

History of RCA By-Mail Voting since 2007

- I. Introduction:** Review of the voting history may be helpful when considering the potential merits of the ballot proposal for the 2017 ABM.
- **Summary:** The Fellowship has ten years of experience using the current ABM ballot process in which the votes of those present at the ABM are combined with those submitting by-mail ballots.
 - Additionally, the Fellowship has decided a number of important issues relying exclusively on by-mail voting. Special By-Mail Ballots have been used on four occasions since 2007 and have involved voting on a total of sixteen proposals.
 - This extensive experience provides a more-than-adequate basis for evaluating the merits of the 2017 ABM ballot proposal.
 - **Background on the Current Process:** Prior to the 2007 ABM, voting at the annual business meetings was restricted to those members attending the ABM.
 - At the 2006 ABM, the members present amended the Bylaws to implement delegate-couple voting and to provide three methods of voting: voting at the meeting; voting by-mail; and voting by proxy.
 - The intent was to provide the maximum opportunity for all groups to vote, whether or not they were able to have a delegate couple attend the ABM.
 - The changes went into effect at the 2007 ABM. Beginning at 2012 ABM, on-line voting became available.
 - The 2006 Bylaw amendments also enabled the use of Special By-Mail Ballots, where voting is exclusively by-mail.

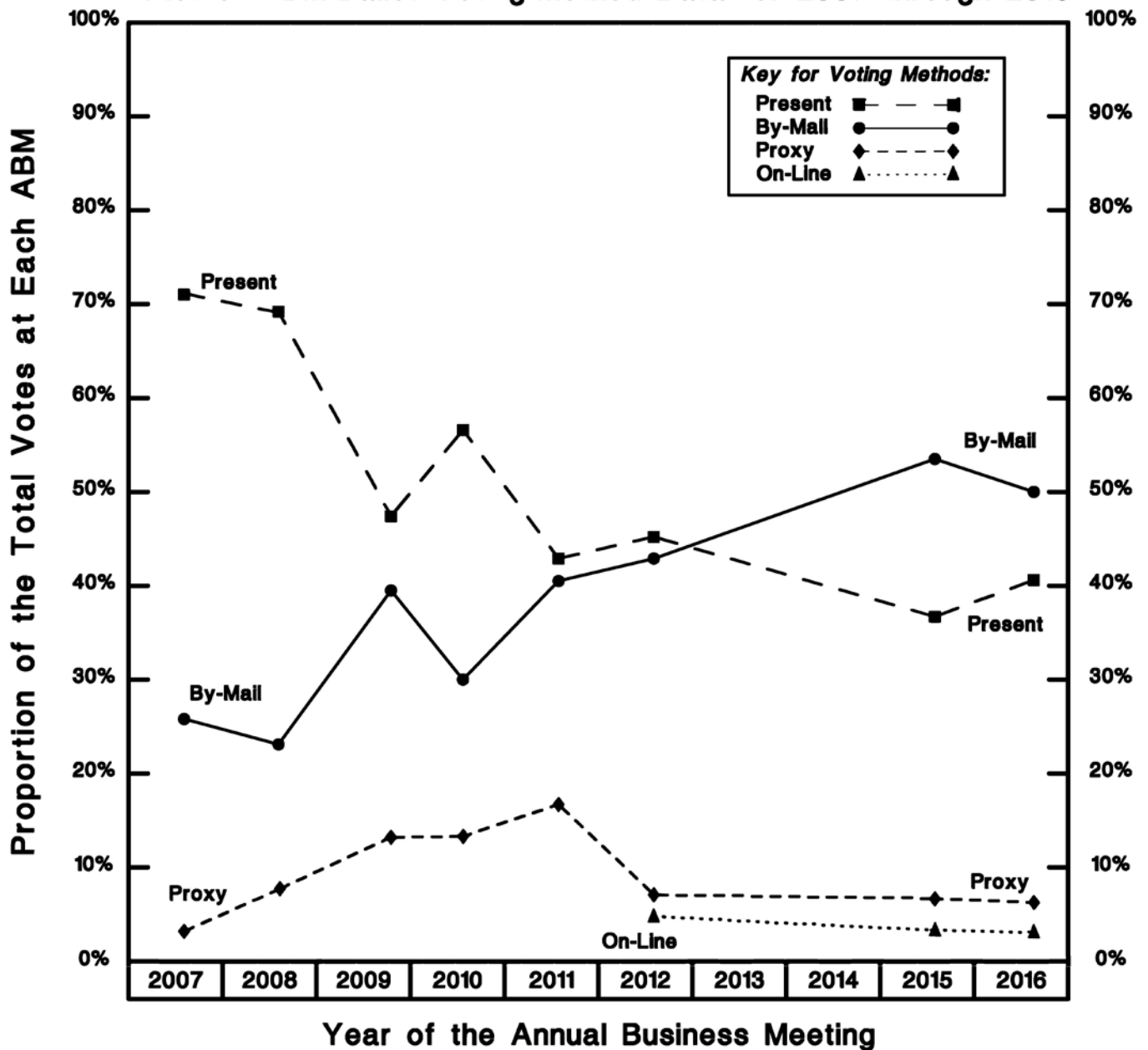
II. Voting on the ABM ballot proposals: Table 1 summarizes the data for the ten years of ABM-Ballot voting.

Table 1: ABM-Ballot Voting for 2007 through 2016									
ABM	Voting Methods Used by Delegate Couples								
	Present at ABM		By-Mail		Proxy		On-Line at ABM		Total
	No.	% Total	No.	% Total	No	% Total	No	% Total	No.
1. 2007 — St. Louis	22	71.0%	8	25.8%	1	3.2%	--	--	31
2. 2008 — San Francisco	18	69.2%	6	23.1%	2	7.7%	--	--	26
3. 2009 — Ft. Lauderdale	18	47.4%	15	39.5%	5	13.2%	--	--	38
4. 2010 — Niagara Falls	17	56.6%	9	30.0%	4	13.3%	--	--	30
5. 2011 — Phoenix	18	42.9%	17	40.5%	7	16.7%	--	--	42
6. 2012 — Memphis	19	45.2%	18	42.9%	3	7.1%	2	4.8%	42
7. 2013 — Cape Cod	Minutes for 2013 ABM do not include a breakout by voting method.								29
8. 2014 — London	There was no ABM Ballot for the 2014 ABM in London.								
9. 2015 — Santa Clarita	11	36.7%	16	53.3%	2	6.7%	1	3.3%	30
10. 2016 — Atlanta	13	40.6%	16	50.0%	2	6.3%	1	3.1%	32

The Table 1 voting-method data are plotted in Figure 1.

Figure 1:

Plot of ABM-Ballot Voting-Method Data for 2007 through 2016



As shown in table 1 and figure 1, the initial use of the by-mail and proxy voting methods — in 2007 and 2008 — was not as significant as it became in 2009 and in later years. That should not be surprising given that the availability of these alternative methods represented a significant change in the ABM voting process. As the Fellowship has become more familiar with the alternative methods, their use has increased particularly the use of by-mail voting.

III. Voting Trends: Table 2 presents summary data illustrating the comparative trends in voting methods over the period. To examine the changes in trends over time, the data are summarized for three time periods:

- Ten-year period, 2007 to 2016.
- Last eight years, 2009 to 2016.
- Last six years, 2011 to 2016.

Summaries of Three Time Periods to Examine Comparative Trends in Voting Methods (less 2013 & 2014) ^[1]	Voting Methods Used by Delegate Couples								Total Votes for Each Period
	Present at ABM		By-Mail		Proxy		On-Line at ABM		
	No.	% Total	No.	% Total	No.	% Total	No.	% Total	
1. Totals for Full 10 Years 2007 to 2016	136	50.2%	105	38.7%	26	9.6%	4	1.5%	271
2. Totals for Last 8 Years 2009 to 2016	96	44.9%	91	42.5%	23	10.7%	4	1.9%	214
3. Totals for Last 6 Years 2011 to 2016	61	41.2%	67	45.9%	14	9.6%	4	2.7%	146

^[1] The available data from the 2013 ABM do not include a breakout by voting method. There was no ABM ballot in 2014.

Conclusions: For the last eight years, Table 2 shows that the number of by-mail votes was very close to that of those voting at the ABMs, 91 compared to 96. For the last six years, the number of by-mail votes exceeded that of those voting at the ABMs, 67 compared to 61. The trend data illustrate the increasing use of by-mail voting since the first two years of the voting process that was adopted in 2006.

IV. Summary of Four Special By-Mail Votes: The Fellowship has had substantial experience voting on a number of significant proposals based solely on by-mail voting. Since delegate-couple voting went into effect in 2007, there have been four Special By-Mail Ballots covering sixteen proposals.

- The first use of a Special By-Mail ballot occurred in the spring of 2008 and covered two proposed amendments to the Bylaws. The ballot results were tallied on June 10, 2008, with one amendment approved and one not.
- The second use covered the vote on Fellowship approval of the Fourth Edition of our Basic Text in the spring of 2011. The votes were tallied during the second week of June. Receiving approval by a substantial majority, the Fourth Edition was the first item of RCA literature to receive Fellowship approval.
- *RCA Standing Rules* — applicable to the procedures for the *Annual Business Meeting* and the *Annual Board-Election Meeting* — were adopted as a result of a Special By-Mail Ballot whose results were tallied on May 8, 2013. Additionally, an amendment to the *RCA Meeting Posting Policy* that was on this ballot was approved.
- Amendments to ten of the Twelve *RCA Concepts of Service* were on a Special By-Mail Ballot whose results were tallied on July 25, 2014. Eight of the Concepts were modified while amendments to two of the Concepts failed to pass. Additionally, a Bylaw amendment, related to attendance of Board members at the ABM, was also on the ballot and was approved.

The voting details for each of the sixteen proposals are included in Table 3, on the next page.

Table 3: Summary of the Voting on the Four Special By-Mail Ballots

Year of Vote Spring of:	Description of Proposals Voted On	All Votes By-Mail			Total Votes	Percent Yes [1]	Required Majority	Pass?
		Yes	No	Abstain				
1. 2008	Topic 1: Amend the Limitation of Terms provision of the paragraph 4.1.5.1 of the Bylaws that was added to the Bylaws at the 2007 ABM.	20	3	1	24	87.0%	75%	Yes
	Topic 2: Amend Bylaws to Establish Independent Ethics Committee.	14	9	1	24	60.9%	75%	<i>No</i>
2. 2011	Fellowship Approval of the Fourth Edition	30	1	1	32	96.8%	Two-Thirds	Yes
3. 2013	Topic 1: Fellowship Approval of the Standing Rules for the Annual Business and the Board-Election Meetings	22	1	1	24	95.7%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Topic 2: Approval of an amendment to the Meeting Posting Policy	18	2	4	24	90.0%	Two-Thirds	Yes
4. 2014	Topic 1: Amend Bylaws to Provide for Remote Participation of Board Members at the ABM.	29	1	1	31	96.7%	75%	Yes
	Topic 2: Amendments to Ten of the Twelve RCA Concepts of Service							
	Concept Two	25	5	1	31	83.3%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Three	21	7	4	32	75.0%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Four	23	7	2	32	76.7%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Five	17	14	1	32	54.8%	Two-Thirds	<i>No</i>
	Concept Six	19	12	1	32	61.3%	Two-Thirds	<i>No</i>
	Concept Seven	26	5	1	32	83.9%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Eight	24	7	1	32	77.4%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Nine	26	5	1	32	83.9%	Two-Thirds	Yes
	Concept Ten	25	5	2	32	83.3%	Two-Thirds	Yes
Concept Eleven	25	6	1	32	80.6%	Two-Thirds	Yes	
Table Notes:								
[1] Percent Yes = Total of the Yes Votes divided by the Total of the Yes and No Votes. Thus abstentions do not affect the results.								

Conclusion: The Fellowship already has substantial experience deciding very important issues exclusively on the basis of by-mail voting.

V. Proportion of the Estimated Number of Groups Voting: The voting data also provide an estimate of the proportion of RCA groups that have participated in voting since 2007:

- These values are based on estimate of approximately 120 RCA groups. This is the current estimate and is based on recent effort to determine a best estimate of the number of active RCA groups.

- Unfortunately, there has been little net change in the number of active groups since 2007. Generally, the number of new groups added each year has been offset by the number of groups that either close or become inactive each year.

The proportion of groups voting at the ABMs is shown in Table 4, while the number voting on the Special By-Mail Ballots is shown in Table 5.

Table 4: ABM-Ballot Voting — Proportion of Groups Voting for 2007 through 2016					
Year of ABM	Date of ABM	Number of Groups Voting	Proportion of Groups Voting: Based on Estimate of 120 Groups		
			Fraction	Percent	
1.	2007 — St. Louis	August 3	31	31 ÷ 120	25.8%
2.	2008 — San Francisco	August 1	26	26 ÷ 120	21.7%
3.	2009 — Ft. Lauderdale	October 16	38	38 ÷ 120	31.7%
4.	2010 — Niagara Falls	July 23	30	30 ÷ 120	25.0%
5.	2011 — Phoenix	July 29	42	42 ÷ 120	35.0%
6.	2012 — Memphis	August 3	42	42 ÷ 120	35.0%
7.	2013 — Cape Cod	August 23	29	29 ÷ 120	24.2%
8.	2014 — London	August 22	There was no ABM Ballot for the 2014 ABM in London.		
9.	2015 — Santa Clarita	July 31	30	30 ÷ 120	25.0%
10.	2016 — Atlanta	August 12	32	32 ÷ 120	26.7%
Average Number of Groups Voting			33.3	33.3 ÷ 120	27.8%

Table 5: Special By-Mail Ballot Voting — Proportion of Groups Voting					
Year	Date of ABM	Number of Groups Voting	Proportion of Groups Voting: Based on Estimate of 120 Groups		
			Fraction	Percent	
1.	2008 — Spring	August 3	24	24 ÷ 120	20.0%
2.	2011 — Spring	August 1	32	32 ÷ 120	26.7%
3.	2013 — Spring	October 16	24	24 ÷ 120	20.0%
4.	2014 — Spring	July 23	32	32 ÷ 120	26.7%
Average Number of Groups Voting			28	28 ÷ 120	23.3%

Conclusions:

- While all member groups have had the opportunity to vote on by-mail proposals, tables 4 and 5 show that the average participation has been about 25%. The averages are 27.8% for the ABM Ballot Proposals and 23.3% for Special By-Mail Ballots.
- Lack of interest in the operations of the WSO may explain a portion of the Fellowship’s limited participation in the voting. But, it is more likely that the many demands on the time of RCA members play a far greater role. These demands include the priority that must be given to: continued individual and couple recovery, as well as to family and work obligations.
- It is vital that only important issues be presented to the Fellowship. The role of expenses must be also recognized: Even if a couple can afford to attend the RCA convention, attendance at the Friday ABM requires an extra night at a hotel —Thursday as well as Friday and Saturday nights; and the use of an extra day of the limited leave from work that the couple may have available — Thursday in addition to Friday.
- It is important that the member groups be given a realistic opportunity to participate in Fellowship decisions.

V. Examples of Rejection of Proposals Submitted by the Board of Trustees: The voting data also show that the fact that the Board of Trustees submits or recommends approval of a proposal does not mean that the Fellowship will *rubber-stamp* that proposal.

- Table 6 includes three examples in which Board proposals were not approved, in each case by a rather large margin. The fourth item included in table 6, is a proposal that, despite being opposed by the Board, was nevertheless approved by the Fellowship. Additionally, as shown in table 3 above, the Fellowship did not approve the Board’s proposed amendments to Concepts of Service Five and Six.

Table 6: Three Examples of Rejected Ballot Proposals Presented by the Board of Trustees and One Example of a Proposal Opposed by the Board that Was Approved by the Fellowship								
ABM	Description of Proposals Voted On	Votes			Total Votes	Percent Yes [1]	Required Majority	Pass?
		Yes	No	Abstain				
1. 2010	Topic 2: Proposal to Eliminate the Use of By-Mail Voting at the Annual Business Meeting.							
	Total votes	5	17	6	28	22.7%	75%	<i>No</i>
2. 2011	Topic 2: Bylaw change to Modify the Definition of an RCA Group to Preclude the Formation of Special-Focus Meetings.							
	Total votes	21	21	0	42	50.0%	75%	<i>No</i>
3. 2012	Topic 2B: Board’s Proposal for an RCA Meeting-Posting Policy.							
	Total votes	6	27	8	41	18.2%	Two-Thirds	<i>No</i>
4. 2012	Topic 2A: Alternate Proposal for an RCA Meeting-Posting Policy (Policy permits Special-Focus Meetings). [Proposal opposed by the Board]							
	Total votes	27	7	6	40	79.4%	Two-Thirds	Yes

Conclusion: Any suggestions, that Board proposals or Board *recommendations* have undue influence on the Groups, are not supported by these data.