

February 13, 2017

I've been your Guild president for the past year. For that, first, I thank you. I'm humbled, and I will do my best to continue to grow the Guild in the ways our members need in this new year. I've been observing how our organization works, and I'm writing this month about just that -- our continued growth.

We began a decade ago with just a few dozen members. Since that time, we've grown twentyfold and become, truly, an international organization. This is growth and expansion that we want to continue.

Every non-profit goes through stages of growth, and one of the frequent causes of failure is an inability (or unwillingness) to adapt to the next stage. I believe we're at that point of transition, where our previous structure and methods won't support us any longer. In other words, what worked beautifully for dozens of writers, illustrators, editors, and publishers simply won't work for hundreds of them.

In talking with many of you, online or in person, I've heard many positive things. I've also heard much frustration. There is not one single cause cited by everyone; there are many frustrations, large and small. They differ, but I believe strongly that they have the same root. We've grown up, and we're struggling in too-small clothes. In concert with our board, and with our committee chairs, we'll be devoting much effort in the coming months to addressing those frustrations at the roots--to cleaning out the closet, so to speak, of those clothes that don't fit. It will take time and focus, and it might be a little painful or slow. It absolutely cannot succeed without cooperation and effort, and we cannot continue to operate at our current size (or bigger) without it.

Much of this will be invisible to you, as the capacity-building we need to do involves improving our financial records and forecasting, standardizing our project and document management, and improving our internal communication. It will be noticeable, I hope, in the ultimate effects. It will make a stable foundation on which to continue to grow, to be able to enact and expand the Guilds offerings, and to build our capacity to serve both internally and externally. I ask you to pray for us, to be as patient as you can, and, as always, to keep in communication with me about your questions, concerns, and ideas.

God bless,
Joe Wetterling