

idea corner

Chairman or Chairperson?

Confusion often exists about what *you or others* should call the person who presides over a committee or group. Should it be "chairman" or "chairperson"?

The 20th convention of the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) in San Francisco passed the following resolution that should help you make a decision:

Whereas, Parliamentary Law has a language all its own; and

Whereas, In olden times the one presiding was the only person provided with a chair, while others sat on benches, *hence he was called the Chairman; and*

Whereas, No parliamentary law authority or dictionary recognizes the word *Chairperson; and*

Whereas, Since time immemorial the term "MISTER Chairman" or "MADAME Chairman" has always been employed to differentiate between the sexes; and

Whereas, Further effort toward sex differentiation is redundant and contrived; now therefore be it

Resolved That organizations and parliamentarians of the National Association of Parliamentarians *must use the term Chairman* instead of "Chairperson" and be it

Resolved That all N.A.P. members should habitually stress the principle that the word *Chairman* belongs to the title of the office the same as the title of President or Secretary.

This information may help to correct and overcome awkwardness, embarrassment, and confusion on the part of Extension educators as you work and advise your clientele.

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