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## Trustee Line for July 20, 2006

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### Some Opening Thoughts

When the Trustee Website Committee took over the responsibility for publishing the Trustee Line after the Boston Trustee meeting this past Spring, there were many skeptics who were handicapping its burial. Some of the more memorable 'digs' were:

- It's an outdated idea
- Nobody cares anymore
- If you get 3 people to send in something, that will be a miracle
- Why waste your time
- It's never published regularly, so what's the point

Judging by the turnout for the 1st and 2nd issues on the Internet, it could be said that the rumors of the Trustee Line's demise are misplaced. It seems that there were a number of critical components that were necessary in order for this platform to succeed.

1. An Internet version was critical. No more are there space constraints, or printing costs, not to mention postage. It's the age of the digital documents and the cost savings are enormous.
2. The membership needed to know that the production schedule was easy to remember. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month at midnight ET. To paraphrase one person's remark from the other day. 'Now that I know it's the 20th of each month, I don't need the numerous reminders.' That is the easy part. Now all we have to do is to get all the Trustees to submit something each month.
3. Reminders are essential. You may not like the email reminders about the deadline, but they are producing results. We all have busy schedules and simply saying once that the next deadline is the 20th doesn't work.
4. Submissions are contagious. If the Trustees see that there are submissions, then they are more likely to be motivated to submit something on their own behalf. This is like falling dominos, which we hope will continue to spawn new items for each successive month of the Trustee Line.

The Trustee meetings are only for 2 days, twice a year. If the Trustees have a communication tool to use for the full year, GA as a whole will be the beneficiary. Many of you are reading this and the Trustee Website Committee is asking why you didn't submit something of your own. Isn't this how we share our experience, strength and hope?

The August Trustee Line is now officially open for new submissions. A new feature was added to this edition. We will now be showing topics that are covered by the new month's submissions. It's meant to be somewhat of a 'coming attractions' preview, but moreso it's meant to plant some seeds for people to think about submitting their own thoughts. The only thing we can't do is write them for you.

To submit a response to something written in this issue or have a new item added to the next Trustee Line, [click this link](#). You can even use the link for any comments or suggestions regarding what has been done or what you would like to see done in the future.

Thanks for all your entries,

The Trustee Website Committee

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### **From the Chairman of the Board of Trustees**

Dear Trustees,

My congratulations to the Trustee Website Committee for their success in putting together the first online issue of the Trustee Line. I was encouraged by the response and hope the participation continues.

As you read this there are less than 90 days before we meet in Florida and less than 30 days for submitting an item for the agenda. Please consider the effort that goes into setting up the agenda and, if your planning to submit an item, consider doing it now and not waiting for the last few days.

In the meantime, your executive board continues to work towards making the operation of the Board of Trustees and the BOT meetings as productive and efficient as possible. With that in mind, I am trying to put together some kind of informal meeting for the Wednesday evening before the start of the trustee meeting. Michelle J. and Chuck R., my two co-chairs and Karen H. our IES have agreed to participate and I hope to also have a representative of the Board of regents in attendance.

My plan is to structure this as an orientation session geared especially to the newly elected trustees. This will give the officers an opportunity to introduce ourselves and explain a bit about what it is we do an allow the new trustees a chance to get to know us and each other. It will also provide time to explain procedures used in the trustee meeting and give trustees a chance to ask questions about how things work.

So, whether you're a new trustee or a veteran, if you intend on being in Florida on Wednesday evening please plan to attend. As our program takes shape I will update you with more details.

Best Regards,  
Brother Denis - Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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### **From the 1st Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees**

I would like to welcome all the new Trustees and all the returning Trustees. Thank you all for being willing to serve the program. I encourage all the trustees-- especially the new trustees to ask questions and participate in discussions with other trustees. I am looking forward to meeting all the new trustees and seeing everyone in Florida for what promises to be a great conference.

One issue I would like some feedback on is an issue that I raised on behalf of another Trustee at the last conference. She has had an experience in GA where a member who had been attending groups in her area for some time, propositioned her and she feels she was taken advantage of due to the fact that she was new in the program and very vulnerable emotionally at that time. The agenda item proposed was not passed. I have to admit struggling with the issue of how to word a precaution to new members and whether it is even appropriate to put into our literature; and if so, where? This member feels very strongly that something should be put into the combo book since that is the main piece of literature read at the meetings. I have received some feedback from Trustees already and would welcome any other comments you may have.

I have to say that having these discussions on the Trustee Line are great since I will be able to discuss may of the issues raised with members in my area. I believe this will be a great help in raising awareness of the work that Trustees do

and in encouraging more members from my area to give me input prior to the BOT meetings. It has also been very helpful in keeping members in my area up to date with the committee work that is going on. I am looking forward to the upcoming issue!

Yours in recovery,  
Michelle J. - 1st Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees

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### From the International Executive Secretary at ISO

Hi Everyone,

I hope this letter finds you all well and enjoying the peace and serenity that comes into our lives as a result of this wonderful Program.

In the June issue I asked for help in receiving information about elections for Trustees from all Areas that we had not heard from. Since that time I have only heard from a few more Areas. If you are one of the nine Areas that received a letter from me and you have not responded, please do so as soon as possible. For those of you I have heard from, thank you very much. I will be sending out a page with the Trustee information we have for you the first part of August and ask that you look it over and make any corrections. I am hoping to have a complete Confidential Listing of Trustees compiled and sent out to you by September 1st.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Board of Trustees and also the new Board of Regents. I look forward to working with all of you.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank Tom M. for his past 2 years as Chairman of the Board of Regents. His unselfish dedication to Gamblers Anonymous is a true testament of his belief in what our Program of Recovery is all about. Thank you Tom for always being there.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of you for your continued support and if there is anything we here at the I.S.O. can do for you, just let us know.

Love to all,  
Karen H. - International Executive Secretary

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### From the Chairman of the Board of Regents

Thank you for the confidence in electing me to the Board of Regents. The responsibility of being on the Board as well as being Chairman is giving me the opportunity to work diligently for the continuing success of our fellowship. The next Board meeting will be discussing the National Hot Line and the financial problems attendant thereto. In addition, we will be discussing how to improve the Bulletin. If you have any suggestions they will be more than welcome. Bob W., our new Recording Secretary, will be providing detailed minutes of our meeting, so that you will be better informed. I look forward to meeting all of you at the conference in Florida.

Respectfully,  
Benni F. - Chairman of the Board of Regents

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### From the Trustees

Hello

This is my first (and probably my last) submission to the trustee line. I am the outgoing trustee for Area 2A. I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone

that supported me and our program over the past 2 years. I also want to comment on the various trustees that I met over the past two years attending a couple of trustee meetings. Most of these people were, like me, involved because of basic altruistic reasons. I think the majority want to genuinely help their fellow gamblers and in turn help themselves by doing so.

I was extremely disappointed at the last conference when we weren't able to get through the entire agenda. There are a variety of reasons for this but, in my opinion, the main one is those of us trustees who seem to need to waste the board's time by bringing up ridiculous points of information or points of order. We are all adults here, are we not? Some of the behavior displayed by some of our trustees was embarrassing. In some cases it was obvious that personal agendas were being accommodated. Not so much by the chair, but by the individual trustees themselves. No knock to Brother Denis M. He did a terrific job under the circumstances. I feel that some of us need to take a close hard look at why we are trustees, why we attend trustee meetings and finally, are we putting the greater good ahead of our own personal wants and wishes. I felt terrible for Gary and the phone committee. It was as if he was being kicked in the teeth for a job that I feel he has tackled with exceptionally and thoroughly. All for free!!!! It's not like he's being paid so why attack him for doing a job that needs to be done. Those of you who feel the need to criticize should perhaps take it upon yourself to volunteer for some of these committees and do something yourself. Either that or don't run for trustee the next time an election comes up. Let someone more positive take over.

A lot of trustees travel long distances to attend trustee meetings and wasting their time and those of the people who entrust them to make progress at these meetings is pointless and an affront to the entire process.

As for the rest, I want to wish everyone all the best, good luck and keep pluggin'. It's been a great experience and I wish you all the serenity you all deserve, one day at a time.

Mike Y - Area 2A

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Response to Gail L.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 7th item in the 'From The Trustees' section:

Dear Gail,

Although my opinion will certainly be argued with, I feel that the couple mentioned in your letter did not gamble. It is important to note that the definition of gambling specifically says "any betting or wagering...". Even though the ensuing parameters are given, such as "for money or not", the actual event must be a bet or wager. By that limitation, the couple did not gamble - they only entered a contest where there was nothing at stake.

I feel that we, as a body and as individual members, need to stop being the gambling police. For myself, I know that if something makes me feel uncomfortable, even though it is technically not gambling, then I shouldn't do it. We should give others the same leeway. Of course we all need guidance in the program as newcomers, but I'm certain that if my personal life were dictated by others, I would have cut and run long ago.

Yours in GA,  
Chuck R. - Area 15

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I have attended many Trustee meetings and I'm usually frustrated by the amount of 'points of order' and the overwhelming repetitious points of information. However the fact that we did not complete the agenda did not seem to bother me. I was too upset about not seeing 3 Trustees that I had seen just a few months

before in San Diego. We lost a huge wealth of experience and a irreplaceable amount of love. Comets are brilliant but their time span is not like the sun. 3 who worked for us from start to finish

Bill B. - Area 15

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Dear Trustees,

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has been of assistance to me in the past two years. There are too many names because so many of you have helped in one way or another. My first two years as a trustee have been very interesting and helpful to my recovery. I must give a big thanks to Rick B. for all his help and guidance in the past two years. I truly enjoyed working with him and will continue to use him for guidance.

I have to express one thought that I was extremely bothered with at the Boston conference. We (The BOT) placed a rule; if you want to call it that; that if two people speak in favor or opposed to an agenda item then the following speaker would be in opposition of the first two speakers. Ok, this is great and I believe it works, but why don't we go a step further and say if everyone at the microphone is in favor (or all opposed) then we limit it to five speakers and then take the vote. I still can not understand why we have to hear 15 people speak in favor or opposition to an agenda item. If everyone standing up is all against (or in favor) then let's just take the vote and save 20 minutes for an item that may have quite a few different view points!! I am not really sure how to word this correctly, but if anyone on this board feels the same way I would be happy to put this item on the agenda.

Since Boston there are a few things in Area 6B that I have been working on and I can't think of a better place to let others know that I am open to any help or guidance that they may have. First, I have been in contact with Gary B. because I was interested in re-writing the pamphlet titled Young Gamblers in Recovery. I have actually been in contact with a few people on this matter. I have come up with the first rough draft and submitted it to Gary and the literature committee. The problem is that I am not a very good writer, so I am not sure that I am able to deliver the message that I was hoping to put in this piece of literature. I believe that we can all see a younger group of people coming into our rooms and I felt that there was some need to enhance the current pamphlet. If anyone is interested in helping let me or Gary know and we can email a copy of the current rough draft. I would really appreciate any assistance that I can get with this.

Also, in this area we really struggle with pressure relief. Currently we have 19 meetings (that could be wrong, but it was just off the top of my head) and I believe that we have about five members that can do a pressure relief. The problem is that it is NOT being done. Maybe I should say very rarely being done. I am not sure how to go about making the different rooms in my area understand that pressure relief is an extremely important part of our program. I believe correct me if I am wrong that every room should have at least one person that can do a pressure relief. If this is correct then how can I help this area to make pressure relief an important part of recovery?

Finally, I just want to give a little message that was extremely helpful to me as a new trustee. I remember sitting in New Orleans (my first trustee meeting) in room full of people that seemed to know so much more about this fellowship than I could imagine. I thought right away I would never get up to that microphone and speak. I was truly afraid that everyone in the room would basically tell me I didn't have any business being in the room or on the BOT. However, something came up on the agenda that my area wanted Rick and I to vote a certain way on and I had a strong opinion on this topic. I leaned over to Rick and began to discuss it with him and in the end he said, "get up on the mike." I thought he was absolutely crazy and tried to persuade him to get up and speak on the subject.

Rick was not going to get up and speak, not because in any way was he intimidated, but he knew how important it was for me to get up and speak on the topic that was important to me and my area. Had he gotten up and spoke for me, I to this day would never have gotten up in front of this group and spoke on anything. Again, thanks Rick for all your help!! Please, encourage the new trustees to get up and speak on issues they feel are important to their area.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Florida in October.

Sincerely,  
Dina P. - Area 6B

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I would like to speak on the inclusion of 'the Internet' in our Unity Program. Many over the years have asked for the following change to step Eleven:

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, (and television and the Internet.

On many occasions I considered the idea of including the Internet as a form of public relations, but I would like to mention something for many trustees that requires serious consideration (and I prefer to do this here or on e-mail rather than waste 10 minutes ranting at a Trustee meeting).

When you are in press, radio, films or television, you are typically 'requested' by a company, a reporter, a news anchor, broadcaster - whatever...to do an interview or tell your story on News Channel 8 or THEY ask to write the article to tell your story. THEY control what's going on, THEY control the blackout on your face, what is dubbed, what is said, etc. That is why we have steps in place to save (and respect) personal anonymity WHEN THEY ASK US...just as the Unity Program requests of us in the event we want to use our stories to attract new members to the program. This is the essence behind public relations and that's why many 12-Step Program survive public relations successfully without conflict of interest and without opinion on outside issues.

On the Internet however, it is a different story. There is no company that asked me to go on, nobody controlling what is said, nobody editing anything, nobody changing my name, voice or blacking out my portrait. This makes a huge difference between what the Internet is, and what is 'press, radio, films and television'. Those were examples of media.

Now let me take my point to extreme...If I want to rub green jello all over my naked body and run around downtowns of every GA conference city singing 'I'm Alan S---, and I'm an Oscar Meyer Weeeei-ner and a Com-pul-sive Gaaaaambler in Gamblers Anonymous!' I can. That is not Public Relations. That is free speech. This exaggerated example would be ridiculous, foolhardy and I would forever be looked at with odd familiarity, but that would be \*my\* choice.

The idea of speech is as free as it would be for me to print my picture, e-mail address and my problem and that I am in Gamblers Anonymous on tens of thousands of leaflets and scatter them out from the observation deck of the Empire State Building free for the winds to carry the information all over Manhattan. It is free speech -- albeit electronic in the case of the Internet, free for anyone to find and instantaneously fast, but the bottom line is 'I CHOSE' to create a blog, website, or webspace, or simply put my personal information out there.

You cannot force people not to do anything outside of legal intervention with cause. That is why Gamblers Anonymous has cease and desist orders, letters that can be and have been issued by their legal department. Adding this wording (the Internet) to 'any' 12-Step's 'Program of Unity' is convoluted and dangerous. No member should ever tell another member what to do aside from what is regarded

as 'principle' or what they 'could' do based on 'personal experience'. As a trusted servant, I would certainly respect it in my role as Trustee.

It never ceases to amaze me how personal opinion does not go without consideration to the existing principles that are already in place and the implications they would create. You want to break your anonymity as a compulsive gamblers (up to the level of press radio film and TV) knock yourself out. You want to add a 13th Step of Gamblers Anonymous Recovery about rubbing green jello on your website and call it Gamblers Anonymous, well then -- we'll see you in court.

And really, when the bottom line comes down, this concept comes down to common sense, not semantics. I come to Gamblers Anonymous to better myself from compulsive gambling. We're not even close to even having an entry as political as AA does on Wikipedia. You don't see them chasing down the owners like Enron and presidential entries for sake of reputation. Our reputation comes in the form of people helping each other to help ourselves.

Welcome to the world of free speech in the electronics age. In this highly technological state of the world we're in - it's a no-brainer.

Thank you for the read and seriously consider what you wish to vote on when you are considering this and ongoing motions which carry many ambiguous ideals.

Alan S. - Area 2E

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At last count, it seems that there are 35 brand new Trustees who have been elected for the new 2-year term. As of this submission, there are still a number of areas that have not officially notified ISO about the details of their Trustees, new or otherwise. Having said that, it is now an issue of how to educate these new Trustees about the structured insanity that we call a Trustee meeting.

I remember my 1st Trustee meeting in Montreal 2000. Close to 100 people were in that meeting and here I was almost shaking in my shoes thinking about what I should be doing, what I should say, when to say it and how not to embarrass myself. Although the meeting started out calmly and quite orderly, it was the calm before the storm.

All of a sudden someone blurted out 'I challenge the chair.' My next thought was that this was going to dueling pistols at 20 paces to settle the problem. Obviously that did not happen, but it became very evident that in order to eliminate personalities, there had to be a very strong structure to the meeting. Procedures had to be followed and the Chair of the BOT was the determining factor as to what was supposed to be.

The more I got into the meeting, the more I found how little I knew about those procedures and the more intimidating the Trustee meetings was. For those of you who know me, I'm not the bashful type, and getting up to the microphone and making several procedural errors was the path I chose to learn the in's and out's of the Trustee meeting.

What I have noticed in those 6 years of being a Trustee is that the vast majority of the Trustees do not get up to the microphone to either ask questions of clarification or to voice their opinions on the various agenda items. To that I say shame on all of us. I believe that many of the Trustees are not comfortable with procedures at the Trustee meetings and would rather sit and mind their own business rather than to risk doing or saying something that might make them feel embarrassed.

I am looking for direct feedback from everyone who reads this to find out if there is enough interest among the Trustees, especially the new Trustees, to hold a conference call in which any Trustee gets to ask our Chairman of the BOT about

any procedural question that might come up during the Trustee meeting in Fort Lauderdale. This would be everyone's chance to find out how to submit a motion. How to get the attention of the Chair. How to get assigned to a committee. Or any one of a thousand questions.

The worst feeling is sitting in the Trustee meeting and feeling like a deer in the headlights. You got elected to represent your area. Why not do it with the knowledge of how things work? Be heard and make a difference with your opinion, but do it without the guesswork of who, what, where and when.

The more positive feedback I get from this submission, the more likely it will happen before the October Trustee meeting in Florida, and act as a stepping stone for more technological matters of efficiency in the future. Just like the Trustee Line; its success depends on everyone's contribution. Let me know if you think it's a good idea and it may just be one step closer to getting it done.

Just [click here](#) to send me an email what will let me know how you feel about this communication and education tool for the Trustees.

David M. - Trustee Website Administrator  
Area 12

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Hi to all Trustees,

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at the Fort Lauderdale Conference, being held at the Bonaventure Resort & Spa, on the weekend of October 20th through the 22nd. (Remember that our Trustee meeting starts on the 19th.) A conference is a great way to reconnect with old friends, as well as make some new ones! I am sure we will all have a great time of fellowship and recovery here in Fort Lauderdale. If you have not made your reservation yet, please get it in. You need to call the hotel directly and then send in your conference registration to the conference committee.

If arriving by airport, please remember that there will not be any organized transportation to the hotel. You can rent a car, take a taxi, or the super shuttle, which is the least expensive. The golf outings will be on Thursday morning at 7 AM and on Friday afternoon. If there are any questions please contact the committee as soon as possible.

Your brother,

Lloyd A. - Reservation committee  
Area 6

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Hi fellow Trustees and past Trustees,

It has just come to my attention that the Bonaventure Resort has hired the Hyatt Management Team to manage the hotel. If you have any difficulty in making your reservation please inform the clerk that you need In-House Reservations, or call the 954 number. During off hours the 800 number will ring in Hyatts office and they are not yet ready to handle our conference with their computers.

So again, if you have any problems either ask for In-House reservations, or call back during normal business hours, or call the local number.

As always, if there is a problem please call me directly.  
See you all very soon....and get your reservations in!!!!

Your brother,  
Richie S. - Fort Lauderdale Conference Committee Chair  
Area 6

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The purpose of this article is to get feedback on determining the course of action to take, if any, regarding an issue in Area 2 Northern California.

In David M.'s reminder about the July 20 submission deadline to the Trustee Line, David reports there is a substantial number of recently-elected Trustees for the very first time and a fewer number of recently-elected Trustees who were Trustees once before. Based on these facts, I believe it is worthwhile to provide additional background information about the following item, which I had presented at Boston's BOT meeting this past spring and requested a straw vote poll from the Board:

Is a 'workbook' -- put together by an individual G.A. member containing the 12 Steps of Unity and the text of each Unity Step reprinted from the G.A. "Red Book" combined with a list of questions (developed by the member) intended to promote discussion of each Step -- passed out to members in attendance during a closed G.A. meeting considered approved G.A. literature?

- A G.A. member put together and printed a 'workbook' that has the 12 Steps of Unity and the text of each Unity Step reprinted from the G.A. 'A New Beginning'.
- Directly underneath a particular Unity Step is a list of questions developed by the member.
- This workbook is a work-in-progress and intended to promote discussion and a better understanding of each Unity Step.
- It is used only at this particular meeting.
- It is passed out to members in attendance during a closed meeting, and the discussion (generally 15-20 minutes) takes place immediately after the reading of the Combo Book and before the break and therapy portion of the meeting.
- This meeting format takes place once a month.
- Following is a sample question for Unity Step 9, 'Gamblers Anonymous, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.'  
- - 'Is G.A. a democratic or communistic organization?'

A straw vote was taken and the consensus of the Board through its vote of 0-78 determined that the 'workbook' in the above scenario is not considered approved G.A. literature. The overwhelming result clearly reflects the Board's validation that approved G.A. literature means that all literature used by the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous must first be approved by the Board of Trustees. We know also that approved literature carries the Gamblers Anonymous seal.

In my opinion, approved G.A. literature does not mean the Board of Trustees disapproves of any other publications; however it disapproves of their use at G.A. meetings unless they will have been passed by two-thirds of the votes cast at two consecutive conference meetings. Further, the Guidance Code states that a group will be known as a Gamblers Anonymous group, *only* if it applies itself to follow the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code and *limits its use only to approved Gamblers Anonymous literature*. Therefore, a group that chooses to use any other publication, other than G.A. approved literature at its meetings, clearly tells me that it cannot be known as a Gamblers Anonymous group.

As a Trustee, I believe my responsibility is not to prescribe to the group what it should or should not do, rather to communicate to them what is contained in the G.A. Guidance Code as it relates to this particular issue. More importantly, I have a responsibility to protect the integrity of our Guidance Code, which is the very framework of Gamblers Anonymous that guides us as individuals and as a Fellowship. I must adhere to and fulfill the responsibility of following one of the guidelines for National Trustees of G.A., which is: 'Uphold and try to implement the Guidance Code, and all decisions made by the Board of Trustees (not fulfilling this affects G.A. as a whole).'

The G.A. group using the unapproved workbook has been made aware of what is contained in the Guidance Code and apprised of the Board's decision, but it believes the situation is a matter in which an individual G.A. group can exercise its self-governing rights; therefore it intends to continue using the workbook.

Given the Board has pronounced that the workbook is not approved G.A. literature, then I ask, 'What next?' Some of the many questions that come to mind are: If in fact this group cannot be known as a G.A. group, does it mean the group should be removed from the Area 2 Meeting List and the meeting directory of the G.A. Web site? Does it mean that our Intergroup and the ISO cannot accept the group's contributions? Does it mean the group will no longer receive the monthly ISO Bulletin? What are the next steps for the Area 2 Trustees, or for that matter, the Board?

Thanks in advance for letting me know of your comments, concerns or suggestions!

Ed E. - Area 2

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Response to David M.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 8th item in the 'From The Trustees' section:

David,

I'm responding to your June 20 article regarding the events you described and experienced at a 24 Step meeting in your Area.

Not only did "the use of the recording device" at the meeting breach a past trustee decision (#31 of Groups & Intergroups), but also "the reading of a piece of non-GA approved material" clearly contradicts our Guidance Code because Gamblers Anonymous groups are to limit their use only to approved Gamblers Anonymous literature.

Past Trustee Decision #31 of Groups & Intergroups states: "Board consensus is that tape recording of a G.A. meeting without the consent of the group does affect G.A. as a whole." This particular decision rendered by the board in Montreal 2004 does not address a tape recording by group consent. Therefore I believe your intent to introduce a measure that would disallow tape recordings of any kind, whether consented through group conscience or otherwise, would go a long way toward providing specificity to issues of tape recordings at G.A. meetings.

While I have not yet seen the language of your proposed motion, I believe the proper placement of this item prohibiting the use of recording devices would be in the Guidance Code, as opposed to being documented as just another past trustee decision. The reason is that items in the Guidance Code not only provide more "clout" and ascendancy to a decision -- based on passage by two-thirds of the votes cast at two consecutive conference meetings -- but also, whereas the listing of Past Trustee Decisions has limited distribution, the Guidance Code is made available to every member of the Fellowship. A group cannot claim ignorance about the existence of this publication since every starter kit contains the Guidance Code, which is the framework of Gamblers Anonymous that guides us as individuals and as a Fellowship.

In summary, I urge others to support the introduction of any resolution which would better distinguish matters that affect other groups or G.A. as a whole from matters relating to groups' self-governing rights. I look forward to reading the text of your motion in the weeks to come, David.

Ed E. - Area 2

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Tape recorded meetings - Part 2

This month I want to continue with the outcome of the June 26th meeting of the monthly meeting of the Trustees of Area 12 and the NJ Intergroup meeting that followed.

For those of you reading this and not understanding what brought this subject to a head, I suggest you read the Trustee Line for last month. My prior submission on this subject is the next to the last item in that issue. Reading that will give you the background for this month's issue.

I brought this subject up to our Trustees and asked for their backing as the subject was part of the new business part of the NJ Intergroup meeting. Much to my surprise, only 1 of the 6 Trustees agreed with my position about the complete inappropriateness of the tape-recorded meeting, and the violations of the Guidance Code and NJ Intergroup guidelines. Out of the remaining 5 Trustees, questions were asked, such as: 'Where in the Guidance Code does it say you can't tape record a meeting?' The question that really sent me over the edge was: 'Who is it really hurting?' Some actually voiced no opinion.

What became apparent to me is that questions like that are about being a Trustee for the photo op, to coin a phrase, but not to ruffle the feathers of those members who will be responsible for re-electing them in 2 years.

Article VIII, Section 8 of the Guidance Code states: 'The Board of Trustees shall act as guardians of the Twelve Steps of RECOVERY and the Twelve Step UNITY PROGRAM and must be guided by these precepts in all their decisions.' The BOT came up with a consensus opinion 2 years ago about recording meetings without the consent and it affecting GA as a whole. That takes direct aim at Unity Step 4 from the Red Book that states 'Each Gamblers Anonymous group has great latitude to conduct its affairs within the framework of the Fellowship. This preserves the freedom of choice that is so important to the group conscience. The conduct of each group is limited only to the extent that its actions would conflict with the Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous.' I don't know how much more direct this can be, but it was not only the members of our Intergroup who chose to look the other way, it was also the Trustees.

In the discussion on the item, I received minimal support on the issue. I say minimal, because no additional people stood up and said 'This is wrong, it shouldn't have happened, and we have to stop this from happening again.' Instead, I heard more comments about that it was hurting no one, and that it has been going on for 10 years and nobody complained about it until now, so why is there suddenly a problem? Comments continued about how we were fostering a GA Police squad, and that nobody from Intergroup or anywhere else could tell anyone how to run a meeting, along with why is it that one person didn't like the meeting and now we have to waste our time discussing this issue.

My proposal included the formulation of a committee to strengthen the pre-opening announcements that we read in each of our 38 rooms, in which we say: 'No cameras, tape recorders, or recording devices of any kind in the GA room at any time.' This was meant to prevent such an occurrence from happening in the future. The Chair chose not to form a committee. As a result, I have put together a motion for the Fort Lauderdale agenda that will help those Trustees who chose to not follow the Guidance Code unless there is specific language, and even then that may not be enough motivation for them to be the Guardians they are supposed to be as Trustee. I also hope that it will underscore the detrimental effects of conducting a meeting with any recording device, irrespective of the best intentions of those running that room or particular meeting.

The items is as follows:

Article VII, insert new Section 6

Group meetings or events are governed by Unity Step 4, with the exception that no cameras, tape recorders or recording devices of any kind are allowed at any time, irrespective of group conscience decisions.

To pass this item, it will take a vote requiring a two-thirds majority in 2 successive meetings. In Fort Lauderdale, I intend on outlining all the detrimental issues that are a result of tape- recording GA meetings. I welcome those members who wish to support this along with those who might in some way justify this conduct as completely acceptable.

There continues to be many issues that others feel are appropriate and I disagree with. The important thing is the decision by the BOT will be the group conscience, and I will abide by those decisions. I hold no bitterness to those who have rationalized that tape-recorded meetings are acceptable. For now, I just shake my head in disbelief and hope that during the Trustee meeting in Florida, an open discussion on this item will shed some light on this very sensitive issue.

David M. - Area 12

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As a new trustee, I'm looking forward to the Florida Conference. GA has saved my life and I'm honored that I can 'give back' by serving as one of our area's trustees. Leanne W., my fellow trustee in this new adventure, suggested I get my feet wet and submit this item to the Trustee Line. So, here it goes. We've had an issue in our area recently that many would like addressed. Should a trustee need to reside in the area she/he represents? Until recently, I just thought it was understood. One of our trustees moved out the area. Many members were displeased and thought she should have stepped down. Much of the slack seemed to be picked up by our other trustee.

We would like feedback from other trustees. Has any area had a similar situation? Should area residence be required for a trustee? Should a motion be made for a BOT Meeting to add residence requirements in the Guidance Code? Thanks for your input!!!

Laine P. - Area 7

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Hello everyone, my name is Ara H, newly elected trustee from AREA 1. Los Angeles, Ca. Even though this is my first time as trustee, I have served twice on the Board of Regents, and I am now serving as chairman of LA Intergroup. I have been to many trustee meetings in the past, presenting different literature changes to our combo book. I have enjoyed the opportunity to propose how I felt the literature should be changed.

I am looking forward to the conference in October in Florida, I have already booked my flight and room. I am looking forward to meeting new friends and seeing old ones.

Respectfully,  
Ara H. - Area 1.

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Dear G.A. Brothers and Sisters

I am respectfully asking for your help. I was selected to chair a very important committee which ,in my opinion could be one of the most important tools directly related to new member retention. The 90 Day room Committee is asking for any positive suggestions that you may have concerning the 90 Day Room as to format and structure . We would love to get suggestions from across the fellowship as to what you think should happen when a new member enters the program.

For those of you who are not familiar with the 90 Day Room , It is a small segment of a meeting dedicated to emplaning to the new member how the Program works . We have found this to be extremely helpful in keeping are new members attending meetings. There are many thought and feelings about what is said in this room and exactly what information is presented. This is why we are

asking for as much feedback as we can get.

If you have any ideas which you would like the committee to review please contact me via the phone numbers and email listed in the Confidential Trustee Listing.

Thank you in advance.  
Andy D. - Area 12

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Response to Gail L.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 7th item in the 'From The Trustees' section:

In regard to the note from Gail, Area 3 trustee. I believe what happened in this wedding contest constitutes gambling. We all know, no matter what happens with members if they don't admit to gambling I certainly can't tell them they gambled, that's entirely up to the individual members. As far as television and radio contests are concerned, (Any contest) somewhere in our literature should cover it. Actually it already does in the past trustee decisions, but some people are not satisfied with newspaper contests, they need it separated and that's ok with me. Here in Las Vegas over the years people have seen others gambling in casinos and convenience stores. Until they admit it no one can take their abstinence away from them.

Thank You  
Ron S. - Area 3

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Dear Fellow Trustees:

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am excited about attending Ft. Lauderdale. Although I have attended the last six conventions as a Member-at-Large, this will be my first one as a Trustee!!! I feel blessed to have made many friends and acquaintances over the last 3 ½ years and am looking forward to fulfilling my responsibility as a Trustee for Area 3.

That being said, I would like to bring up an issue that I hope will generate some discussion and solutions! A recent study published through the University of Minnesota stated that there are over 500 million compulsive/problem gamblers in the world, but only 10% will actually seek help. Of those 10% that seek help, there are probably only 3% that will 'stick' to the program. I don't know, and can't speak for the rest of you, but those 'odds' scare the heck out of me. Bottom line: Are we, the elected Trusted Servants of Gamblers' Anonymous, doing all that we can to encourage retention of ourselves and fellow members?

Although I have read through all of our literature at one point or another, I had forgotten about two particular pieces: "Have I Quit the Fellowship?" and the "Twenty Survival Questions for Gamblers Anonymous Members" found in the green Information Packet. I have heard in countless meetings "...I owe Gamblers Anonymous my life" or "...I go to one meeting a week and get my dollar's worth" or "...I missed going to meetings for a couple of weeks because I had family in town, overtime at work, stuff going on at home"....Sound familiar? Complacency is one of the most common denominators in many compulsive gamblers' statements upon returning after a relapse. Among other reasons cited: Failure to stay 'connected' with other members, lack of service at meeting and/or Intergroup level, failure to get a sponsor (or use one), failure to work the Steps with a sponsor, insufficient number of meetings, and too busy to attend meetings.

I liked the perspective of the little booklet "Have I Quit the Fellowship?", in which it is pointed out "...What else must I do to quit Gamblers Anonymous?" and lists ten questions that we all should be asking of ourselves on a regular basis, just as page 17 of the Combo Book tells us to continuously review the 20 Questions and read the Recovery and Unity Steps often. Some of those questions are as follows:

- 1) What if every member were as lax in attendance as I am?
- 2) What if every member gave as little moral, spiritual, and financial support as I do?
- 3) Am I part of the problem instead of part of the solution?
- 4) I have often said that I owe my life to this fellowship, but do I really mean it?
- 5) Do I give as well as take?
- 6) There are thousands of compulsive gamblers who will some day ask for help. Will you be there when they do?

The second article found in the green Information Packet titled the "Twenty Survival Questions for Gamblers Anonymous Members" should be an integral part of our program as stated on page 17. I, for one, am going to begin incorporating these additional 20 Survival Questions into my regular weekly review which includes the 20 Questions, Unity Steps and the Recovery Steps. Some of those questions include:

DO YOU:

- 1) Sponsor members?
- 2) Make 12 step calls?
- 3) Maintain regular personal and social contact with other Gamblers Anonymous members?
- 4) Continue to try and maintain the HOW, "Honesty", "Open-Mindedness", and "Willingness"?
- 5) Continue to remove your defects and shortcomings through working the 12 Steps of Recovery?
- 6) Continue to be aware that your gambling compulsion is only 'arrested', not 'cured'?
- 7) Place principles before personalities?
- 8) Regularly support your Gamblers Anonymous group, ISO, regional office, Intergroups, and other GA functions, with your contributions?

In closing, I just want to state that as Trusted Servants, we need to be setting the examples of living and practicing the principles of this program..Remember, the program that saved our life!!! Even easier, those precepts are found in that same little green Information Packet and are described in the article titled "Guidelines for National Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous".

Best Regards,  
Karen L. - Area 3

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To all my fellow Trustees,

I would like to take advantage of the new online web TRUSTLINE. I was very impressed with the first online issue and the number of letters and the content. I enjoy being informed on what's going on in all of our areas and I thank all of you for making it happen.

The exchange of ideas is what I had meant by the item I had put on the Boston agenda and now for the Florida fall conference of taking our Intergroups from "GOOD 2 GREAT". We are elected by our respective areas and Intergroups and yet we do not focus on the Good, Bad and sometimes Ugly parts of our Intergroup meetings.

Please- let me first clarify that I believe in our Intergroups and their purpose. Also, I am not stating that all Intergroups are Good, Bad or Ugly. All I am saying is that we can make everything better. By exchanging the Good, Bad and Ugly points in an ongoing basis, which is how we should make our Intergroups "GOOD 2 GREAT"... Just like character changes we should be doing an honest inventory of our Intergroups.

Let me give you an example. Last year I had written a letter in the ISO bulletin

about how I look at Intergroups and was trying to point out that Intergroups will not change if the members, reps and officers do something other than just complaining. We all should be involved with our own Intergroups and not just sit speechless in each meeting like deadwood. I had gotten a lot of nasty comments but mostly some great comments. The senior members' comments were more beneficial to me and gave me the encouragement to create the "GOOD 2 GREAT" concept. They had seen the Good, Bad and Ugly over the years in their Intergroups and not just the short viewpoint that I had in my recovery to date.

One of the very first comments came from Bob K in North Carolina. Bob had called and introduced himself and we proceeded to talk for the next hour or maybe 2. It was such a great conversation and now we have become friends. Hopefully he will be in Florida for the conference and we can meet in person. Anyway, back to my point. Bob has been in the program for a lot longer than myself and he agreed with my article. He told me that he has drifted away from truly being involved in his Intergroup and was going to go back due to my article. Two weeks ago he had called and told me that he has now been elected the Chairman of his area Intergroup and is looking forward to his new term. Now that is the true essence of the "GOOD 2 GREAT" concept.

Again, if we do not take a true inventory, then we are doomed to follow some of our past learning curves. Why don't we help each other? Why don't we help build the Intergroups that are just starting and have them learn from the ones that are Good and trying to make themselves Great? I would hope that their membership would grow with a more positive effort. They would be starting out with the "GOOD 2 GREAT" concept, knowing that it will only get better and better.

With all the respect of our program,  
Gary S. - Area 12

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