

Graham Seibert Resignation as President of Rotary Club Kyiv Multinational

Introduction

I have resigned from Rotary Club Kyiv Multinational more times than anybody in its history... and all because of the same person, Dirk Lustig. In 2011 I resigned as Club Secretary and President Elect for 2012-13. I retained my membership, which I dropped in 2012. Dirk had ignored blatant signs that the treasurer, Myron Spolsky, had stolen the treasury. He had lied for more than a year to protect Myron, resisting every effort to adopt bylaws and then conduct an audit in accordance with them. Myron had stolen the money, about \$56,000. The club lost a third of its membership immediately, and another third drifted away.

In late 2014 Dirk was gone. They had pressured Myron into returning all but about \$13,000 of the stolen funds. The club had some interesting projects coming up. I thought things had changed. They accepted me back and immediately made me treasurer. I found that Dirk had not paid dues for 2½ years. As I tried to collect, he quit the club. Good riddance.

In September 2015 he reappeared, lying to the effect that he had indeed paid the dues in question and demanding readmission. The board sided with Dirk, looking for a way to take him back without his making good on the dues. I sent an email of resignation on October 28, 2015.

The Board asked me to stay. They appointed one of their number to negotiate with Dirk. The upshot was a compromise whereby Dirk did not have to pay and his many lies went unchallenged. Disgusted, I resigned for the last time via the following two letters.

Along the way I wrote about 20 pages of history of the whole sorry affair, from the time I joined the club in 2009. It is available by following the hyperlinks in the letter of resignation below.

Graham Seibert
March 2016

Most recent letters of resignation

From: Graham Seibert
To: <**Five Board members of Kyiv Multinational Rotary Club**>
Date: Tue, Dec 1, 2015 at 12:30 PM

Subject: I am the wrong president for this club

I am sending the last of my analyses of the situation with Dirk. You may or may not read it; I doubt it will make any difference.

We have fundamentally different values. You value loyalty and compassion. I value integrity and character.

I point out Dirk's character flaws – he's a bully, he's a braggart, he lies and he is a deadbeat. You do not answer the points I raise. You agree it with me in part, but you do not care.

I point out that Dirk has no strengths to bring to the club. He was a disaster as a manager. He has no professional skills. He has no useful contacts. He has no money. He is profane. Again, you see much of what I see, but you do not care.

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What you see in Dirk is a man who has been a member of the club since 2008. You feel he commands your loyalty. You see a human being in need, a man who has nothing in life except this poor club. You feel compassion for him.

We saw the same alignment in 2011. Dirk's half of the club accused my half of questioning Treasurer Myron Spolsky's honesty, even calling him a thief. Dirk's half defended Myron to the bitter end. My half left, and more importantly, the contentious atmosphere killed the club's ability to attract new members and to stage fundraisers. We shrank and have not regrown.

You are defending Dirk today just like you defended Myron in 2011. Pointing out his flaws and reasoning from our constitution and bylaws is fruitless. That is what I do in [this document](#), but I expect it will have no effect.

Two additional elements are fear and indecision. Dirk is an angry, unstable person. Confronting him could be dangerous. Also, being loyal and compassionate does not require you to make hard decisions.

I am the wrong president for this club. Oksana and I repeated the discussion we had when I sent my letter of resignation the last time (*Six weeks earlier, in October 2015 – the resignation was not accepted*). I simply don't need this. I am preparing a letter of resignation to send to the whole club tomorrow. (*included here on the following page*)

YIR,

Graham

From: Graham Seibert

To <**30 members and friends of the club, 2 district officials**>

Date: Wed, Dec 2, 2015 at 6:30 AM

Subject: Resignation as President of Kyiv Multinational

I am resigning as President and from the club.

The Board has acted to readmit Dirk Lustig. They do this despite a bylaws provision that requires the payment of all past debts before rejoining. More important, I have argued strongly that Dirk does not meet the Rotary constitution standard that "A club shall be composed of active members each of whom shall be an adult person of good character and good business, professional and/or community reputation." You have some sense of the man from the email traffic the last three months.

I had made it clear that I would quit over this issue. I am doing so.

I have enjoyed your company in the club, and look forward to ongoing friendship with those whom I know outside the club.

Aftermath

The Board did not take my resignation well. Despite my having been totally clear that I would resign, even doing so on October 28, they seemed shocked that I did so.

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They immediately accused me of the things that Dirk does. They called me a liar, for suggesting that we simply give Dirk back the pittance he had given the treasurer in November – what for was not specified – which was far short of what he owed. I mis-stated the amount he had given the treasurer by eight dollars, and they called it a lie.

They accused me of "stealing the treasury" when, on the morning of December 5, three days after resigning, I did not give them the balance of the club money that I was holding. I said that I would do it upon their written acceptance of my accounting. I did not want them to come back and accuse me of embezzlement. Jesper Lindholt threatened to "put my picture in the Kyiv Post," as they had (after more than a year's delay!) with Myron Spolsky.

Fortunately, the incoming President is an honest woman whom I had brought into the club. We agreed on the accounting, I gave her the money the next day, on December 6th and it was done. The club had to finalize a Global Grant with clubs from Brazil by the end of the year and pay them \$5,250. I stayed on the phone and exchanged emails with Brazil until the project was approved. Also, as I was certainly in the best position to make the payment. I held the money and made sure that the payment went through.

My last contacts, in January and February, 2016, involved handing over a flash drive of the club archives, a suitcase of records, banners and other mementoes, and \$250 which I had held to cover any unexpected expenses connected with the Brazil project. I am gone.

Post Postscript

The club readmitted Dirk. Very shortly thereafter he disappeared back into Eastern Ukraine, expressing not the least regret for the disruption he had caused, not participating in club life and almost certainly not paying a kopek of the back dues he owed.

Some members lamented that I, the guy who had been doing most of the heavy lifting for the club, was gone. They still don't understand why I should object to being in a club with a man that they all acknowledge is a liar and a deadbeat. Their attitude remains "We all know he lies – what's the harm?" This despite the obvious fact that Dirk's lying had destroyed the club in 2011. These same people, however, feel entitled to complain about corruption in the Ukrainian government. The irony of it all!

Some aspects of human nature never change. To repeat, I am gone.