

LONG ISLAND ROMANCE WRITERS, INC.
CHAPTER 160 OF THE RWA©.

CIVILITY CODE & DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

May 15, 2010

CONTENTS

Civility Code.....3
Dispute Resolution Process.....5
Authority from the Bylaws.....7

LIRW CIVILITY CODE

Long Island Romance Writers, Inc., chapter 160 of the Romance Writers of America©, requires of its members proper and respectful conduct at all chapter functions.

1. Please Act Respectfully toward your fellow chapter members.

- a. In meetings, please listen respectfully while business is being conducted
- b. Do not talk over our speakers
- c. Turn cell phones off or to vibrate during meetings and presentations. Leave the room quietly and discreetly to make or answer any necessary calls.
- d. Present any proposals, arguments, or disagreements concisely, civilly and with respect and please wait your turn to speak.
- e. Abide by the president's decision if something should be tabled for further discussion at another time

2. Please Act Professionally—the writing world is a small one, and we value our members' reputations. Refrain from gossiping about others within our chapter, or outside it, even when things go wrong. Take the higher road.

3. Please Act Responsibly when using email to discuss or conduct LIRW chapter business. Forwarding of Board emails posted on the Board's list serve to members who are not Board members is prohibited without the express written consent of a 2/3 majority of the Board. Forwarding of emails among general or associate members is not prohibited, but is discouraged unless consent is given by the original poster. Please be aware that any emails you send, even those intended to be "confidential", may not be treated as confidential by the recipient.

- a. In no event is flaming, bashing, trashing, slamming or inciting is permitted in the context of LIRW chapter transactions. NOTE: Inappropriate emails may be forwarded to the President, Committee Chairperson, or a Board member in accordance with the established LIRW Dispute Resolution Process, following.
- b. If things get out of control or inappropriate, please table all discussions and bring the matter to the attention of the President or other BOD members for resolution.
- c. Adhere to all LIRW yahoo group list serve rules, which can be found in the files section of the LIRW yahoo group. Infractions will not be tolerated. The moderators reserve the right to respond immediately and appropriately, and consequences include warnings, removal of posts, and can result in immediate removal from list participation.

4. Please utilize all the tools to hand before problems get out of control. The LIRW has a dispute resolution process for any major problem or infraction—please give this option a chance.

5. Infractions—We understand that emotions can sometimes get the best of people, and we would hope that simple communication between members would make it unnecessary for the BOD to step in and act.

If infractions of this Code occur, be aware that the LIRW BOD may choose any or all of the following options to respond:

- A. Verbal Warning
- B. Written Warning
- C. Expulsion from the chapter—in accordance with the bylaws

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

The LIRW values the good-will and camaraderie of its members as well as the civil conduct of its business. The LIRW Board of Directors is confident that under most circumstances, misunderstandings and conflict will be minimal and easily resolved.

However, should conflicts or events occur which cannot be resolved simply and amicably, we have put in place the following procedures for Dispute Resolution.

- If the matter concerns general behavior, please seek out the President.
- If the matter concerns the conduct of committee business, please seek out the Committee Chairperson first and give her or him the opportunity to resolve the problem.
- If the problem concerns the Committee Chairperson, please bring it to the attention of the President.
- If the matter concerns the President, please bring it to the attention of one or more Board members

In general, if a member feels that something cannot be solved despite her or his own efforts, or feels too uncomfortable to approach the concerned party and resolve the matter on their own, or has tried repeatedly to solve the problem with no positive outcome, and wishes to bring the matter to the attention of the BOD, she or he may do so. The President and the Board will do their utmost to resolve any problems or disputes without resorting to formal proceedings. If formal proceedings become necessary, the Board will handle things as follows:

Bringing a matter formally before the Board—

A formal complaint should be brought before the Board through a formal letter of complaint from the concerned member. In this letter, the member will write down simply and clearly what their concern is and back it up with any evidence they may have (i.e., inappropriate emails, reports of unethical behavior) should they have such evidence. They may present this letter and any accompanying evidence to the President in person or through the mail. If the matter involves the President, then the letter should be given/sent to another Board Member.

The President (or another Board Member) will acknowledge receipt of the letter of complaint.

The Board Member receiving the letter will bring it to the attention of the rest of the Board, who will then decide on a course of action, which may include any of the following:

- An immediate decision on the matter, if deemed appropriate
- A call for further explanation, through either a written statement from any parties concerned or by requested appearance before the Board
- Executive Session discussion by the Board—which would be conducted privately, and confidentially, and not be made public to the rest of the chapter
- An Open Board session discussion—which would be open to all LIRW members wishing to attend
- A Vote of the Board to resolve the matter

The decision of the Board will be made known to the complainant and any other party involved. The decision of the Board is final.

If Termination Proceedings are called for--

If it becomes necessary to remove a member from the LIRW, the Board will proceed as outlined in section 4.5 of the LIRW bylaws. The Chapter Bylaws can be found in the FILES section of the LIRW yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lirw/files/>.

AUTHORITY FROM THE BYLAWS:

ARTICLE 2****Purposes and Limitations****

Section 2.1. The corporation is hereby organized for the following purposes:

2.1.1. To promote excellence in romantic fiction and advance the professional interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy, dissemination of information, professional education, publications, and other appropriate activities, and to provide continuing support for writers within the romance publishing industry; and

2.1.2. To carry on such other activities as are permissible for a nonprofit corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the same may be amended or supplemented (“IRC”).

Section 4.5. Termination of Membership.

4.5.1. Automatic Termination. Membership in this chapter shall be terminated immediately if a member does not pay his or her membership dues, in full, by the due date established by the Board of Directors. Membership shall also be terminated immediately upon a member’s death, failure to maintain RWA membership, or submission of written notice of membership resignation.

4.5.2. Termination After Hearing. The Board of Directors may, by two-thirds vote, terminate a member’s membership for cause after an appropriate hearing. Grounds constituting “cause” shall consist of: (1) admission of an act of plagiarism or copyright infringement or losing a plagiarism or copyright infringement case in a court of law; (2) misrepresenting membership qualifications; (3) failing to pay, following receipt of written demand, conference or other financial obligations due the chapter or RWA; (4) persistent verbal or physical conduct of an offensive nature that disrupts the chapter’s ability to operate or function; (5) misuse or unauthorized use of chapter property and/or records; or (6) illegal conduct in a chapter election. Such member shall be given reasonable notice thereof and shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors, at which the member shall have an opportunity to respond and present evidence on all issues involved.

4.5.3. Appeal Rights. An individual whose membership is terminated pursuant to Section 4.5.2 may appeal the decision of the Board of Directors by paying any financial obligations listed in the reasons for termination and by writing to the Appeals Committee within one year after the date of termination. Upon consideration of the written appeal, and by a majority vote of the Appeals Committee, the Appeals Committee may recommend that the Board reinstate such member. The member must receive a majority vote of the Board to be reinstated. A member whose appeal is denied may reapply for membership at yearly intervals thereafter. A reinstated member shall not be entitled to receive retroactively the benefits or privileges lost as a result of his or her termination of membership.

4.5.4. Financial Obligations. Termination of membership does not extinguish any member’s existing financial obligations to the chapter.

Section 6.5. Resolution of Disputes. The Board of Directors shall make the final decision in all disputes among committees, Board members, and members concerning chapter functions and business.