

Best Practice #029, Passing the Baton
Heading: Chapter Structure
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A smooth transition from old officers to new ones has benefits: it encourages people to be officers, it keeps chapter activity levels and morale high and the chapter grows in an orderly fashion.

The Bay Area Woodturners Association elects new officers each year and has adopted the following to encourage people to be officers and promote a seamless transition from one set of officers to the next.

Job Descriptions. Our bylaws contain written job descriptions. We break jobs down so that, whenever possible, they can be shared by a team, creating a social environment and avoiding a few individuals getting burned out.

Early Elections. We elect new officers in October, but they don't take office until January. This provides them with an overlap with the outgoing group and a few months to get their feet on the ground

Training Pyramid. New people are encouraged to take on project leadership roles. This helps them learn chapter culture, get acquainted with the membership and demonstrate the leadership potential.

Institutional Memory. We document our activities, even such things as how a picnic was planned. New leaders use these 'books of knowledge' as a starting point for their efforts.

Identified Expectations. We establish annual plans (activities, budgets, etc.) so there is wide spread understanding of what is expected of new officers.

Ombudsman. We have a chapter ombudsman that members can approach with concerns or comments. We also have a suggestion box. These seem to catch concerns early on when they are easiest to resolve.

Term Limits. Our elected officers are limited to two consecutive terms in the same position and no individual can hold any set of elected positions for more than four years. This encourages new blood.

Appreciation. We try to show appreciation for everyone who makes a contribution to the chapter.

Your chapter may wish to try some or all of the above.

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