.), p. 337-38; see also p. 12-13 of *RONR In Brief.*]