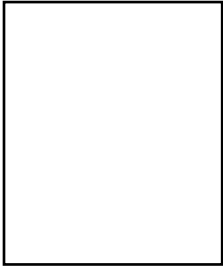


From the Chair



GODOR :L , - H

Stephen Woods

Old Blue was a used minivan that my wife and I bought in 2001 in response to the growing demands of a family of ve. e center seat had two built-in child seats that could be tucked

away neatly when not in use, and the seat could be folded down to create a table for picnics in the car on rainy days. It was a well-loved vehicle with many memories of cross-country trips, camping, kayaking, and moving large furniture.

Our family's last trip in Old Blue was from Pittsburgh International Airport to State College after returning from the 2015 American Library Association meeting in San Francisco.

Fir. 2015 A79(F)34 (ir)6. tr Wd a p

communicate these to the standing committee. I would like to see permanent structures have common characteristics that it was the expectation of those who designed the organization that the liaisons to the committees would also be actively involved in the work of the committee, providing context as a general purpose for existing; they address the specific task identified by the taskforce.

So what happened? Well in short, the awareness mechanism—taskforce updates—were eliminated, making it difficult to find a forum where these issues were discussed. The awareness and action-oriented model that existed was short-circuited and the liaisons became merely communicators.

So am I suggesting that we restart the updates as the solution? Or that we simply eliminate the liaisons, thus creating fewer appointments and demands on our limited resources. Certainly not. These are only patchwork solutions. This is our opportunity to look afresh at our purpose to see what roles we want to play as an organization. I submit that this will fall on a continuum of awareness and action.

Structure: Permanence and Flexibility

We currently have an extremely flat organization with many permanent parts. The real question we need to answer is: What parts of our organization need to be permanent and what parts should be flexible? What do I mean by permanence and flexibility?

Support

As I stated earlier, our structure and strategies need to be re-evaluated given our available resources. GODORT's current structure requires us to fill 72 appointed and 29 elected positions from a membership of about 500. We recognize that appointments and elections are important considerations for involvement in member's institutions; however, I would submit that a sustainable model.

We have talked about virtual meetings as a way to address the challenges of participation. It certainly would provide with greater flexibility for those who cannot attend Midwinter Meetings. However, I have some concerns about this being seen as the panacea of our organization. We are very honest about what we want our purpose to be.

Government information is what makes our brand unique. Our profession already has rich, historical associations with the classic themes of librarianship, often surpassing our own efforts. This is why past leaders in our organization have encouraged us to develop stronger ties with groups like RUSA and ALCTS. What we want to do with this brand is up to membership.

Conclusion

My wife and I recently completed the process of replacing our first thought was to get another minivan, but I think about the changes that were occurring in my family. One of our daughters is now in college and two of our teenagers are learning to drive. Given all that, it made sense to replace the van with a less expensive sedan.

The point of this metaphor is that we still need a structure to address the challenges we face and what role GODORT needs to play in the library profession to determine what our structure should be.

Reference

1. History of the Government Documents Roundtable (GODORT) of the American Library Association, 1972-2002, http://wikis.ala.org/godort/images/9/90/GODORT_history_nal.pdf; GODORT Policies and Procedures Manual, http://wikis.ala.org/godort/images/9/90/GODORT_Policies_and_Procedures_Manual.pdf; Oral Histories, http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Oral_Histories. It also included a strong commitment to advocacy for information policy. I confess that advocacy has played a dominant role in GODORT some times to the exclusion of those classic