

Friends,

For those of you who haven't met me, I am the Chair of Monroe County SCOPE. I have served as Chair since 2010, and was recently re-elected in April. Unfortunately, many on the State Board of Directors of SCOPE did not like the outcome of this election, and so they have voted 16-9 after a 50 minute debate to expel me from SCOPE. How did this happen? The story begins a little more than a year ago.

Steve Aldstadt was the best President SCOPE ever had. His leadership after the SAFE Act was passed caused SCOPE to triple in membership, and resulted in the founding of many new chapters, and a great increase in our Treasury. He also led the charge against the RINOs in the State Senate who sold us out and voted for the SAFE Act.

Unfortunately for Steve, success breeds envy and malice. Others in the organization wanted the power and fame that Steve mostly shunned in favor of hard work. Steve was re-elected as President in April of last year, but that did not suit those who sought the power for themselves.

As revenue from the sale of Repeal the SAFE Act signs began to decrease, legitimate debates arose over how to plan our finances. A meeting of the Board of Directors was called in July to discuss this. I had sprained my foot and did not drive to Syracuse for the meeting.

Imagine my surprise when I found out that, at this meeting, a vote was taken to ignore the results of the April election, and hold a new one, and that Steve was voted out! This violated not only the SCOPE Bylaws, which require the agenda to be provided beforehand, and have no provision for holding elections over again. It also violated New York State Not-For-Profit Law, which requires that members be notified in advance of any election.

Many of us on the Board of Directors pointed this out, but the faction which violated the Bylaws had a one vote majority. They did not care about rules or laws.

Resignations followed. Paloma Capanna, who was our director of legal education, was the first to resign following this illegal act. Our webmaster resigned, and our membership chairman, and our legislative director.

The rogue faction which had taken over began meeting among themselves, and cutting the rest of the Board out. Meetings of the Board were decided on in secret, then announced to us only a few days in advance, leaving many of us unable to attend. The Bylaws require 14 days notice, but this too was ignored.

We could have sued but we did not want adverse publicity for SCOPE. Nonetheless, the new leadership of SCOPE filed a lawsuit against Steve and other members of SCOPE, using SCOPE's money. The judge ruled that the April election was valid and that it was wrong to hold a new election in July. Unfortunately, this was in March and so the judge left the current leadership in place until the next election this April. Since so many had resigned, the votes were not there to remove them.

As part of his ruling, the judge ordered the current leadership to pay the legal costs of the lawsuit. This means that \$22,000 of SCOPE's money was spent to accomplish nothing. The current leadership will tell you this is a victory, but you can decide for yourself if that \$22,000 was well spent.

You will be told that Steve had to be removed because he spent too much money. Evidence was put forward such as buying an in-room movie, when he stayed at a hotel which held a conference on Second Amendment issues. In a budget of \$100,000 only \$400 was in dispute. This is trivial and not a reason to remove a well respected and successful leader.

It would be one thing if the new leadership of SCOPE was up to the challenge. But they are in over their heads. We did not hold any rallies or lobby day in Albany. We did not hold a leadership conference. We did not have any candidate ratings last year. Membership fell from 8,000 members to under 6,000, and continues to decline. \$22,000 was wasted on a failed lawsuit. \$10,000 was spent on consultants to tell us how to change our Bylaws, when all we really need are honorable men who respect them.

I have not held my tongue. I have pointed out that ego, greed, animosity and deceit are leading the organization to ruin. These men lust to hold titles and offices so they can boast to each other, while SCOPE falls down around them. I will call a lie a lie, and a dishonorable man a liar. Our Second Amendment rights are too important for us to be politically correct.

This does not sit well with those who tell the lies, or who profit by them. They tried and failed to defeat me in Monroe County chapter elections this April. Now, just like they did before with Steve Aldstadt, they want to overturn the election and dictate to the members of Monroe County who their leaders should be.

In order to do that, this past Saturday a vote was held to expel me from SCOPE. Supposedly the reason is that my affiliation with Gun Owners of America New York (goanys.com) is a conflict of interest. This despite the fact that the SCOPE Board voted to ally with NYSRPA, and even considered joint membership.

I'm sure you will hear from the state Board soon. They will say anything they need to justify their actions. Keep in mind that I have served Monroe County SCOPE as Chair loyally for seven years. I organized busloads of people to go to Albany to rally against the SAFE Act after it was passed. Under my watch Monroe County SCOPE won the only lawsuits SCOPE has ever won, which forced Cuomo to tell us how few people registered their "assault weapons". I have held out until the end in order to do the work of our chapter. You can decide who you want to trust.

I have done my best to prevent SCOPE from falling apart, but I cannot do it anymore. This may be for the best in the long run. I will continue my work in other organizations -- and who knows but that perhaps I will see you there?

Molon Labe,

Chris Edes