

MY CUP OF TEA



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Today's subject: What makes an organization?
--will an alternative work?

Organizations tend to grow, and in time that growth may result in a top-heavy structure. When that occurs the tail begins to wag the dog. How does such a group restructure itself and return to an efficient and smooth operating status? *It looks for an alternative.* Let's explore one possible solution: simplicity.

Which offices are absolutely vital? Looking at a typical amateur journalism group:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Mailer
- Manuscript Manager
- Historian
- Official Editor
- Board of Directors

Applying the "Vital" yardstick, which offices fit that description? Perhaps these:

1. President
2. Secretary/Treasurer
3. Mailer
4. Official Editor

Could an organization function with only four officers? Yes, it could. The difference is that

the four officers would expand their duties to cover those functions previously performed by another officer. Is it fair to ask these remaining officers to assume extra duty? It's fair if the office description is changed to include the added duties, which in effect removes the stigma of "extra duty." The cry then becomes "*I don't have time to do all these things!*" Then it is incumbent upon that officer to seek assistance from others in the form of volunteers, both individuals and committees. In other words, the work is divided among those who are dedicated to the hobby without an urge to hold office. Are there such people? Yes, there are such people who can lend much expertise without assuming the responsibility of an elected official.

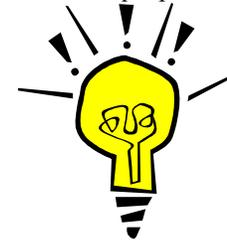
What happens when the President is unable to attend conventions and conduct meetings? The mantle of presiding officer would then pass to the Secretary/Treasurer, Mailer, and Official Editor in that order. "*But that's asking too much!*" Not so. In cases where no official is sufficiently versed in parliamentary procedures any qualified attendee may be appointed to conduct meetings.

The duties of Mailer and Official Editor will remain much as they are already. The office most severely impacted by simplification is the Secretary/Treasurer. It may be that adding the duties of a Historian would impose an unfair burden on an already busy Secretary/Treasurer. A volunteer historian would serve well in such a situation.

What about a Board of Directors? Why is a Board of Directors needed? The power vested in a Board of Directors could as easily be vested in the four elected officers, or such power could be returned to the membership and all matters requiring that level of decision could be voted on by members.

Such a simpler form of government will, of course, demand a deeper involvement by those elected to office. Functions such as recruiting or publicity could be handled by committees appointed by the President. While more thought

is likely to reveal a wider choice of operating procedures, these brief suggestions illustrate the possibilities of tightening responsibility and reducing the adverse effect of bureaucracy. My purpose here is not to recommend any specific course of action, but rather to present options for further consideration by all those interested. We owe it to amateur journalism as a hobby of lasting value and importance to promote and preserve the established traditions while adding as much value as possible and insuring the long continuation of our unique pastime.



One of the freedoms we enjoy is the right to express our ideas. Amateur journalism provides us with a most excellent means of doing just that. How shameful the waste when we fail to let our thoughts be known concerning matters that affect us all. As an active participant in this hobby, we owe it to ourselves and to our peers to voice our opinions about current topics. The shrinking violet not only loses his opportunity to speak, but he deprives us of our right to know everyone's position on a subject at hand. I urge every person who plays an active role in amateur journalism to speak his mind, knowing that he will not be ridiculed nor chastised for having done so. We are a group of people who understand that life has more than just one face; more than just one side; with more than just one way to doing things. We will not stoop to show a petty disregard for the feelings of others. Bring your ideas before the group and let everyone have an opportunity to exchange views. #

"One can resist the invasion of armies; one cannot resist the invasion of ideas."

--Victor Hugo