

Reps:

I posted this yesterday to the Austin Go Club mailing list (120 people, not all local) and received good support and a request to post it here from someone on both lists. The letter below is how I have summarized the news so far to my club members. In it I try to focus attention on facts and on the most important issues, while adding some personal details from the inside...

Cheers,  
Jeff Shaevel  
President, Austin Go Club

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Friends:

If you're not interested in the politics of the national organization, delete this message now. I also apologize for the length of this note, but a lot has happened. See the latest eJournal for additional news.

To Michael's point, there is a (highly trafficked) discussion group, but at this time it's only for chapter representatives. I will do my best to keep bringing you the news as it happens. The following is a distillation of items from the representatives discussions (when I use "us" or "we") as well as some additional points of my own (marked as such). I will attempt to present only the facts as I know them or intentions as expressed by the people who hold them, not conjecture of motives or generalizations.

While there have been some questions about the rationale for removing the President, what has most of the representatives up in arms is HOW the removal took place. Nobody questions that the Board has the right to remove an unfit President. Although we haven't heard the reasons yet, few are concerned about that, per se.

More important to us were the tactics used to effect the removal:

Fact: At the Go Congress in Houston, the board stated that a committee was being formed to search for potential presidential talent. The question was asked of the Board if this was in reaction to known friction between President Kirschner and the board. The board assured us that this was NOT about replacing Chris and merely about finding new talent.

Fact: Yours truly was on the short list of people contacted about

potential interest in the Presidency. I asked during my phone interview if this was about replacing Chris and was, once again, assured that this was NOT about his replacement. (Side note 1: the person who interviewed me was NOT one of the four Board members and the interviewer has since expressed dismay that he was lied to regarding the intent of the search. Side note 2: I made it an explicit condition of my being considered for the position that I would NOT accept it to replace Chris in a sudden removal.)

Fact: The agenda of the special Board meeting of 10/16 was announced as discussion of the search committee interviews and findings. The three Board members who ultimately voted against the action were under the impression that this was to be the first of several discussions to determine who was qualified and how to go about using the "talent pool". The motion came as a complete surprise, discussion quickly cut off, and a yes/no vote taken with little deliberation of the candidates or other options than replacement.

Fact: Immediately following, then Chairman of the Board, Dave Weimer, resigned his position as Chair, while retaining his seat on the Board. He has explained that he could not in good conscience serve as head of a Board that chose to behave in this manner.

Quite a few Chapter Representatives are dismayed that four Board members would act in such a manner. While they may have acted within the strict letter of the by-laws, we feel they have effectively violated the trust of the representatives who elected them and violated the SPIRIT of both the Board and by-laws. (Side note 3: Rather than spend forever trying to create by-laws that covered every conceivable case, we trusted that the Board would act fairly and intelligently to fill in missing pieces and arbitrate gray areas. This appears to have failed both in the problem of the relocated Mr. Dinhoff and the process for replacing a president.)

The Chapter Representatives have at their recourse the possible recall of 1 or more of the 4 Board members in question. We are, however, waiting for further explanation of their actions before reacting. However, we are only peripherally interested in the grounds for dismissing Chris. More important is how they justify their APPROACH. Furthermore, we will not wait for long. If too much time elapses without explanation, we will act based on what information we have.

Personal opinion: Go is a BOARD GAME. No decisions we make as leaders are THAT urgent. (No money was being stolen; nobody was in physical danger; armies were not going into battle nor weapons of mass destruction being armed, etc...) We are here in the spirit of education,

cooperation, and friendship. Tactics such as those taken by the Board have no place in the furthering the ideals of our organization. Regardless of whether Chris should continue as President, we must clean house of this kind of petty, hidden, machinated decision making and work towards open, clear communication.

Please feel free to continue discussing in this forum and/or e-mailing or calling me (733-0027) directly if you wish to discuss privately. If you have any particular questions of the Board, the representatives, or suggestions you would like brought to them, please let me know. Although the responsibility for electing a board currently rests with the representatives, your concerns are important and your input is valued.

Cheers,  
Jeff Shaevel  
Austin Go Club