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**From the Board of Directors**

TUG Board of Directors

*(This letter was sent to all TUG members on October 13, 2015, and posted at <http://tug.org/election> shortly thereafter. We are reprinting it, as sent, here in TUGboat since it potentially affects the entire T<sub>E</sub>X community. Questions or comments can be sent to [board@tug.org](mailto:board@tug.org).)*

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We, as directors of the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group, write to you about a difficult decision we have had to make. With regret, we announce that we have voted to suspend Kaveh Bazargan as TUG President, effective immediately. We need to explain this, and give the reasons for our actions.

As you know, Kaveh Bazargan was elected President of TUG this last spring. We directors were looking forward to working with Kaveh on widening TUG's audience and reach.

The TUG President, like the TUG directors, has the privilege and obligation of representing the interests of all TUG members to the best of his or her abilities.

Unfortunately, at the time of the election, unbeknownst to the directors, Kaveh was involved in a lawsuit against another member of TUG. The lawsuit remains ongoing today, and involves T<sub>E</sub>X-related business activities by the parties. The existence of the lawsuit was not disclosed at the time of the election. (Of course, the TUG organization has no standing, and takes no position whatsoever, on the merits of either party's case.)

In our opinion, legal entanglement with another TUG member is a clear conflict of interest, preventing proper fulfillment of the President's duties. Any decision made or initiative undertaken by the TUG President while pursuing a lawsuit against another TUG member would, at the very least, appear to be tainted.

In addition, the directors were informed that the fact of Kaveh's election as TUG President was included in documents submitted to the court. We believe that TUG should not take sides, or even appear to take sides, in a lawsuit to which it is not a party. Such an implication appears inevitable to us when the TUG presidency is used as a material fact in a court case.

Thus, we asked Kaveh to voluntarily suspend his presidency for the duration of the lawsuit and any related legal matters. We were not successful in convincing him that this would be best for TUG. Further, he neither made an explanation as to why

he did not reveal the existence of the lawsuit at the time of the election, nor made any offer to mitigate its effects now.

Therefore, we concluded that the actions of the President were not in the interests of TUG. To fulfill our responsibilities as TUG directors, we felt we needed to act according to Article IV, Section 5, of the TUG bylaws (<http://tug.org/bylaws>):

A Board member who by action or inaction shall be deemed to be no longer working in the interests of TUG may be suspended as Director by a vote of the entire Board, provided that at least 75% of the Board votes in favor of suspension.

As 14 members of the Board, out of a total of 16, voted for his suspension (one director abstained for health reasons, and the 16th board member is the President), hence 87.5% which is greater than the 75% required, Kaveh Bazargan is now suspended from the office of TUG President. He has the right to appeal his suspension according to the TUG bylaws.

A final note: this decision to suspend the sitting President was perhaps the most difficult made by any of us in the course of our involvement with TUG. We carefully reviewed the bylaws and the entire record of correspondence with Kaveh, and intensely deliberated over a period of weeks, ever since becoming aware of the issue. We communicated our concerns to Kaveh several times, and we took into consideration that Kaveh received the majority of votes in an independent election and was thus entitled to substantial regard. We would like the TUG membership, and the wider T<sub>E</sub>X community, to know that we made our best efforts to arrive at a solution that was respectful of the election results, while also recognizing the expectations of conduct from all of its officers.

Ultimately, as the duly-chosen directors of the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group, we made the decision for suspension in the belief that it is the course of action that is best for TUG.

Sincerely,

Pavneet Arora ■ Barbara Beeton ■ Karl Berry  
 ■ Kaja Christiansen ■ Sue DeMeritt ■ Michael Doob  
 ■ Steve Grathwohl ■ Jim Hefferon ■ Klaus Höppner  
 ■ Steve Peter ■ Cheryl Ponchin ■ Norbert Preining  
 ■ Arthur Reutenauer ■ Boris Veytsman

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*(Addendum: per the TUG bylaws, while the suspension of the president is effective, the vice-president assumes the duties of the office of president.)*

◇ TUG Board of Directors  
[board@tug.org](mailto:board@tug.org)

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