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Trustee Line for August 20, 2006

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Response to David M.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 7th item in the 'From The Trustees' section and the [July 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 10th item in the 'From The Trustees' section

I have read comments about the Taped 'meeting' and I'm really surprised at the 'outrage' and misunderstanding of the FACTS. First let me make it understood that I was there and I did participate. That said, let me also make it very clear the this was NOT a Gamblers Anonymous meeting...It was a meeting of people who are members of Gamblers Anonymous-I'm not word playing-Members were asked to put forth their views on one of the 24 steps and that the session would be taped. I was not even told what step that I would be asked to comment upon.This event was not anything more than a way of exchanging personal opinions on the steps will the idea that members who do not have access to or never heard of a step meeting. It was very simply put another way to make a conference 'phone call'...We also seem to be putting too much weight on Past Trustee Decisions-Now there is an great example of a piece of 'literature' that has not been approved as Gamblers Anonymous literature being WIDELY circulated and assumed by many to be THE WORD. Getting back to the subject at hand-nothing was taken out of a Gamblers Anonymous room because there was no Gamblers Anonymous room. Also there was no question about the fact that the comments were being taped because the mic was being handed around from one to another.

Well enough on this-see you soon
Bill B. - Area 15

PS - Since writing this comment I have learned from others that not everyone was approached as myself. I knew nothing about flyers-NJ Intergroup. I just received a phone call asking me to participate in a disussion of the 24 steps.

Dear Fellow Trustees,

I hope all of you are having a good summer.

On Thursday, July 13, Denis, Michelle and I had a conference call to discuss our individual and mutual Trustee issues. We are trying to do these calls on a monthly basis so that there is communication among us and so that individual Trustee matters relayed to any of the three of us can be shared. We all agree that this is a very productive method of communication since e-mails may not necessarily be read nor answered immediately.

I am pleased to let you know that there will be a Wednesday, October 18th evening meeting at the Florida conference for all new Trustees so that we can discuss meeting procedures. The three of us as well as Benni F., the newly elected chair of the Board of Regents and Karen H. will be in attendance. We plan to talk about how the Trustee meetings are run so that new Trustees do not walk in cold to their first meeting. Of course, any Trustee is invited, whether newly elected or not.

The Florida conference is being well organized and planned by the Conference Chair, Richie S. Believe it or not, it is less than 90 days away. Please be sure to make your reservations ASAP. Remember - your hotel reservation must be made directly with the hotel and conference registration must be made separately with the committee (there is a registration form in the current ISO Bulletin).

Thanks again to David M. for his work on putting the Trustee Line online.

Yours in recovery,
Chuck R. - 2nd Co-Chair, Board of Trustees
Area - 15

Hello to all Trustees

We have an update for the Southern Conference to be held Oct 19th through the 22nd.

The hotel is now a Hyatt property. The hotel is giving us until Sept 8th to get all reservations in, which will guarantee a room at the rate stated in the conference flyer. After Sept 8th, the hotel will take reservations, but there will be no guarantee of getting a room as part of the Southern Conference. It will be based on availability.

So please call and get your reservations in NOW. Please do not procrastinate any longer or you may end up staying at a completely different hotel. Why take the "chance" that you might not get a room?

Rich S. - Fort Lauderdale Conference Chair
Area 6

From the July 21th Board of Regents Minutes: "There was also a discussion on cutting back the Anniversary listings in the Life-Line bulletin. A suggestion was made to list only pinning years. This would save 2-3 pages and result in a small printing and mailing savings. It was decided to check with the Trustees and get their opinion on this."

My response sent to Karen H (International Executive Secretary) and cc'ed Bob W (Secretary of the Board of Regents):

'Today I received my copy of the Board of Regents minutes for last month. I am writing to express my opinion on the fact that it is being considered that the anniversaries only be listed for the pinning years. I am against that idea as I look every month to see who is celebrating a milestone across the world. Each anniversary is an important milestone, not to be missed. I like to see when elders as well as those in the early years of our program celebrate a milestone from around the world.

If Gamblers Anonymous is in dire financial straights, than it should look at this as a cost cutting measure, but otherwise the anniversaries should be left alone and printed in the lifeliner as they presently are. We need to show the newcomer that this program works and for them to look through the lifeliner and see pages and pages of anniversaries is WONDERFUL.'

Thanks,
Richard C - Area 2A

Response to David M.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 7th item in the 'From The Trustees' section and the [July 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 10th item in the 'From The Trustees' section

David,

In response to your item in the June and July trustee lines about tape recording a meeting. It is my understanding that if one person in the room objects to having the meeting taped then it cannot happen. I believe that this breaks the anonymity of the person who objects. How does a person know who will be listening to those tapes. It is no ones business who is in a room or what is said in a room. If you want to know you should have been there. I am a firm believer in respecting every ones anonymity and in my opinion taping a meeting when one person objects is breaking their anonymity. I also think that this a violation of the past trustee decision #31 of groups and intergroups. In the Guidance Code Article VII Section 1 it clearly states that a group apply themselves to follow the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code and limit their use to only approved Gamblers Anonymous Literature.

Leanne W.
Area 7

Copy of an email that was sent to Benni F, Chairman of the Board of Regents

Hi Benni,

I just got thru reading the BOR minutes of the last meeting, I have a few questions....

What is the need to cut back on the bulletins that are sent to each room. Are we losing money? I know we give most of them out and ask people to bring them back after reading, and we give them mostly to the new member, as they are wanting to hear & read that they are not alone. If we need the money, don't hurt the new member.

Now on to # 2, I don't know who made the suggestion about cutting back on the Anniversary Pages, but wake him or her up. I know how I felt seeing my anniversary date in print for the first few years, I looked forward to it. Ask that person if they did. It seems to me that these two suggestions are not needed at this time, I don't believe we have that much of a money problem. If we do, then we are doing something wrong.

Well Benni, that's it for me. I would like to hear from you or any member of the BOR & will see you soon in Fla.

Joe B. - Area 6C

What was seen by me in the first years of recovery as the mysterious "past trustee decisions" seem to have cause some problems in our area. I have tried to read all the literature for GA and especially the dos and don'ts, better known as guidelines. According

to the guidelines a member's date of abstinence is the date of their first meeting after their last bet. However, I was told that their is a past trustee decision to clarify it to only be meant for new members and if you relapse you use the date of your last bet.

I sure many people say what is the difference, but I have seen it cause a rift for new members when they are treated differently. On more than one occasion a new member came in on the same night as a past member returning. The new member was insulted and made to feel they were held to a different standard as they had to use that night as their date but the member returning use the day of their last bet (which could have been weeks ago). Needless to say the new member use this for a reason not to return. It has also cause sour feeling between members.

I realize we will all find reasons not to do what is best for us or an excuse to stay in action, but I feel this has cause problems in our area. I would like to propose an agenda item for the spring conference to change the way the guidance code currently reads to: "Date of abstinence starts from your first meeting after your last bet, whether this is your first time to GA or your return to GA after a relapse." This is found on page 5, Article VII Section 5.

I would appreciate the input from other trustees and suggestions as to how to work the motion to gain the most support.

Carol K. - Area 9

Response to David M.'s letter to the [June 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 7th item in the 'From The Trustees' section and the [July 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 10th item in the 'From The Trustees' section

Hello All,

I would like to show support to David M. on his request to include no cameras, or recording devices at meetings. A couple years ago, I attended a mini conference workshop in which a member requested to record what was being said. Group consensus was to allow it unless someone asked him to stop recording. I also had been to a few anniversary celebrations where a member was taking candid shots around the room to share with other members who could not attend. One thing that every group should have in their possession and be displaying at every meeting is the sign that reads: "WHOM YOU SEE HERE, WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, LET IT STAY HERE." Is there anything misunderstood about this simple statement? I have no problem with taking posed pictures outside the room. Just don't bring cameras inside the rooms.

Looking forward to meeting everyone in October.
Kevin M. - Area 6b

Greetings.

Joan L. from Area 8A here, outgoing trustee.

I chose not to run again after just one term as I felt I could be of more service to the compulsive gambler who still suffers in ways not related to the BOT. Visiting the meetings in my area was rewarding and actually allowed me to see parts of Minnesota I hadn't seen before! Meeting members whom I probably would not have met otherwise was great. Helping new meetings attract new members was thought-provoking. The trustee meetings, however . . .

I came to look with dread upon the twice-yearly meetings in great cities. So many times I've heard other trustees speak of these meetings being their "chance to catch up with old friends and have a great time!" That is not why I was there. My intergroup spent a lot of money to send myself and our other trustee to those meetings. In my two year tour-of-duty as trustee, I would venture a guess that maybe five things were voted on or required my presence. The rest of what I heard was a lot of hot, sticky air.

So many things need to be changed in order for the Board of Trustee meetings to be what I believe it was intended to be; however, I recognize I'm only one person who can't fight city hall. Limitations on terms served is a great place to start. Although possibly well-intentioned, many of our longer-term trustees need to get a new hobby.

I see on the agenda for the upcoming Florida meeting a change in the actual 12 steps of recovery. Are you kidding me? No disrespect to the poor soul who submitted that item, but give me a break! If I were a betting person (which, of course, I am not), I'm sure there will be a full session's worth of discussion on this crazy item. Time wasted. Money spent. Useless.

I wish all the new trustees well in their new adventure. There are so many good people in this program who can be of so much help in moving GA along (Gary and the national phone line), but they seem to be held down by antiquated thinking. While many longer-term trustees claim to remember their purpose for being at BOT meetings, it's painfully clear to me they do not. Just remember, you are there to help the compulsive gambler

who still suffers.

Literature on CDs Committee

Hi Again,

Well in case you didn't know or hear, the first of the CD's is now for sale thru the ISO office. Item #37, Towards 90 Days CD, & #44 Beyond 90 Days CD, they are \$2.00 each. What I have done is to ask my homeroom to purchase 20 of each, and give them out to each person. We will take a vote after each of us has listened to them, to see if we will make them part of the New Person Kit. This is how our thinking is going.

The Committee is currently work on putting together the New Member Packet, which includes the Combo Book, and hopefully will be finished soon also. Again we are asking the membership for ideas on what they would like to be placed on CDs. Just to let you know we, haven't heard from anyone since the last time we asked.

Hey don't forget you are also part of this committee, so let us know. See you all in Fla, tally-ho for now.

Joe B. - Literature on CDs Committee Co-Chair
Area - 6C

Thank you for welcoming me and giving me an opportunity to have a voice as a trustee. Being fairly new to Gamblers Anonymous, and never having been a trustee before, I can only speak to things i have personal experience with. One of my biggest concerns is spreading the message to other members of Gamblers Anonymous in our region so that there is unity and one primary purpose. Sometimes I feel like new ways of redefining Gamblers Anonymous pops up everywhere, and it would help me a lot to hear and learn about how we can all send the same message to others. I feel like a lot of members have no idea what a trustee is and what purpose they serve, other than to go to conventions and vote on things. This would be a great help for me, focusing on things that can send a strong message of hope.

Also, the whole idea of the internet, chat rooms, meetings online meetings, all seem to be racing forward with technology. With all of that come new definitions of what a Gamblers Anonymous member is, and the definition gets blurred, to me. I would love to hear more about the Gamblers Anonymous philosophy of progressing with technology, but not losing sight of the roots of this fellowship, which is how I got my start and continue to stay healthy, with strong roots.

Thanks again for this chance to speak and I look forward to Fort Lauderdale. Take care

Tom S. - Area 7A

My entry this month has more of an overtone of being the Chair of the Trustee Website, than issues that are happening in my area. First let me finish up the issue of tape-recorded GA meetings that I cited in my June and July submissions. NJ Intergroup has just dropped the issue. There is no resolution, no votes to change the status quo, or any committees formed to strengthen provisions that were already established by NJIG in which we read pre-opening announcements, one of which is 'no cameras, tape recorders or recording devices of any kind allowed in the GA room at any time.' This appears to be a testimony for how GA trusted servants and group consciences just do what they want and only want to know 'who is it actually hurting?' Yes, GA members are falsely empowered by Unity Step 4 in this case, when they don't care to deal with the part of the step that says: '...except in matters affecting Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.' Hopefully we will take a large step toward fixing this problem if we carry a two-thirds majority on agenda item #42. I for one will be curious to hear what the opinions are from any Trustees that feel it is okay to tape record meetings. To me, this is not an issue to rationalize or justify why it should be done. It is about making the GA rooms 100% for any and all members. Many of us may be a bit too secure with being compulsive gamblers, but that doesn't mean we should cast ANY aspect of meeting procedures aside that would then remotely increase the chances of a member's anonymity being given up.

On to the Trustee Website. The site has gone through a transformation with the Trustee Line. In an effort to try and motivate more of the members to contribute to the Trustee Line, the Trustee Website Committee has come up with the 'Hot Button Section'. This is the place to allow all the Trustees to vote on 10 of 25 issues that pertain to the Trustees. The results are showing that the Trustee Website is slowing getting traction with the Trustees and that consensus is for how to figure out better ways to use the site to speed up the Board of Trustees meeting. Right behind it is better Trustee meeting time management. The underlying issue with these two topics appears to be that the Trustees are not satisfied with all the wasted time at the Trustee meetings.

For the September 20th issue of the Trustee Line, we will split the issue into two parts. The first will be the submissions on the Hot Button issue of the month: How to use the

Trustee website to speed up the BOT meeting. If you have any ideas, this is the time to send them in. Remember, this site grows with the ideas and usage of the Trustees. If you don't let the committee know what you want, it won't happen. The second section will be reserved for regular submissions as we have had in the past.

That brings up my last subject - Participation. Less than 20 percent of the Trustees responded to the request for everyone to vote for the subjects they felt were prime for discussion in the next Trustee Line edition. We have even less participation with submissions to this issue. It's a long time between Trustee meetings and that is no reason for any of the Trustees to go into hibernation on issues that need to be discussed and even brought into the next agenda for a vote by the Trustees. With so many Trustees looking to speed up the Trustee meetings, it might make more sense for more Trustees to commit themselves to rustling the trees in between Trustee meetings and getting others to think about what needs to be changed for the benefit of the fellowship.

Combo book changes are fine, but don't we have more important things to do with Unity Step 5: 'Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers', instead of focusing so much of our time on changing a word to bold type in the Combo book? Page 17, number 2 of the Combo book says: 'Telephone other members as often as possible between meetings. Use the Telephone List!' For the Trustees, we should create our own similar statement: 'Exchange ideas with other Trustees as often as possible between Trustee meetings. Use the Trustee Line!'

David M. - Trustee Website Chair Area 12

Trustee Line,

Let me begin by thanking the website committee for the great job they are doing on the Trustee Line and the website in general.

While the response in terms of submitting items has been wonderful, it appears that the feedback that some of us have asked for has not been as good. In my last submission I wrote about having an informal get together for the new and returning trustees on the Wednesday night before the start of the BOT meeting in Florida. Apparently, this idea was not well received as I only had one returning trustee express interest in attending. Although those I had asked to assist me in making the presentation were enthusiastic I have decided to scratch the idea for lack of interest. Perhaps, in the future, we can raise the idea again.

On a much more positive note, I have some great news to pass along regarding our goal of establishing a national hotline. You will recall that the BOT had voted to move forward with developing a national hotline. Gary S. of area 12 did a wonderful job in developing a system and in trying to get the local areas involved. At this point, the Board of regents has agreed to take over the committee in the hopes of moving forward and Gary has agreed to stay with the job. Therefore, the BOT committee will be disbanded and the BOR committee will take it from here. Gary has promised to provide me with a written report summarizing where we stand I will pass this along to you with your agenda.

I also have some news of our fellowship in Russia. Recently, Karen and I were contacted by our friends in Russia and informed on a conference they are having in Moscow in December. They invited Karen to attend and also extended an invitation to me. I am unable to attend but I am happy to report that David M. of area 12 expressed an interest in going. David has been in touch with them over there and is now trying to work out the details. As this is something that we could not afford to do as a fellowship, David has offered to cover all of his expenses. You can imagine how expensive a trip like this can be so I have decided to use a small portion of my chairman's fund and will be able to at least pay for his airfare. This is an exciting step both for our friends in Russia and, I believe, for Gamblers Anonymous as a whole. I will keep you informed as his trip takes shape.

Again, thank you all for your support and your efforts on behalf of our fellowship.

Brother Denis - Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Area 12

Following are a variety of comments based on an item in the Florida agenda and articles from the July 20 Trustee Line issue:

Agenda item #36

- I'm in favor of item #36 (David M.), a BOT procedure regarding the "one time opportunity to challenge", etc. I believe this process would provide for adequate discussion of the challenge itself and allow the Chairperson to retract his or her decision that created the challenge. Should the challenge go to a vote, then at least members of the BOT will have heard arguments on the challenge and

therefore can proceed with a more informed vote.

- In fact, why limit this to just "chair challenges"? In a regular motion, for example, by allowing the motion-maker to have only two opportunities to speak -- one, in presenting his or her motion and subsequent discussion; and two, in having the final opportunity to respond to the various dissenting speakers -- it forces the motion-maker to have a well-crafted motion and to be adequately prepared in discussing it. By allowing each dissenting speaker to speak only once, it precludes any two-way discussions between the motion-maker and dissenting speaker. It also requires the dissenting speaker to be adequately prepared. The end result is that discussions become less contentious and the meeting moves along at a much more efficient pace.

Response to Laine P.'s letter to the [July 20, 2006 Trustee Line](#) - 12th item in the 'From The Trustees' section:

Should Trustees reside in the area they represent?

- Laine P.'s concern in Area 7 is one that is disconcerting if a Trustee -- not residing in the immediate area he or she represents -- is not able to fulfill the functions to which he or she committed when elected to serve. While it's possible to not reside in the immediate area and still fulfill certain guidelines, such as attending monthly Intergroup meetings, it does not seem practical.
- Ultimately, the core issue that ought to be examined is whether the non-resident Trustee is carrying out the expectations and responsibilities of a trusted servant. I would suggest referring to the "Guidelines for National Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous" contained in the G.A. Information Packet and determining if the non-resident Trustee is fulfilling item #s 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. The bottom line here, it seems, is applying common sense.
- I don't believe legislating residential requirements would be feasible since some areas are geographically widespread that determining area residence may be problematic.

Potential orientation meeting for new Trustees prior to the BOT meeting in Florida

- I am in favor of any process that helps in promoting efficiency to the Board of Trustees meetings; and I commend Denis, Michelle and Chuck in their willingness to give up their Wednesday evening in Florida. Based on David M.'s reporting that there are 35 brand new Trustees, the explanation of procedural matters -- and simply, how things work at the BOT meeting -- will go a long way toward perhaps avoiding the situation in Boston in which we were not able to complete the agenda and our work.

Ed E. - Area 2