

OCA Vice President's Report, 2007-2008

Before proceeding to the heart of my report, I would like to congratulate a number of Ontario players who have distinguished themselves over the board during the past year. Nikolay Noritsyn earned the IM title at the 2007 Canadian Championship, where Raja Panjwani and Michael Barron both earned their FM titles. Great job, lads! Yuanling Yuan continues to impress everyone and most recently scored an awesome 6.5/9 to take silver at the recent Pan Am Women's Championship. I hope Yuanling can join the women's Olympic team where she will gain some vital experience and help move Canada up the rankings.

Unfortunately, there have been very few positive developments within the OCA this past year. Most of my energies has been consumed with the issue of the now infamous Trillium grant to the OCA.

In August of 2007, while pursuing the matter of OCA rebates to the various leagues, I learned that more than 90% of the Trillium grant's salary budget was paid directly to OCA President Barry Thorvardson. This is contrary to our constitution and contrary to Trillium regulations.

The appointment was made without notice to the OCA Executive. After consulting with the Board, I asked Barry to tender his resignation and he refused. OCA Secretary Mark Dutton was moving to BC, and my availability was reduced due to new CFC duties. Given the weakened state of the Executive, and the absence of an apparent successor for Barry, it was decided to censure the President for his actions and defer the matter to the AGM.

On May 9, 2008 I attended a two hour meeting in Toronto with President Thorvdarson at the request of Trillium Regional Co-ordinator John Pugsley and Inga Lubbock, who worked with Barry on the original application. Their concerns included alleged use of Trillium funds by the CFC, deliverables under the grant, and payment to an OCA board member for staffing costs.

Barry and I convinced the Trillium officials that none of the grant money was used by the CFC. Barry provided explanations for why the deliverables in York Region were less than expected. They questioned these explanations at some length before moving on.

We then discussed the staffing question. Both Pugsley and Lubbock were adamant that board members are ineligible for such funds. They would not have approved the grant had they known that such a move was contemplated. Ms. Lubbock further expressed disappointment that the grant did not result in employment for someone who resides in York Region. They also questioned the governance of the OCA and requested copies of the minutes of the meetings at which Barry was hired. Such minutes do not exist.

At this point I made it very clear that the OCA Executive had not approved Barry's appointment, that it was discovered in August 2007, he had refused to resign when asked,

that he had been censured by the Executive and that further actions were left to our AGM. The Trillium personnel accepted this answer and look forward to learning the outcome of our Annual Meeting. They advised that the file was “red flagged” for the staffing irregularity, and no further actions were contemplated by Trillium.

Among other things, our future success with Trillium will depend on a demonstrated improvement in OCA governance. While new chess projects are not necessarily doomed with respect to Trillium, it is inconceivable that Barry Thorvardson’s name will adorn a successful Trillium grant ever again.

Had Barry resigned as President AND been approved by the Executive to staff the Trillium grant, he would only be accountable to us for its deliverables. Sadly, neither of these critical steps was taken, and we must still hear from Barry exactly what work was performed in exchange for the \$90,000 paid to him.

I file this report with great regret. Notwithstanding the Trillium grant, I believe that Barry has been an energetic, positive force in Ontario Chess and I thank him for his service. It is time for new leadership in the OCA and I wish the incoming Executive every success.

Respectfully submitted

Hal Bond
Vice President, Ontario Chess Association

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