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**Trustee Line for January 2011**

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**Thoughts From The Trustees - Current and Past**

The subjects listed below are just a listing of themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them or start an entirely new subject

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**Greater Involvement in the BOT - A New Year's Resolution**

1/1/11 - 12:08 PM

First of all, a happy and healthy New Year to everyone. Hopefully, if we are all working toward recovery, we will worry less about going back to gambling, and more about how to make our lives better every day. All too often, we tend to forget about staying healthy, until we get sick. Let's all strive to live better in that regard.

Okay, enough with the pleasantries. For the 10 years since I first became a Trustee, I have seen a very harsh reality. It seems that generally, Trustees don't want to take an extra minute or two to try and make things work a little better with the BOT and the Fellowship as a whole. Now I know that

statement probably comes close to insulting some members who actually do stay involved and active by being of service, but bear with me for this item, because I really want those who are lax in their activities as Trustees to think about what I am going to say. I don't mean this as an attack against anyone, but more of a nudge on the shoulder to rethink their levels of commitment between Trustee meetings.

Many of you have heard me give the Trustee website report at the Trustee meetings where I appear to be begging for some creative ideas on how to better deploy the features of the website. It's been a constant request for everyone to pass on to the committee ANY ideas they might have to improve the Trustee website and to continue improving the level of communications for all who use it. Seldom do we hear anything.

Over a month ago, someone came up with the idea of putting a Trustee Poll together so that current and past Trustees could 'test the waters' of those Trustees who vote in the BOT meetings. The idea was that we have too many agenda items that fail in their votes by epic proportions. I'm not saying that the items are worthless to begin with, but for whatever the reasons are for their overwhelming defeat, they were probably items that should never have been on the agendas to begin with. The Trustee Poll feature on this site allows Trustees to throw ideas out to the Trustees for a very unofficial view of whether or not the item(s) would survive a vote at a BOT meeting. They can be the precursors to actual agenda items, or just some thoughts that someone wants to see how the Trustees feel. We eliminated straw votes from the meetings, but this could be viewed upon as a general consensus of how the Trustees see the item, unofficially.

What's nice is there are 5 different types of indications that only the current Trustees could use to show their level of interest:

1. No - Not In Favor
2. Probably Not in Favor, But Need To Hear More
3. No Opinion One Way Or The Other
4. Probably In Favor, But Need To Hear More
5. Yes - In Favor

None of the submissions are binding and they are all anonymous. It's meant to give a message to the author about how the item may fare in an actual vote, or as I said a moment ago, what the general feeling is of the current Trustees.

The bigger picture is that maybe some day soon, every item that is going to be submitted to the next agenda, will have to go through this process in order to make it on the agenda. One solution is that at least 33% of all the indications for an item must have some vote other than an outright NO vote, in order to get on the agenda. Those items may still fail, but it will have had a chance. If the item can't make that minimum number, then it means that at least 67% of the indications were flat out NO votes. Maybe the author needs to resubmit an item that has to be tweaked a bit, who knows. The issue is that we could begin to cut the size of the agenda from items that essentially are not well thought out or just make no sense to the BOT, and as such we would be able to shave some time off the 2-day agenda process and not feel like we have to rush through a normally big agenda. I'm talking about efficiency, not speed. Think about how you have felt after a Trustee meeting...you may not admit it to others, but no doubt you have a list of items that in your opinion were a complete waste of time, especially by being defeated after an extension of time. This process might eliminate much of that.

So why did I choose the title that I did for this submission? Because the turnout for this feature, even after an email went out to every single current Trustee describing it in detail, has been much more than just disappointing. As of this posting, only 31 current Trustees have sent in any kind of response to the 7 poll items in the system. About a third of those have responded to all 7 items.

We currently have 127 Trustees and only 24.41% have responded to any of the poll items. Why not take a look at how poor the turnout has been. While you are at it, check out how you have participated or not in this process. Just [click this link](#) and you can see for yourself. While you are at it, on the same page is an icon of a vote box. If you click it, you will be taken directly to the Trustee Poll. Take a few minutes and get involved, like it says on page 17 of the combo book.

If we all can't spend a few minutes on something as simple as this, how can anyone expect things to get better for this Fellowship? This cavalier attitude of noninvolvement is contagious. It's so easy to read the email and delete it,

instead of putting forth a better effort to help out.

The work of the BOR always seems to funnel down to the same group of people who do remain involved. The work of the 19 BOT committees we have in place has made a huge improvement in so many things that have happened to the BOT and the Fellowship at large. Moving forward, the burden must be shared by more people. Why not start by responding to the items in the Trustee Poll. The link is located right below the link for the Trustee Line. What's nice about it, is that any item that can be answered in a Yes or No manner, can be posted by any current or past Trustee. Let's start the New Year with a resolution to have each of us get a bit more into the job of being a Trustee. Start with this feature and you never know where it can take you.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey  
Trustee Website Admin

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1/5/11 - 1:25 PM

I could not agree with David's letter more. There are just a couple of handfuls of trustees that take on additional involvement in what the BOT feels important enough to form a committee. Program teaches us that the more involved we are - the more benefits we receive in ones recovery and adds to our fellowship and unity. There is so much more a trustee can do than just put an agenda item on an already long list.

I can speak from my commitment to the International Relation Committee and the benefits I receive. Knowing that I can affect change to someone or area half way around the world with the help of our fellowship is unbelievable. I would have never known that feeling of gratitude and fulfillments without stepping up to the plate, just like the 20+ others in the IRC committee. The entire IRC committee knows the importance of spreading the word and we are all very humble and grateful for our fellowship, helping us to help others. At times, I am involved in this committee at a week solid or at least one week out of the month we dedicate our time to the IRC.

The other committee I am on is the new Helpline committee, which involves a minimum of up to 10 days a month with consent emails and phone calls.

So between the both committees, my meetings, sponsorship, talking to other GA members, and being a volunteer on the NJ Helpline, GA takes a chunk of my monthly time. Please note - I am not feeding my ego. Nor I am stating that it is job of 9-5, but it does take away from my profession and family. I do it cause it helps me and my recovery, and it gives back to our fellowship. But the reality is there is my other life outside of GA and 720 hours of time in a month and 210 hrs of that I sleep, 200+ hours of work etc.

My agenda item for Cherry Hill Spring conference is reference to hopefully get more trustees to step up and feel its benefits.

Rules and Procedures

4. - Rules and Procedures

Committees section:

A trustee can only be on no more than two(2) committees at any time.

Gary S. - Area 12

Submitted - 12/8/10

Updated -

It does not benefit our fellowship by having a couple of handful trustees to do the job. This item will help to promote involvement. The argument, that if a trustee wants to be on more than 2 does not help the fellowship as a whole. We have well over 100 trustees and maybe 20% step up to the plate is just not right. If the BOT agrees to form a committee, than its body should support it and not just those few.

The more trustees that get involved will give a greater overview and opinion of our international body. This to me is the most important reason. We as a fellowship must start to understand the "INTERNATIONAL" responsibility we have to preserve and grow. By limiting the number of trustees on multi committees will ensure that and encourage other trustees to step up to the plate and experience its rewards.

David's letter is correct and I fully support his efforts in getting more trustees involved, hopefully this agenda item will help David and my dreams for the new year.

As always, I am open to any thoughts and hopefully positive ones to promote unity.

I wish everyone a GREAT NEW YEAR in recovery.

Gary S. - Past Area 12 trustee for 6 years, New Jersey  
Past Proud member of the BOR  
Member of IRC committee for 4+ years  
Past Chair and present member of the Helpline committee for 10+ years

Most Important - A grateful and proud member of our fellowship since I  
surrender on 03/23/1997

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1/6/11 - 12:47 PM

To David M and Gary S.  
Good morning, gentlemen:

< David - I couldn't agree with you more. I believe all Trustees should be at least reading the Trustee Line every day; and participation, I believe, is one of the responsibilities of a Trustee - to submit thoughts, ideas and questions - as well as seek help, advice and assistance from other Trustees. I don't claim to know all there is to know - and have a growing list of GA things I really and truly need to learn. But I also know I can't control what other people do, even Trustees. I was advised by a more knowledgeable person one time to 'never put anyone on a pedestal, even a Trustee.'

Gary - While I understand your thought process very well, I am leaning toward disagreement with you on limiting Trustee participation to two committees. Please allow me to share some of my limited experiences with this process. As you have heard me say a thousand times - even here on the Trustee Line - I have to read October 15th from our Day-at-a-Time book - because it fits me like a glove. "All too often I unwittingly set standards for others in the Gamblers Anonymous Program. Worse yet, I expect those standards to be met.....Not surprisingly, when things don't work out the way I expect, I become frustrated and even angry."

Another one of our responsibilities as Trustees is to serve 'actively' on BOT committees. I take those suggestions and recommendations to heart. But not everyone does. I cannot control what others do; I can only control my own behavior. To me, the Board of Trustees is not much different from my membership groups, nor my inter group. There are those who do - who are willing to serve - and those who are not. That is their choice. Are you suggesting that a specific and important committee go without volunteers because we are limiting the 'doers' to only two committees? That would be a shame when there is such important work to be done - by whomever is willing to do it. Are you asking me to sit in judgment of which committee is less important than the others I serve on? I would hope not.

I repeat, I am still in the learning mode. I still need a lot of help. I still need to think things through and not react - especially judgmentally. I know I am guilty of many wrongdoings, but hopefully through this process of serving I will learn more to help me live a better life, and be of some assistance to those who are still suffering. I may not always succeed, but I will never stop trying. Thanks for listening and understanding where I think I am coming from.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/6/11 - 1:37 PM

I wish to emphasize that I am writing my own opinion here and am only referring to myself.

I read with interest the submissions from David, Gary, and Linda and immediately sense a problem.

I fully understand and agree with David's opinions on this topic, however, I did not see nor understand any mention of limiting the number of committees a trustee should be a member of. David is on at least 2 committees that I am also on and a few others as well and he would NEVER suggest that any trustee limit his involvement in the B.O.T. work. This also applies at the intergroup and meeting level as well. Each of us should be free to contribute and participate to the full extent of our time we allot to G.A. and we should never be told that we are doing too much (nor, not enough). For myself, Idle time is one of my greatest enemies and I try to busy myself with healthy and important (for me) endeavors. If I have the time to participate on 3 or 4 or even 5 committees, nobody in G.A. has the right to suggest otherwise.

So, again, I emphasize, that I am participating, because I need to be busy

and involved and equally important, because I want to be involved. I fully understand that some trustees do not have the time nor the desire to be involved and I would never criticize them for their decision, and , I hope nobody in G.A. would criticize me for my involvement.

I do however agree with Gary and Linda with the exception of the limiting a members involvement. I do not speak for David, but, I know he agrees with this thinking.

So, get involved with whatever you feel you can contribute to at the B.O.T. level and try not to suggest that others limit their contributions.

Herb B. - Trustee Area 5 - Montreal, Quebec

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1/6/11 - 4:29 PM

In all due respect to both Linda and Herb, we as the guardians of our fellowship should think on how to inspire and suggest others to get involved for now and the future. There are several guidelines that control or suggest what limits a trustee should be doing with half of them not being practice or followed. A trustee may run only for two years - the BOT just instructed the BOR that they must run for 2 years and not one. A BOR member must run only for two terms in a row. A member must make 39 full meetings; a new room must make a six-month commitment. All of them for good reason and merit.

Our GC is growing more and more on how/what rooms and members should do or not - but not the trustee!

I ask for you to think out of one's own box and think for GA betterment. There are many reasons for this item to pass, without pointing fingers and without setting any example to anyone or committee. An open mind, honesty and willing comes to mind.

It is great that any member steps up to the plate to be on a committee or two. But, are we really doing service when we do more than that? What are we trying to achieve and fulfill? Are we seeking for a broader viewpoint for all of GA? Are we encouraging others to step up to the plate? Does some trustees setback and say " someone will do it - he/she always does"? Are we limiting the viewpoint of GA to just those, which always does the job? Are we promoting UNITY and Step 12? Are we being humble or feeding our egos? What is the fear, we have 110+ trustees, with a handful that does the job. Maybe we don't need that many trustees, if 75% of them just come to voice their opinion twice a year? We're responsible and accountability to the BOT and our fellowship to ensure their elected trustees are doing the job for those areas and GA? How do we groom the new trustees the importance of being on a committee? How do we protect GA from some egos, instead of encouraging being humble? Would it be great to see a committee of mostly new trustees and get some fresh ideas? What are we trying to control and why? How do we ensure that committees are successful if there are several members that are on 3, 4, or 5 committees? Why not just have a single board, of the same amount of members, for all committees?

My compulsive brain could go on for days.

The bottom line - is that the BOT is there to better GA as a whole and not just a single trustee. If we limit our thought to just a single trustee vs. what is better for the BOT and GA as whole, we are lost.

There is no harm to think out of the box and see what happens - we can always go back for another agenda item later on and reverse it or modify it. Like the RULES AND PROCEDURE committee had stated in the very beginning "IT IS A WORK IN PROGRESS". Why not be progressive and test the waters? Would it affect GA as a whole? OR maybe - just maybe, it may work.

What we have now is not working to encourage more participation - which we know.

Should we just set back and do nothing?

Humbly yours,  
Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/7/11 - 12:03 PM

While I agree with Gary about trying to figure out a way to inspire others to get involved, especially at the committee level, I stand by the comments I made about this particular agenda item in the last issue of the Trustee Line. It would be nice if more Trustees would involve themselves at the

committee level. However, there may be time restrictions we are unaware of, or just an unwillingness to do so. It is not up to any member of GA to force any other member into doing something they are not willing to do.

My fear in all of this is that if a current or past Trustee is limited to 2 committees, then GA as a whole will suffer. If people are unwilling or unable to perform the duties asked, then the entire Fellowship suffers. I for one would rather have a handful of people involved than no one at all. Even at the Intergroup level we have several people who hold more than one position because of lack of involvement from our membership. Are the positions filled? Yes, because those who are involved are willing and able to perform the duties required. Would I like to see more involvement?

Aboslutely. But, I learned a long time ago to accept things as they are and not to live in a dreamworld, which is exactly what we will do if Trustees are limited in their work. Unfortunately, the hope that the "job will still get done" is exactly that: Living in a dreamworld and not accepting reality. We can't force anyone to do anything they are unable to do. That's something else I learned a long time ago. It's not up for me to decide who should do what. I hold no ill will towards anyone who doesn't actively serve on a BOT committee. It's a shame that some people do. It's up to an individual member. I'm also not willing to allow my recovery to suffer because of some grandiose idea that if I do less, others will step up to the plate.

If this is how the BOT feels and votes yes for this item, I will as always go with the majority. And if this item does pass, may I suggest another item for the future? Maybe something along the lines that if you wish to be a Trustee, you are required to serve on at least one committee?

Pete K. - Area 13B, South New Jersey, Past Trustee

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1/7/11 - 2:47 PM

Good morning, Gary -

Your thought process is sincerely appreciated. It truly is. You'd like to see more Trustees get involved and be of service. However, I don't think we achieve that by directive - I think we do that by setting a good example. Others before me have done just that. I 'want' what they 'have.' As I stated previously, I have also taken the list of Trustee Responsibilities to heart.

I am in complete agreement with Herb. How I wish to serve my fellow GA members through service, is my choice.

What other Trustees do or don't do is really none of my business. If I want to encourage others to participate, I feel I should do this one-on-one, or by showing excitement to others about the committees I serve on - or try to. One lesson that has been pounded into me is that I cannot control anyone else's behavior - only my own.

Two, brand new Trustees from San Diego CHOSE to serve on committees that were of very, very special interest to them. Good for them. But they made that decision for themselves, and I take my hat off to them for making that commitment.

Gary, I think your wish to get others involved is wonderful - but I think it should be by desire and not by legislation. My opinion.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/14/11 - 1:49 PM

I agree we need more involvement. I like the poll and the line. Both give me a way to share my opinions and get an idea of how my peers feel. It is sad that we only have 24% participation. Isn't there an old adage that says 10% do the work? We have this same problem at our area Intergroup. We have this same problem at the church I attend. We had this same problem at the parent organization I used to attend. In these situations, I have to remember the Serenity Prayer - serenity, courage, and wisdom. Does this mean we do nothing? Of course not. We still need to encourage participation and if it doesn't happen, let it go.

This subject seemed to morph into Gary's proposed addition to Rules and Procedures #4. I do not agree with his proposal of mandating the Trustees can only be on two committees. I am glad he commented that his reasoning for the addition was so others would step up. I didn't understand at first why he would want to limit Trustee's volunteering. That said, I do not believe that limiting committee membership will guarantee that new people will volunteer. I am thrilled though that Gary and others are trying to think

up ways to encourage participation on committees.

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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1/23/11 - 9:58 AM

I think the question of whether or not we can work on more than two committees depends on what is involved in those committees and what else we have in our lives. Some committees take a considerable amount of time in some stages of the committees work while others take less. The international committee has tons of work to do and I thank those that are able to serve on this committee. Personally there have been committees that I would have liked to join, however, with the time needed for the revision of the blue book committee and my health issues I have not joined any due to the fact that I believe having your name on the committee list and not doing the work is a deterrent to GA as a whole. It may let someone think there are enough there to do the job. Please as the chairperson of any committee you wish to be on before you ever think that there are too many people there.

In the same respect I have asked for people to join the blue book committee at every conference with maybe one or two saying they are interested but then I usually don't even get a response from the email I send to follow up. It would be a real shame to have to say to someone who has cleared the time to work on this committee, "I can't allow you to help as you are already on two committees." Being on committees is part of our responsibility as trustees but it is also our responsibility as members of Gamblers Anonymous, just as it is of those are not currently serving as trustees. I was on BOT committees long before I was ever a trustee. I also spent years at BOT meetings and talking with those that were trustees prior to being a trustee in preparation for the job.

I feel my responsibility as trustee for my area has more to do with the needs of my area in support of the meetings currently there and those to come in the future. My focus as a trustee is not just nor firstly the trustee meeting. Phone calls, meeting work, Intergroup work, reaching out to check with meetings that are geographically too far away to be able to attend, answering questions of members, being a person available to discuss meeting issues with, and a reference point for help to the compulsive gambler who still suffers the list can continue if you wish.

I am open to any ideas of how to get more participation. I give the address of the trustee website as part of my report at Intergroup. I let people know that don't have to be a trustee to be on a committee but they do need to have at least 2 years abstinence and attend at least 39 meeting a year.

For those that think that if it is important enough someone will step forward to do, I suggest you be prepared to go hungry if you are already on two committees and no one signs up for the food preparation committee. Just because things are important it doesn't mean someone else will do it. The literature committee is a very needed committee. I believe it is also a very time consuming committee. I also remember literature that got lost in the crack because the committee kind of fell apart for awhile. You see sometimes when people step back to allow the rotation principle to happen, no one steps forward.

ENCOURAGE, MAKE MEMBERS AWARE, ENCOURAGE, SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE, ENCOURAGE but please don't limit.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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<b>Who is Violating the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code? - Part 2</b>
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1/1/11 - 5:43 PM

In response to the post on Dec. 17 post by George W:

George, you are certainly entitled to your opinion in all matters pertaining to GA, as do I and every other GA member. I appreciate your thoughts, even though I strongly disagree with many of them, as I believe all comments on the Trustee line foster healthy discussion.

However, please, in the future do just a little research. I was the one who asked not to be labeled a "curmudgeon or GA Policeman", however I was NOT the trustee who wrote regarding the poem being read at a GA Birthday. Please, if you are going to quote me, do it correctly.

By the way, since I don't know you personally and would not recognize you,

were you at the Tampa Bay BOT meeting?

Yours in Recovery,  
Levi B. - Area 2, Northern California

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<b>Combined Therapy Meeting</b>
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1/2/11 - 6:22 PM

To my fellow Trustees -

First, and foremost, Happy New Year. May 2011 bring peace and serenity to all.

In the San Diego Area, we have one Combined Therapy Meeting. In an attempt to construct a list of guidelines for this meeting, I am asking for help. Those who also have Combined Therapy Meetings in your area, can you please advise what procedure(s) you follow. Also would appreciate any advice you can give.

Thanks for your assistance.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/3/11 - 3:39 PM

To: Linda S.

Subject: Combined GA/Gam-Anon Therapy Meetings

The first combined meeting was held in 1969 at the Teaneck, NJ chapter of Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon Family Groups. I was the GA chair of that meeting. This type of meeting was a new idea for progress for better understanding between the individual Fellowships. At that time most GA/Gam-Anon members were marriage partners and there had been hard feelings developing through resentments on both sides.

The results of the first combined meeting were very helpful to increased communication and new awareness for Gam-Anon members of the illness of compulsive gambling. The GA members were aided by seeing the strength their partners possessed in believing that a better, more unified way of thinking and living together was possible when there was a common purpose to strive for. That purpose was strengthening all recoveries.

A joint or combined G.A. and Gam-Anon meeting was run much as individual meetings were conducted. There is a G.A. chair and a Gam-Anon chair, who agree before the meeting upon the exact format as to when to call on respective members for therapy. (i.e., (1) one G.A. followed by one Gam-Anon if there is a relative same number of members in each group; (2) two G.A. members followed by one Gam-Anon member if there are more G.A. members than Gam-Anon, etc.) Another format gives the G.A. group the first half of the meeting and the Gam-Anon group the second half.

It is important that the chairpersons from each group also decide upon a topic or Step that both groups can speak to. The meeting is always opened with the literature from both groups being read. How much of the literature to be read can be decided before the meeting by the co-chairs and the chairpersons should agree upon the reading of the Steps—both Recovery and Unity. In the interest of time in a combined meeting, they can agree that it is not necessary for both groups to read all 24 Steps, but they should, of course be read once. (An announcement that the Steps are the same and will be read only once covers this nicely.) One chair may agree to handle the 12 recovery steps while the other handles the 12 unity steps. (They should not be eliminated because of the combined meeting.)

The perspective of the members may be very different, and it is amazing what we can learn from each other! There are now groups in this country who have monthly combined meetings, some quarterly (the one I attend), and then some more often while others none at all. The group conscience decides for any particular meeting whether or not this is a helpful tool. In my experience, I have never heard of a group who decided against combined meetings after having held one! It always amazes me that some G.A. members think of Gam-Anon as our enemies! (At my first GA meeting June 25th 1965, GA met on the 7th floor of the Farband building at 16th street and 6th avenue in NYC and Gam-Anon met on the 6th floor. This was notated in the elevator but someone crossed out Gam-Anon and wrote above their name "troublemakers!") These combined meetings tend to put that attitude to rest, and I believe that the Gam-Anon members are in our corner and busy working on their own individual recoveries.



I hope this has addressed your concern regarding these type of meetings.

Yours in Recovery,  
George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York

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1/6/11 - 11:53 AM

George:

Thank you for your input; it was more than helpful. Appreciated your comments as well. We too have found that the two groups together does foster a better understanding of both programs and issues. Our "Combined Therapy Meetings" happen once per week - every Saturday evening.

My next question then becomes this: You have indicated that there are readings from both groups' literature. Is Gam-Anon literature considered GA-approved material? If so, then, yes, we can read both groups' literature. However, if Gam-Anon literature is not GA-approved material, how do I, as a Trustee and trusted servant justify these readings when the GA Guidance Code indicates, ".....they will be known as a group, only if they apply themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use to only Gamblers Anonymous literature." (Sorry, this is a quote from an old - 2001 -- Guidance Code which I happened to have at hand at the moment.)

Are we not in violation of the Guidance Code if we allow readings from non-approved or non- appropriate GA literature even at a 'combined' meeting?

Again - additional input would greatly be appreciated. Thank you.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/14/11 - 1:49 PM

Thanks Linda for putting this topic on the Trustee line. I was not aware there were combined GA/Gam-Anon meetings. (I learn something new all the time.) We have open meetings, where spouses are welcomed, but they are not there as Gam-Anon. I agree with Linda's question/comment that isn't it a violation of GC if the Gam-Anon read their literature as it is not GA approved? I would appreciate hearing any opposing views. Thanks

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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1/14/11 - 3:41 PM

Dear Linda,

It is with the utmost respect for your recovery, your service as a Trustee and "Trusted Servant" to the Fellowship that I respond to your posting. We may disagree on some issues, but we have that right to disagree while not being disagreeable.

The truth shall set us free. The Spiritual Principles of the Fellowship are the truth and are freely presented to all members for their consideration.

This response is to your questioning violations of the Guidance Code where our GA Group in the process of holding a combined meeting with the Fellowship of Gam-Anon (Gam-Anon has equal rights within the combined meeting) and Gam-Anon members in the process of participation/involvement read parts of their literature. I respectfully believe that no other GA group, or GA as a whole in any way could be affected.

We, the Watertown GA Group, believe our "group conscience" decision to conduct the combined meeting in this format meets the requirements presented by the Board of Trustee resolution made at the Montreal Conference in 1992. It is noted as #31 of Past Trustee Decisions under groups.

Resolved,

Whereas, GA Open Meetings commonly include Gam-Anon members,  
Whereas, GA Intergroup meetings commonly reserve a portion of time in which Gam-Anon members are invited to discuss matter of interest to both groups,

Whereas, GA Step Meetings are often open meetings in which Gam-Anon Members are welcome to attend and participate,

Whereas, GA social functions and conferences are commonly co-hosted With Gam-Anon members,

Whereas, GA has a responsibility to make new members aware of the Existence of Gam-Anon and does so through our literature,

Therefore, the Board of Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous does not perceive

any of the above to violate any Step of the GA Unity Program.

In addition, at the Farmingdale conference in 2005 which is noted in Past Trustee Decisions as # 43 under Groups, the Board of Trustee consensus is that "the individual Gamblers Anonymous Group does not forfeit its right of autonomy on all items listed in Past Trustee Decisions." Note: The original Unity Step Four used the word "autonomous" which read; "Each GA Group is autonomous, except in matters that affect other groups or GA as a whole." The Trustees (at that time) changed Unity Step Four to read "self-governing."

In summation, the Watertown, New York, Gamblers Anonymous Group in honoring the Gamblers Anonymous Spiritual Principles of kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility with our right of believing in, and following the "group conscience" as the "Ultimate Authority" would not knowingly violate the Guidance Code.

In addition, the values of all recoveries and the respect shown to another recognized Fellowship is essential to understanding and co-operation vital to recovery and progress for all Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon members.

Combined meetings are not Gamblers Anonymous meetings alone. They are Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon Combined meetings agreed upon by the trusted servants of each Fellowship.

I believe, I have the right to protest any restrictions or prohibitions of "group conscience" added to the Guidance Code that violate the rights of individual members or over ride the Spiritual Principles as written in the Recovery and Unity Programs.

These ideas and efforts relating to authority over another member, or members, and control over GA Groups who are self-governing dates back to the Browns Conference in 1979.

The Board of Trustees (at that time) resolved; "No individual member, group, or Intergroup can instruct a National Trustee on how to vote on any issue." That decision in my mind was a direct violation of the GA Guidance Code and the precepts of Recovery and Unity clearly stated in the Guidance Code. That decision causes problems to our Fellowship and Unity to this very day and encourages "personalities before principles" to rule the day and subjugates "Principles before Personalities" which is the bedrock foundation of our Unity as we move forward in carrying the message of hope to those who still suffer.

Yours in recovery, peace of mind and serenity,  
George W. - Past Trustee, Area 16, Upstate, New York

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1/14/11 - 10:07 PM

Very interesting discussion here. We too have a few combined meetings here in Tampa and they are wonderful meetings. I can remember a few years back I raised the issue with the group about the collection. All persons in the meeting whether GA or Gam-Anon were contributing to one collection. Then the collection was used for room rent, literature for both groups, and then donations to our intergroup and ISO. Of course this was a concern that I had because GA is self supporting and here we were receiving donations from Gam-Anon members. The group immediately took note of this issue and brought in another basket for Gam-Anon. Now there are two separate collections at this meeting. The beauty of this is that BOTH groups are self supporting. I bring this up because the small Gam-Anon group that participated in this meeting never had the funds to purchase literature for themselves. Either the members of Gam-Anon purchased individually or the room purchased for Gam-Anon. This Gam-Anon group that meets together with the GA group now has their own treasury, they buy their own literature, and they pay part of the room rent.

However, Linda brings up a part of this that I never even considered. At our combined meetings there is always readings from the GA literature and then a Gam-Anon member chooses a reading from their literature. It never dawned on me the issue of non-approved GA literature. As I read this it made me think about the meeting I was at a few weeks ago. A young lady from Gam-Anon did her reading from her material. Of course I had never heard it because I'm not aware of Gam-Anon literature. At the break I made a comment saying that it was a nice reading. I was then informed that it was a reading from a piece of AA literature. Now, I am well aware that reading AA literature is a violation of our guidance code, but is it a violation for Gam-Anon? I bring this up to the issue because I believe this is going to be a very sensitive item. I'm going to assume that most (or at least some)

trustees would say to allow the Gam-Anon reading in this type of meeting only. And then I would raise the question, "how do we enforce that they use Gam-Anon literature if that is not part of their guidance code?"

Dina P. - Area 6B, Tampa, Florida

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1/16/11 - 11:08 PM  
Good morning George:

I believe we see opposite ends of the spectrum here, George.

1. While I totally respect the opinions of other and/or former Trustees, I have been told that the "Past Trustee Decisions" is not GA-approved literature. If this is so, then I cannot be guided by anything in that volume. I can learn from it, try to understand where others are coming from, but I cannot be guided by those decisions. Because one decision was listed there, as I have been told, that does not mean the opposite is necessarily true.
2. I am a bit concerned about the use of 'autonomous.' That word appears nowhere in the GA literature. That is an Alcoholics Anonymous word, and I am a member of Gamblers Anonymous, not Alcoholics Anonymous. As harsh as this may sound, I don't care what happened in the past, I live in the now, so any and all changes are what I live by and what I am guided by now. What the current literature states is what I am, as a Trustee, supposed to believe in and support.
3. I totally disagree with you concerning the fact that a group conscious can override the Guidance Code. I have had a similar argument at our local intergroup; interestingly enough, also expressed by a very strong AA member. Yes, of course, a group conscious can be taken and disagree with the Guidance Code, but then that group can no longer exist because they have not adhered to the Guidance Code. No - I don't believe a group conscious can override the Guidance Code. If we don't like that, then we should change the Guidance Code - not abandon it or ignore it. There are many things - documents, pamphlets, wordings - that I don't like in Gamblers Anonymous - but I am to support the will of the majority. I don't have to like it; but I do have to accept it.....or change it via the agenda - but that change would have to be approved by the majority - the utmost in a group conscious. But the BOT is not considered a 'group' from what I understand.
4. I don't question spirituality. On a scale of 1-100, I am probably greater than most in my regard and willingness to love and help other people and do the right thing, but certainly less than others with greater spirituality than I have. I am a church organist, a Sunday School teacher, an adult group leader; my grandson attends private Christian school - but I would NEVER bring this to bear at a BOT meeting, at intergroup, or at a local group meeting. That is my personal, religious affinity - but has no place within Gamblers Anonymous as we are not a religious organization. I have had to separate the two identities.
5. The fact remains, George, that we have two conflicting pieces of literature. The Red Book says that in a 'combined meeting,' Gam-Anon literature may be read. The Guidance Code says a group cannot be considered such if we read outside literature. Gam-Anon literature is not GA-approved. I have been advised to submit an agenda item completely scrapping the 'combined therapy meeting,' but I have refused to do so. I believe in the combined meetings; I think it is very important to both groups to have a better understanding of one another. I do not believe that this understanding HAS to be done, or can ONLY be done by reading. I am trying to think 'outside of the box' as we have been told to do.
6. Therefore, I see that we have the following options: (a) remove the 'combined therapy meeting' as a meeting and call it an event; or (b) allow it to stay as a recognized meeting but remove both GA and Gam-Anon readings. I have looked at the title: "therapy" and perhaps that's what it should be - strictly therapy. I would hate to see this very special, very moving, very open-minded type of meeting deleted because of a conflict in our literature. I would much prefer to see our literature revised a tad to be acceptable to all - not just a few. I was hoping that somehow the Trustee Line could offer a compromise. I believe that is what we need - a compromise, not a mandate one way or the other.

Side note to Dina P: We, too, have a dual collection at our combined meeting. One collection for GA and one collection for Gam-Anon; and members are free to donate to either based on their personal choice. We do not monitor who puts what where - that is an individual's own choice. We know we are not to accept outside financial assistance from any other

organization, that we are self-supporting, however, a previous agenda item says we are not to personally walk the collection basket around and monitor who puts in what. Therefore, we have no way of knowing if we are receiving an outside donation. However, Gam-Anon does contribute a percentage to the room rent. A group consensus was taken and it was agreed that since approximately 20% of the attendance at these combined meetings was Gam-Anon, they agreed to pay 20% of the room rent - that seemed fair at the time. We have one elected Treasurer, (s)he reports the amounts in both collections at each meeting, and keeps separate listings of each. At the end of each month, the GA balance is turned over to the room rep to purchase literature and donate to ISO; the Gam- Anon balance is turned over to a Gam-Anon representative and we have absolutely no clue what they do with their money. It is none of our business.

With love, faith, hope and trust in our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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<b>Anonymity - A Dying Concept in GA</b>
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1/7/11 - 11:58 PM

I tracked down this expression in the Bible, Psalm 115:5-6, not my usual source for supporting statements. It really seems to fit the subject of this submission. "They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear."

I suppose the operative theme here is 'Why is this not 100% completely clear to EVERYONE in GA?' The reason I say this is because I received an email, as did close to 300 other people, for the 2011 Kansas City Mini-Conference. Email is a wonderful thing, and I am appreciative of being notified about the Mini-Conference, but why is it that virtually all the people who received the email have their full names visible in the CC section of the email? While you are thinking that one over, why does this very conspicuous full name listing look strangely like the names of the attendees from the Kansas City Conference of '09?

There has been a lot of chatter these last few months from Trustees about how the Fellowship, specifically as a result of actions carried out by the BOT, is now all about controlling our members and rooms. Also that the Guidance Code has turned into a manual of rules, taking the emphasis away from the Spiritual Principles. Interesting point, but did any of those people happen to miss Unity Step 12 where 'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the Gamblers Anonymous program...'

So how do the Trustees uphold the Guidance Code and the Unity Steps that are among the numerous responsibilities of Trustees? How do the Trustees abide by the Guidance Code, Article 8, Section 8: "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."?

To those of you who just want to leave things alone and do what you feel is best, then don't complain when your anonymity is broken. But my thinking is that this same group of people might only be motivated to complain when someone else's actions affect them personally. Otherwise, let's just be one big happy GA family and hide from our responsibilities to the rest of the Fellowship and feel comfortable because we should only be concerned about Unity, irrespective of how much we ignore the Guidance Code.

Back to the anonymity breach from the Mini-Conference email. I don't know about everyone else, but I'm sick and tired of this situation happening on a recurring basis. I know the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling. Should we have a mandatory meeting with new members and the trusted servants of the rooms, so that the concept of anonymity is made 100% crystal clear? Do we have to have a class in email 101 to let people know that if they are going to use a list that incorporates any GA member names, that they only be included in the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) part of the email?

I'm going to leave the problem of using the attendance listing from a conference as an email bulk mailer for someone else to tackle. But the real issue for me, and hopefully everyone else that was on that email from Kansas City, is what do we need to do to stop this activity that so many members treat as their god-given right to be able to give up the anonymity of others. I'm looking for a lot of help here from everyone who reads this. Has this happened to you? Do you feel as violated as I do? What can you suggest as to a process to eliminate this problem?

1/8/11 - 1:43 PM

Look, I get it, David is right that no one should give up anyone's anonymity - EVER - NEVER, NEVER, EVER, I totally agree!!!! Our fellowship is a spiritual one and anonymity is the foundation of it. Especially, when it comes press, radio and TV - YES EVEN THE INTERNET. This email should have never gone out to 300 email names on it. I hope and pray that anyone that had received it should have known this. I know I was caught by surprise.

I have no problem with people knowing my last name within the fellowship and respect everyone's right to their own. I am proud to be in this fellowship and of my name and what I have achieved, due to being part of GA. Even to the extent of seeing a fellow member in the local grocery or restaurant with some one else, I would not go up to say hello, unless I was invited to do so. Again, it is their right and not mine.

I have learned in today's world to protect my identity. It is getting harder and harder to do so. We all seen the commercials and news shows that show how easy it is to get into anyone's home computer, cell phone, etc.. It is up to me how much protection I am comfortable with.

I know many GA members that use their personal email or business email address for this fellowship. While others use a total separate private one just for GA correspondence. It is so easy to get any type of email account from all providers. I use Mac and Verizon and both offer several different email addresses and not just one.

I know, we as a member should understand and respect someone's right to choose or use anything they would like. But, we are all human and being in this program does not automatically make us an Einstein or a Bill Gates. Things like the KC email are going to happen on some level, even down to the local member.

Please understand I am agreeing with David - this should not have happen. But we as an international fellowship cannot enforce this problem or 100% guarantee that this will never happen again. We can have a healthy discussion and try to our hardest to spread the word. The bottom line is only the individual can really control his or her level of anonymity and protect it.

Fellowship First,  
Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/8/11 - 10:22 PM

Greetings, Fellow Trustees,

I just wanted to drop a line to say that I agree with David M as to his comments in reference to the email sent out by Kansas City. If anyone doesn't know how to use the BCC option when sending an email, he/she shouldn't be sending emails.

One of the hats I wear in GA is that of Communications Coordinator for Delaware Valley Intergroup. As such, whenever our intergroup wants something sent out to all of our rooms (calendar, picnic announcement, banquet flyer, etc) I send it to 124 contacts in all 39 of our rooms. Because I use the BCC option, each recipient only sees 2 email addresses: mine and his/her's. This is not rocket science. If I can do it, anyone can. If, for some reason, anyone doesn't know how to do this, they can contact me, and I will explain it as simply as I can.

Your friend in recovery,  
John B. - Trustee, Area 13 - Philadelphia, PA

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1/14/11 - 1:49 PM

I too agree that the email sent should have put the names in blind carbon copy (BCC) so that others couldn't see. Yes, it is 2011, but not everyone understands blind copy. Matter of fact, I wonder if everyone understood the acronym before I listed it above?

I assume someone on the conference committee volunteered to email this form and did not intend to break anonymity. And I agree we must educate. Does everyone know that when they say something via email in all caps it means you are yelling?

This is the second occurrence in four months that I've heard of where anonymity has been broken via emails. Do we need a GA literature piece

discussing email etiquette and anonymity? I'm willing to proof read if someone wants to draft.

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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1/21/11 - 2:33 PM

I appreciate these postings and do agree that Anonymity is a concept in need of "resuscitation". One problem I have seen with regard to the definition of Anonymity is that it often is a mis-used term. If a GA member says to another member, "I saw John D. at the meeting last night" or asks "did you see John D. at a meeting", some will say that's breaking Anonymity. Also, if one shares news heard about another member, some will say that's breaking Anonymity. Is it "Anonymity" or are those really issues of confidentiality, privacy and/or gossip? I believe the mis-use of terms can often water down its meaning. I have also been thinking how our slogan "Whomever you see here, whatever you hear here, let it stay here" relates to the principles of Anonymity.

To follow up on what Cathy suggested, I believe we do need a piece of literature that is strictly related to the principles of Anonymity. While there is clear language on certain main principles of anonymity in various literature (Information Packet, Public Relations, etc.), we would be well served to have piece of literature specifically dedicated to Anonymity, "the spiritual foundation" of GA. In addition to reiterating and consolidating what is in other literature, perhaps this new piece could also cover; "Why Anonymity is not a choice" and "Ways to maintain Anonymity". I think this would bring much needed awareness. I would be glad to work on this new literature as part of a committee.

I would like to note that I recently changed my email address to omit my last name. When initially I read on the Trustee line that this was an issue, I thought to myself, it's my anonymity and I don't care if a trustee knows my last name. However, I now understand that this not about my choice, but rather an overriding principle.

Wishing every well in recovery!  
Paul C. - Area 14, Long Island, NY

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<b>Rolling Agenda Item #30</b>
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1/8/11 - 3:10 PM

I'm watching the sentiment of the Trustees who have sent in their responses to Trustee Poll item #8, which is a rough version of the Cherry Hill agenda item. The indications are leaning toward voting against this item, on an unofficial basis. I want to put my 2 cents into this.

I understand there are those of you that turn off your GA brains any time certain subjects are brought up on the agenda, and that there is virtually no way any of those Trustees will even listen to discussions about how to make things better in these areas.

Let me list the items that are considered sacred ground and untouchable by many: 1-Recovery Steps 2-Unity Steps 3-The definition of gambling

I can hear it now...if it ain't broke, why fix it? Well people, the definition is broken, and has been broken from the time it was introduced many decades ago. We have been indoctrinated to believe this is the gospel since the day we each walked into our first meeting. In order to see it clearly, we need to break down the definition.

Any betting or wagering for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill" constitutes gambling.

The core problem is that there are ONLY 2 conditions that constitute gambling - betting or wagering. Everything in the current definition that follows, is nothing more than qualifiers of betting or wagering. You cannot say to someone that they are gambling if they are engaged in an activity that depends upon skill, by itself. The same goes for an activity where the outcomes is uncertain or depends upon chance. How many times have you heard that playing board games with your kids where you have to roll dice, such as monopoly, is considered gambling? Where is the bet? Where is the wager? What about people whose businesses involve making moves that are uncertain? Are they gambling?

I have recently launched a few new divisions and products in my company. I

believe there is demand for these items and services. I have committed significant resources to them and their outcome is uncertain, there certainly is the element of chance for their success, and making them viable will constitute skill on my part along with others in the company. Going by the history of those who choose to parse the definition of gambling for their convenience, I would imagine that they would want me to re-declare the date of my last bet.

Of course I understand that a person has to make the decision on their own as to whether or not they have gambled. If that's the way you feel, then why do we have the definition to begin with? It's obviously important, because it is always read during the meetings, even when a room only reads the Recovery and Unity Steps and page 17 of the Combo Book. Okay, then why not give the definition more structure so that there are fewer arguments or ill-will between members and groups that try to figure out ways around the definition rather than following Recovery Step 3. The simplicity of what Dave J's item says is brilliantly, and although it is not our job to try and change our 20 questions just to get more people to answer Yes to more of them, this definition change further clarify actions that constitute gambling that would otherwise be the subject of playing games, rather than addressing the problem of compulsive gambling.

All the Trustees who are going to vote on this item, should take a deep breath and really analyze the merits of this change to the definition. Knowing Dave from his time as a Trustee, I'm sure that most of you are not going to be prepared for his high degree of commitment to the program that is second only to his passion.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/8/11 - 9:51 PM

thank you david. i really feel this is very important. the book, as good and true as it is was written in 1963. it is now 2011, times have changed, people are different, technology and money earning opportunities are different and new people are looking for ways to circumvent the program. i believe this addition is very important for the program in this day and age

dave j. - area 14, long island, ny  
past trustee - 34 years clean

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1/12/11 - 1:48 PM>br> I agree that the definition of gambling for the compulsive gambler is broken, but I do not believe that adding the phrase, or involving oneself in any form of gambling, will fix it. In my experience, there are two parts of making a bet; one is the act of placing a bet (which I believe the current definition adequately addresses) and the other is the emotional response I experience as a result of that action. It is this emotional response that makes me different from my fellows; it was chasing this feeling that led me to point of suicide. I do not get this feeling by crossing a dangerous street, but for me, I must watch for this response whenever my own financial gain is involved. The core of this emotional response centers on getting something for nothing or "getting over" on somebody, which then triggers the insanity of wanting more.

I can see how this phrase could be an attempt to address this issue, but I'm afraid that the words themselves could be misused. For example, "involving oneself" could easily be interpreted as working in the gaming industry or in the investment industry. I believe the wording is too vague and open to different interpretations. I really don't need to convince a "newcomer" that she/he is compulsive gambler or prevent her/him from circumventing the program; the disease will do that. Recovery will not begin until she/he completely surrenders; I believe that it is delusional on my part to think that I can argue him into submission. Yes, just like you, I still find myself participating in that delusion, and it still never works. I would support including a description of this emotional response within the definition of gambling for the compulsive gambler. I know that whenever I attempt to describe this emotional response in meetings, new members almost always identify with this description. An example I often use to illustrate this response and its accompanying insanity is: My dog died, I think I will blow a couple of thousand so I can feel better; I then point out that the smiles that this statement invokes, describe a way of thinking that a non-compulsive gambler would never understand. I believe that any change in the definition should address this abnormal emotional response to placing a bet.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

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1/14/11 - 1:49

I read the proposed change and thought of the people in the program who still have to work at the casinos, which would meet the criteria of "involving oneself in any form of gambling". I didn't like the change. Then I read what Dave wrote in the poll reasoning. It says "Some new people have stated that if some stranger gives them a lottery ticket or horse racing ticket and they scratch it or play it, they did not gamble because they did not "wager or bet". After reading that, I understood a bit better the intent of the change. There times a person may be gambling but did not place the bet or wager. Ignoring the word choice because an amendment can be made, I could back a change. Would changing the proposed wording to "Any betting, wagering, or gambling activity, for self or others . . ." change the intent?

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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1/25/11 - 4:21 PM

I am replying to Dave J's proposal to update the definition of gambling. I love Dave J however I disagree with him. If members don't understand what gambling is then they need more then just a 12 step program. If a new person enters the program they have a sponsor that guides them. I certainly understand that if my mother buys me a lottery ticket and gives it to me and I accept the ticket then I have gambled. We are not in a court of law this is suppose to be a program of honesty, commitment and change. Why do we have to complicate things?? I can find a loop hole in any literature you put in front of me. I chose not to try and scheme which is what I did when I gambled. I voiced my opinion last night at a beginners meeting. We spend more time on trying to improve the book then we do in trying to retain members. If we all took a new member to a meeting or a anniversary especially those celebrating 90 days then you would see better member retention. Mary R. - Area 14, Long Island, NY

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<b>How To Get More Trustees To Submit Their Ideas And/Or Opinions To The Trustee Line?</b>
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1/9/11 - 8:10 PM

The headline says it all - I want to keep it simple. I would like to see all trustees reply,

Thank You,  
Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/10/11 - 12:01 AM

Send a monthly E-mail to all Trustees summarizing the topics that were discussed in the prior month. Perhaps a few of the topics will spark some interest or thoughts for future collaboration.

Doug E. - Area 3A, San Diego, California

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1/14/11 - 1:49 PM

Allow the Trustees to sign up to receive an automated email notification whenever a new item is placed on the poll or line. (Sorry David, I know this take programming effort.)

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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<b>Requests for Room Mates in Cherry Hill</b>
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1/11/11 - 4:49 AM

In order to keep expenses at a minimum for my area I am looking for a female member to share a room with. Please call or email me. I am on the trustee list.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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1/13/11 - 5:44 PM

Hi Carol,

I'm glad you posted this to the Trustee website. The registration committee for the Cherry Hill Conference does have your information and is aware that you are requesting to share a room with somebody. Just today we received another request from another Trustee. This Trustee is of the opposite sex, therefore we now have 2 Trustee's requesting to share a room.

We will check the Trustee website often for such requests and will let you



know as soon as we have a "match".

If anyone else is in need of a roommate and would prefer to to make an inquiry to the committee directly, you may do so by emailing us at [2011springconference@gmail.com](mailto:2011springconference@gmail.com) .

Thanks,  
Andy R. - Trustee, Area 13B, Southern New Jersey

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<b>Rolling Agenda Item #15</b>
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1/11/11 - 4:49 AM

David M, you put this item on the agenda: "Whenever two or more persons with a desire to stop gambling meet together, at the same physical location, on a regular weekly scheduled basis to discuss their gambling problem, they will be known as a group, only if they commit themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature. They are also to notify the International Service Office (I.S.O.) of their existence."

What is your intent by adding the words "at the same physical location"?

I am concerned that there are people who live quite a distance away for normal meetings or work an alternative shift that may be having phone meetings with their sponsors or others, still following GC.

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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<b>Rolling Agenda Item #28</b>
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1/11/11 - 4:49 AM

Tom Z, you put this item on the agenda: "Meetings should be listed in chronological order on the ISO Website." Chronological means sequentially, right? Do you want them listed by Area, instead of state? If so, how about both, so GA members can find their Area and potential GA members can find a meeting in their state?

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, Missouri

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1/17/11 - 11:36 AM

Hi Cathy,

When I am referring to chronological order, I am referring to in order of time of day.

I know that the term "chronological" does not sound right here, but my English teacher colleagues say it is the correct term. I trust them but it still doesnt sound right. I guess you can say I have blind faith in them.

If you look at the areas such as Long Island, meetings are listed in all different time orders on the ISO Website. I think they should be listed in time of day order so there is a consistent time sequence. If you look at other fellowship websites, this is the case.

Tom Z. - Area 14, Long Island, New York

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<b>GamAnon - Shoot or Get Off the Pad</b>
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1/16/11 - 11:51 AM

Try though I do to bite my lip on certain statements that are submitted to the Trustee Line, I am not always successful. This is one of those times, and it comes from this month's writings by George W. In keeping with the Trustee website guidelines, I will attempt to cautiously steer clear of how I would really like to respond.

Part of what sets me off is the convenient parsing of text from the Guidance Code and all our literature. There are too many people that throw out false statements seemingly as quotes from our literature, when they are not. If such misstatements are not challenged by others, then we set the stage for a waterfall of misinformation, leading to greater risks to Unity. Simply stated, if you build an argument with a broken foundation, or premises, then your entire argument is going to collapse.

I'm sorry, but Spiritual Principles do not fit in all the situations that we run into every day in our recoveries and how we hold this Fellowship together. I'm not ignoring them, nor am I asking them to be invalidated, but they don't cover all the bases (excuse the baseball metaphor).

Some people may want to live it the past and use whatever material they want in this program from their very beginnings, but that is not the 'group conscience'. We haven't used 'autonomous' in ages. And as long as George is citing chapter and verse about the BOT changing Unity Step 4 'at that time', whatever that means, the Step was changed in the Spring 1980 conference at Brown's. Yes, I do have all the BOT minutes back to 1967. It was item #12 on the agenda and passed unanimously with a vote of 22-0. For the 23 prior years since GA started where everyone used 'autonomous', none of the Trustees appeared to have a problem with that change. Clinging to what we used to use, regarding 'autonomous', in discussions does not serve the betterment of this Fellowship. If someone can't deal with 'self-governing' in lieu of 'autonomous', then maybe this is not the right program for that person. Bettors Anonymous would love to have such people in their Fellowship, as they too believe that each group should be autonomous... I, for one, am tired of hearing about it, as are many others.

The other reality is that the Montreal '92 decision resolving that the Board of Trustees does not perceive any of the 6 items incorporated into the resolution as violating any Step of the GA Unity Program did not change the Unity Step. It ended up merely being a distraction from the main issue that GamAnon is still an outside entity - period, the end.

What we have as destructive veins throughout our literature, are the constant changes that have happened to your literature over decades that are infiltrated with changes incorporating GamAnon. I blame the previous Board of Trustees members who were a party to these changes and all those Trustees who voted for the inclusion of these GamAnon references. It violates the Unity Step 6.

This current Board of Trustees is very self-aware of its responsibility to follow all the provisions of the Guidance Code, not just those sections that are in alignment with the individual Trustees' thinking, especially Article VIII, Section 8, which 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." It is now coming to grips with this GamAnon dilemma.

We are faced with 2 factions in the BOT. The first of which are those who are compelled to try and change our Unity Step because their spouses are in GamAnon and they get insulted at the mere mention that GamAnon is an outside entity. This group of Trustees wants to change the Step, but the Steps are sacred ground and the rest of the Trustees will not allow it. It's interesting that any motion to change Unity Step 6 will blindly be accepted by this group, just because it contains something to include GamAnon. Yet it is those same people who wouldn't dream of any sensible changes to any of the other Unity Steps. The other aspects of this include the incessant whining about how we came from the AA program, and how AA doesn't do this, and AA does that, and why can't we be more like AA? Well folks...if AA had an equivalent of a Trustee Line, this combined meeting subject would certainly NOT be on the list of discussion items. AA does NOT do anything with Al-Anon. There are no combined meetings and most prominently, there is no discussion of it in any AA literature.

The second faction is made up of those Trustees who see Unity Step 6 clearly, and may end up starting a movement to remove all references to GamAnon from our literature if we can't fix Unity Step 6. This faction is about restoring the honesty to our Fellowship regarding GamAnon's inclusion in our literature. This won't happen because the individual acts of changes over the decades will not get any meaningful support to carry to a majority and the ultimate outcome of such removals.

So here we are, caught in a philosophical tug-or-war, that gets us nowhere quickly, with the exception that we as a Fellowship are dishonest. Until such time as the Unity Step gets changed, we are coddling and supporting through implicit involvement the outside entity of GamAnon. Yes, implicit involvement...what else would you call any areas that run their area's hotlines jointly with GamAnon and have an option on their hotlines to speak with a GamAnon hotline volunteer? That's dishonesty with no equivocation.

Back to the prior posting - Any past trustee decision that contains the word 'consensus' is a straw vote. Taking a straw vote poll to 'test the water' is not in order because it neither adopts nor rejects a measure and hence is

meaningless and dilatory. Thankfully the BOT put a ban on straw votes into its Rules and Procedures and is no longer bogged down with these items. Straw votes and their inclusion into the Past Trustee decision booklet are what caused many Trustees to invalidate that booklet. The problem is that there were also many valid motions that were passed in that booklet, and those decisions cannot be undone. However, that's for another posting.

This brings me to the sweet spot of the prior posting in which the statement made centers on the Watertown, NY meeting(s) not knowingly violating the Guidance Code. Additionally, the really alarming statement is 2 paragraphs further down in which it is stated that George has the belief that he has the right to protest any restriction or prohibitions items added to the Guidance Code that violate the rights of individual members or override the Spiritual Principals as written in the Recovery and Unity Programs.

Anyone may protest the decisions of the BOT, but the groups cannot pick and choose which parts of the Guidance Code they wish to follow. And as far as the Watertown area meetings, they might want to figure out exactly what Article VII, Section 1 of the Guidance Code means when it says: 'Whenever two or more persons with a desire to stop gambling meet together on a regular, weekly scheduled basis to discuss their gambling problem, they will be known as a group, only if they commit themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature. They are also to notify the International Service Office (I.S.O.) of their existence.'

Having cited that, where does it put rooms where members knowingly bring in non-approved and non-appropriate literature into the rooms for use, display and distribution? What do we say about those members who are directly told by their area's Trustees that such actions are in violation of the Guidance Code, and the member's responses are that they don't care what the Guidance Code says, and that they are still going to bring in such literature? I'm thinking of a 9- letter word that starts with H, ends with Y, and sound exactly like the word hypocrisy.

When this entire subject of GamAnon comes up, I feel dirty, because it reminds me of the typical gangster stereotyped movies, where everyone get paid to look the other way. In other words, just let it happen and things will take care of themselves. Sorry, that's now how we work in recovery, unless we want to throw away accountability also. Letting this dishonesty continue is going to continue to foster ill-will and tear away at group unity, yet another phrase thrown about for convenience these days.

It's time to wake up. There are a very well heeled group of Trustees sitting in this term. They want clarity, not bullying by the older members who make up the core of GamAnon supporters in the GA Fellowship. Let's see if those GamAnon supporters can put together a discussion without using emotion and just deal with the facts. Personally, I don't think they can. We either need to fix this and include GamAnon in our Unity Step 6, or not. If we don't, then we need to purge our literature of this outside entity. As they say in Cape Kennedy - Shoot or get off the pad.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/17/11 - 12:57 PM  
Good morning, David -

I believe I am one of those who believe in the value of maintaining Unity Step 6 as it is - "Gamblers Anonymous ought never endorse, finance or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose." I believe our primary purpose as stated in Unity Step 5 is "to carry the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers." Sometime ago, Carol K asked the question on the Trustee Line - 'what is the message?' - and got little response. I believe the message is stated in Recovery Step 12 - "to practice these principles in all our affairs." And those are the principles of the 12 Steps of Recovery. I may be incorrect, but that is my opinion and thinking. I have heard this expressed by other trustees as well.

Unity Step 10 continues to say that "Gamblers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Gamblers Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy." Isn't that exactly where we are right now? Aren't we trying to have an opinion on an outside issue and being drawn into controversy?

I believe a change to a step is valid only if it provides direction to a compulsive gambler. As a Trustee, I am responsible for maintaining the Steps

of Recovery and the Steps of Unity. A change to include any outside organization, in my opinion, does not accomplish this goal or the guidelines of these steps.

I have been told to allow changes to Unity Step 6 to agree with the rest of our literature. I disagree. I believe we should change the rest of our literature to agree with Unity Step 6. It is much more work; it takes much more time; but I believe the original creators of these steps also were ahead of their time in seeing that outside organizations would and could only derail us from our primary purpose. I think that is what you have stated, so I am in agreement with you on that score. As you have alluded to, we - trustees and former trustees - have been very glib and benevolent in allowing Gam-Anon privileges far beyond what any other 12 step program would allow. They have attempted some of these same ideologies only to find out it hurt their program rather than aiding it (or so I have read).

I have been called 'anti Gam-Anon' which is far from the truth. I think this has been a personal attack to persuade me - and/or other trustees - to back off from our instructed purpose of helping 'the compulsive gambler who still suffers.' Thank you for stating some of my opinions so eloquently. I love this program, I have hope and faith because of this program - and would try never to hurt this program or the Fellowship - and most of all, I respect the values this program has given me and I respect all of our members - be they in a group, a member of an inter-group or similar entity, or our Board of Trustees - past and present. I just don't happen to always agree with them. Thank you for reading.

With love, faith, hope and trust in our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/17/11 - 10:22 PM

David, I really want to thank you for opening up this topic; it gives me a chance to address some issues that have been laying on my heart for many many years. Yes, it is true that Gamanon is suffering, and their membership is falling, along with their financials. You state that this is an outside issue. In 1989, I was granted the privilege of being the Gamateen sponsor in our area. I hope your outside issue argument does not extend to our children. Or perhaps the big shot gambler cannot be concerned with anyone but himself; we could hold our big shot meeting in even fancier hotels, if we could just get Gamanon off our back. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

As sponsor, I was required to attend Gamanon meetings for two years; I learned a lot about their program. Sybil, the wife of Jim W., founded Gamanon, and she also founded Overeaters Anonymous, the third oldest twelve-step program. OA floundered for several years; in desperation, Sybil approached Bill Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. He advised her that OA should return their steps to their original form; OA followed this advice, and just like every other twelve step program developed since then also designated the book Alcoholics Anonymous as OA approved literature. OA's success is legendary, but unfortunately, Sybil was unable to convince Gamanon to make the same changes. By now, Gamanon had spread throughout the Eastern United States, and she had lost much of her influence. Gamanon repeated the familiar pattern of remaining loyal to the gamblers no matter what harm or hurt it cost them. Doesn't this also sound familiar? The results are predictable, and now we now propose to disavow them and throw them to the wolves. Good form.

Yes, Gamanon has lost their way, but whom did they learn it from? Who taught them about using steps that don't work? Who taught them that the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous was evil, and that using it to recover would bring about expulsion? Who taught them that rooms should hold secrets between spouses, so that GAs could be comfortable sharing their infidelities with pride? Of course they learned from us that they should not worry about their own recovery; their whole program should consist of keeping the gambler from gambling. Gamanon is now so confused that they cannot even define a closed or open meeting because of us, and yet we criticize them. And what of the children, how many of them have to turn to addiction and worse to compensate for our big shot attitudes. Of course we can't learn about family systems or anything else modern science has learned about us; that would be an outside issue. My suggestion is that before we take Gamanon's inventory, we should first take our own.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

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1/18/11 - 12:02 PM

Paul,

You completely missed the point of my posting. I did not raise the issue of GamAnon suffering, their membership falling and their financial problems. You are and have always been very clear about your feelings toward AA and its teachings. You cite instances of how GA has deviated from all that AA is about, yet I don't see you even so much as hint at AA embracing Al-Anon. The fact is that it doesn't. GA seems to want to distinguish itself as being different by attempting to embrace GamAnon and casting the very clear fact that GamAnon is an outside enterprise. The very action of that plays directly to a violation of Unity Step 10, as we are now embroiled in public controversy. Is this not a clear signal that those who are committed to incorporating an outside entity into our Fellowship are taking back our will in opposition of Recovery Step 3?

We have continued over many years to add these bits and pieces into our literature about GamAnon and ignore the simple fact that we continue to violate Unity Step 6. What I am trying to accomplish is for the Fellowship to be honest with itself, which I said in my original posting. Either change Unity Step 6 or get GamAnon out of the fiber of GA. Until we change it, I am structurally against it because of the contradiction to Unity Step 6, in its current form.

Our children are affected by the plight of the compulsive gamblers, as are those affected by the alcoholic. Al-Ateen is not affiliated with AA. I didn't see your statements regarding that. Big hotels for the conferences is a problem that centers on the increased number of GA Trustees, as we continue to extend our footprint throughout the world. If you can find a Motel 6 or Howard Johnson motel that can handle the size we have attained, I'm sure all the areas would appreciate coming in with lower bids. Maybe you could prove that by submitting such a bid for San Francisco after the San Diego Conference in 2012. It stands to reason that the paying Trustees would be eternally grateful to you.

By the way, GA and GamAnon hold the conferences together, yet GamAnon does not sign a contract and has no liability if a conference fails. The last time we had such a problem, GA took on the entire load. Yet, GamAnon continues to receive 45% of the profits, without the attendant level of providing attendees. That's all about GA subsidizing GamAnon. GamAnon is intertwined in our Fellowship in many ways that just keep spreading like weeds on a lawn. Again, GA has to make a decision. Embrace them or separate us from them. No doubt, the latter would be akin to withdrawal symptoms from a chemical dependency.

Your history lesson on GamAnon is not germane to my item, but you no doubt will find supporters among those who stand by GamAnon the way you do. Their program is their own issue. If they 'repeated the familiar pattern of remaining loyal to the gamblers no matter what harm or hurt it cost them.' then it is their problem, not GA's. Your statement is consistent with what I said in my posting, GamAnon supporters only have discussion points that are based on emotional issues, no facts. By the way, I did not propose throwing them to the wolves, as you suggest. However, it is interesting that you view the separation as such. Does that come under the category of guilt? Are you suggesting that we continue to violate Unity Step 6 because we should continue to be co-dependent? I'm still waiting for a factual representation as to why? I suppose I'll have to wait some more.

Your last paragraph is the crowning point to what I have been saying. You actually try to press the point that GA is responsible for GamAnon's woes. You take a huge leap of faith to make such statements. I would hope that someone in GamAnon sees your premises and conclusions to give you their opinion regarding what a fractured and faulty Fellowship they have. It would be great to be a fly on the wall when you get that call.

I have not, nor do I care to take GamAnon's inventory, but it certainly looks to me, by what you have written that you are now the 2011 poster boy by acclamation for doing exactly that and how you accuse the GA Fellowship of doing the same.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/19/11 - 4:14 AM

David,

I can see how my remark about thanking you for this topic had an edge to it; I did not intend to offend you, and I hope you will accept this as a genuine amends. I also hope that we can keep these discussions on a professional and civil level, as there is so VERY much that you and I disagree about. First, I need to make a boundary with you. I am both older than you and I

am clean longer, I respectfully ask that you do not address me as a child. For example: if you must be derogatory, please address me as a poster-adult. For my part, I pledge to write about the issue at hand, and refrain from writing my opinions about you.

So I guess your question is what is the relationship between AA and Alanon, and of course I cannot speak for either of those organizations. What I can share is my experience, which is mostly about the area that I live in. First, I looked at the AA meeting directory for San Mateo County. On the back of the directory I found the following statement: ALANON INFORMATION includes ALATEEN & ACA - followed by telephone numbers for contacts in both English and Spanish.

Next I called the AA central office in San Mateo County and I asked if there were any literature that addressed the relationship between AA and Alanon; I explained that I was responding to the suggestion that AA did not support Alanon. The reply that I got was, "That's ridiculous." He then referred me to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous Appendix V, where the referral is made to the International Alanon Service Office. I was then reminded that the book includes a Chapter to the Wives written by Lois W, Alanon's founder. As you can see, AA literature proudly includes numerous references to Alanon, references which you claim do not exist.

As to my personal experience with Alanon; in most meetings that I have attended there were as many sober alcoholics, we call ourselves double winners, as there were non-alcoholics. In Alanon meetings, I have heard statistics that suggest that one third of Alanon's membership are sober members of AA; we come to Alanon to learn how to relate to others. This is something I also learned in my time in GamAnon; I still use those lessons and tools with my own children. I will close with Alanon's version of Step 6: Our Alanon Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

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1/19/11 - 8:22 AM

Paul,

I can make this response brief by using numbers for each of my points. No doubt that will be easier on everyone.

1. - If it's not edgy, then it's not me.
2. - You don't offend me, but your statements are many times erroneous in their content and effectiveness within the subject. No amends are necessary, although I appreciate the concern. My skin is a bit thicker than most, I suppose.
3. - Yes indeed, there is LITTLE we agree upon, and to that end, I would defer to the group conscience and how those who choose to submit their opinions to the Trustee Line stand on the issues that always seem to end up as a joust between us.
4. - I also believe that your views center on recalcitrance, which clearly rules out virtually all chances for your changing your views, even in the face of factual presentations.
5. - Older doesn't mean squat. If you need proof of that, I'll let you talk to my kids.
6. - More clean time also is meaningless. I've learned many things from newer members. Which falls under the categories of H-O-W.
7. - The poster child remark is strictly a figure of speech, not a derogatory remark; however if you wish me to officially modify my statement, let me do so and take your advice by 'upgrading' you to Poster Adult.
8. - I always write about the issues, but that includes focuses on faulty premises, statements, and conclusions, and assumptions, especially of the kind you made about GamAnon and your assertion of GA's co-dependance on GamAnon or vice versa. I'm just surprised that no other GA member who is a GamAnon supporter has posted a heated response to what you wrote about GamAnon.
9. - I acknowledge your citations by AA to Al-Anon and the absolute aspect of my statements regarding a complete omission as being incorrect.
10. - The Al-Anon Unity Step 6's inclusion of: 'Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.' might be the template for an agenda item to change our Unity Step 6, by you or anyone else. However, judging by the early indications of Trustee Poll item 12, a motion to change that step will go down in flames.
11. - Lastly, if you need it, you may have the last word between us, as I have made my points and I no longer wish to spar with you on this subject.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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1/19/11 - 10:19 AM

How can a combined meeting be listed as a GA Group/meeting when as the Guidance Code states in order to be a GA Group they are to limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature.

All of these meetings they are using Gamanon literature are in violation of the Guidance Code and should be remove from the list of meetings immediately.

I understand that Gamanon may have helped some of you. However, I would think that so has other things help you and others but the GA room is no place for their literature.

A sister is a relative so you that stand by a Trustee Meeting that accepted Gamanon as a sister fellowship did not make it okay to endorse, finance or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name. Look at Unity Step 6 the first item is related facility.

I think it was realized from the beginning that these should be separate.

Who leaves the meeting if there is a problem in the marriage the GA member or the Gamanon member? Who's entitled to the meeting? What is our purpose? To reach the compulsive gambler or the spouse of a compulsive gambler? Are we marriage counselors?

I came in as a single person. I don't need a marriage counselor!!!! I don't feel comfortable in a meeting pouring out my guts and looking across the table at disapproving faces? How does a Gam-anon person make a compulsive gambler feel there are with like people that what to help them get well?

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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1/19/11 - 5:45 PM

Good afternoon, Paul -

Just finished reading your entry on the Trustee Line, and not saying I either agree or disagree with you, but I do have a few questions regarding your submission:

1. I was given a Fourth Edition of the "Basic Text for Alcoholics Anonymous" when I was researching another issue. Is there a more current edition than 2001? If so, I need to review a newer edition. Please advise.
2. In the Fourth Edition, however, on page 121 it states in italics at the bottom that "The fellowship of All-Anon Family Groups was founded about thirteen years after this chapter was written ("To Wives). Though it is entirely separate from Alcoholics Anonymous, it uses the general principles of the A.A. program as a guide for husbands, wives, relatives, friends, and others close to ahcoholics. The foregoing pages (though addressed only to wives) indicate the problems such people may face." In a way, I personally find this somewhat sexist and wonder why the title "To Wives" was never revised. It appears that there are just as many alcoholic women as men, if not more so than there was back in 1939 when this was first written. Please correct me if I am wrong.
3. That is the only reference I see in this book to Al-Anon. That can only make me wonder why we have so many references to Gam-Anon - I don't know - I am asking this as a valid question.

If anyone can answer my questions here, please feel free to do so. I am curious and trying to gain more insight. Thank you.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/20/11 - 12:30 PM

Good morning all -

I am beginning to feel we are belaboring this issue ; however, in re-reading page 1 of our Red Book, "A New Beginning," the second paragraph seems to say a lot to me. I shall only quote a part - I am sure you are capable of reading the rest for yourself if you are as interested in this topic as I am.

"What do we do that helps someone quit gambling when everything else has failed?" It continues, "A significnt part of the answers may lie in the fact that we are neither reformers or "do-gooders." We have no axe to grind.

Traditionally, we neither endorse nor oppose any cause." Again, it continues, "Our focus is on showing the compulsive gambler who wants help, how to help him or herself."

I really and truly do not want to "beat a dead horse." But I think the statements written on that first page speak volumes to all of us. I am finding I need to re-visit much of our literature to get a clearer picture of what it is we are supposed to be doing - not necessarily what I would like us to do, or think we should do. Perhaps I also need to do another Step 4 to determine if there are any inner issues bothering me that aren't apparent or obvious to me. I'll work on that.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/23/11 - 10:46 AM

I think the issue of the wording of Unity Step Six is secondary to being honest and upholding the wording. There are people who say, yeah it says that but ..... Or it doesn't really mean what it says because we know Gamanon is ..... Yes Gamanon is great for those who need and work the program.

We are the guardians of our Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship. Yes your spouse, your children, your friends, your family, your employer and a whole lot of other things are important but they are not the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous.

If I work my recovery program I take better care of my children, grandchildren and everyone else. However, for Gamblers Anonymous to endorse or lend its name to any related or outside enterprise is just plain wrong. That does not mean that we should ignore the needs of our children. So stop with the guilt trips.

Just because it is something that needs your attention it doesn't mean the fellowship should tell you how to do it. Your kids need to acquire an education but GA has no business telling how to do that. I am sure some of you are saying I am just going off the deep end. Guess what, I have lots of opinions as to why GA members want to endorse a related enterprise (all my sisters are related to me).

There is nothing in our Guidance Code that says you can not belong to any other fellowship you want to belong to. Every compulsive gambler that I know qualifies for Gam-anon as they have a person in their life that is affected by compulsive gambling. There you are - go to all the meetings you want - give them all the money you want - but do it with out putting Gamblers Anonymous in the middle.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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<b>GA Approved Literature</b>
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1/18/11 - 11:24 AM

I just wanted to share a message that our Intergroup Chairman on Long Island, Frank S., asked me to send out today to our membership. I am also the Communications Committee Chairperson on Long Island.

HI ALL,

IN OUR MONTHLY MEETING THIS JANUARY @ INTERGROUP WE HAD A DISCUSSION ON GA APPROVED LITERATURE. THE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS GUIDANCE CODE IS CLEAR AND CONCISE:

" Gamblers Anonymous appropriate literature is limited to local area member telephone lists, meeting and direction lists, flyers regarding events sponsored by the local rooms(s), Intergroup(s), surrounding area(s) or conference committees."

UNFORTUNATELY, MEMBERS HAVE BEEN PASSING OUT FLYERS SUCH AS RESTAURANT MENUS, LETTERS AT THEIR ANNIVERSARYS, TO PRIVATE BUSINESS INFORMATION DURING MEETINGS. I UNDERSTAND NOBODY IS TRYING TO BE HARMFUL AND ONLY HAVE GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT THIS IS NOT TO BE HANDED OUT UNLESS APPROVED BY GA TRUSTEES OR INTERGROUP. THIS WAS BROUGHT UP DUE TO WORDING BEING MISREAD OR MISLEADING AND OR HARMFUL TO G.A. AS A WHOLE. PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL AND UNDERSTANDING OF THIS MATTER. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING THIS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ANY ONE OF



YOUR TRUSTEES; PAUL C., BRAD B., TOM Z., MARY R. OR MYSELF AND/OR YOU CAN ALWAYS COME TO AN INTERGROUP MEETING THE 1ST THURSDAY OF ANY MONTH @ SOUTHOAKS CHAPEL AMITYVILLE. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MORE SUPPORT.

THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT ON THIS MATTER.

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

SINCERELY,

FRANK S.  
LONG ISLAND INTERGROUP CHAIRMAN

I am sharing this because I think that this is a very important message to send out to all. People are not following the Guidance Code and it could affect GA as a whole. I am also happy that Frank is defending our program and taking a stand on the local level. Who wants to be the one that tells somebody not to read a poem/letter that inspired them at their anniversary? These are not only our GA Brothers and Sisters, but these are our friends.

But, as we know, if we let one person read something that inspires them, we have to let EVERYBODY read what inspires them. What you find uplifting, I might find offensive or insulting. The point is, as Trustees, sometimes we have to do things that are right and not always popular. In my humble opinion, this is one of those instances.

Tom Z. - Area 14, Long Island, New York

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1/18/11 - 11:16 PM  
Good evening Tom -

I read your submission with interest. We have faced the same issue here in San Diego and I agree, it is VERY difficult to ask someone to cease from reading something that is truly meaningful to them, but inappropriate in a GA meeting. Yes, they are our friends as well as our GA colleagues and it can be painful to both parties to point out their error.

Some have read excerpts from Mother Theresa, an inspiring woman who is now cannonized as a saint; readings from the Holy Bible; readings about gambling from Time magazine; readings regarding the passing of a dear friend - all of these issues wonderfully worthwhile - in a different setting, but not inside a Gamblers Anonymous meeting or within a group.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and message on this issue.

With love, faith, hope and trust in our fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

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1/19/11 - 11:17 PM  
Dear Tom Z,

I am glad you posted a copy for Frank S. (area 14 Intergroup Chair) letter regarding G.A approved literature.

I believe that if you don't follow guidelines it will lead to complete chaos. The same kind of chaos that most of us lived during our gambling lives. I think it is inappropriate to pass out poetry, menus, religious articles, and business information during our meetings. I am surprised that there has been some negative feedback in the rooms regarding this matter. If members of the room feel the need to share these things they can do so on their own time. What one person finds inspirational I might and others might find offensive.

Mary R. - Area 14, Long Island, New York

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1/27/11 - 12:58 PM

I don't believe we have to argue further on the issue of GA/Gam-Anon Combined Meetings. Page 10 of "A New Beginning" which carries the GA Seal of Approval explains in clear terms that the Watertown GA Group has not violated, but has complied with, the instructions of Gamblers Anonymous-Gam-Anon Combined Therapy Meeting described in this important publication. I am sorry for the commotion that has ensued over this issue. I do not expect or need an apology from those who have not read "A New Beginning."

Yes, Gamblers Anonymous is not affiliated with Gam-Anon, and I am not in

favor of changing Unity Step Six in any way; but I also see that Gam-Anon is spoken of very favorably in many pieces of GA approved literature.

In a separate posting I have some comments I believe are important in reference to Rolling Agenda Item #41. I believe this item #41 is a thinly veiled move to amend Steps Two, Four, and Nine of the Unity Program and the Spiritual Principles of our Fellowship. It is the Guidance Code that should conform to the Principles of the Program—not the reverse. In fact, many of the articles contained in the Guidance Code would have to be removed. This attempt to turn the Guidance Code into a sledgehammer of authority will not happen if Board of Trustees members who believe in the Spiritual Principles of the Fellowship and act accordingly as guardians of those principles have a voice. I have deep faith that the correct decision will be reached.

Yours in recovery, unity, faith, and hope,  
George W. - Area 16, Watertown, NY - Past Trustee, Area 12.

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### Logic and the Guidance Code

1/19/11 - 4:17 PM

Recently, I was accused of having faulty premises and faulty conclusions, so I consulted Wikipedia to brush up on my Ps and Qs. On the first page in the fallacy section, I found the fallacy of Irrelevant Conclusion. This fallacy takes many forms, such as Appeal to authority, Appeal to the majority or loyalty, Appeal to fear, Appeal to emotion, Arguing without proof etc. The form of the fallacy is always the same; one of the premises is implied. The example cited is:

Argument: Billy believes that war is justifiable, therefore it must be justified.

Problem: Billy can be wrong.

Of course this conclusion is apparent, but my logic professor taught me that all arguments of the same form are equally faulty. Have you ever heard this argument? The Guidance Code says such and such, therefore we must do such and such. From the above conclusion we can see the error in such argument as not only the Guidance Code can be wrong, it also can be misunderstood or misinterpreted. That is the precise reason the BOT meets twice a year, to apply reason and love to these guiding principles. This statement is of course faulty logic, as it represents what I believe.

Here is how I arrive at that belief. I see the Steps of Recovery and Unity as our constitution, and the rest of our guidance codes as the laws enacted for the good of our fellowship. Occasionally, there are conflicts between these separate sets of principles, and that is when the BOT should resolve these conflicts. It follows then, that the Guidance Code must sometimes bow to the group conscience.

So please advise me of the fallacy in this argument. The 12 steps of recovery are a suggested program of recovery, the 12 steps of unity are a suggested program to unify our fellowship, therefore the Guidance Code is a suggested set of rules to conduct our business. I am aware the words suggested in the program is applied in the same way that it is suggested that a person jumping out of an airplane pull the chord on his parachute. The consequences of not following the suggestion are caused by gravity, similarly failing to follow the 12 suggested steps of recovery can result in relapse. When a group fails to follow the suggested unity program, it usually withers and dies. I suspect that if we wander away from our procedures, the BOT would experience chaos, and for that reason, I do uphold the guidance code. But, they are only procedures; the programs are the policies.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

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### Now We Want to Use the AA Promises?

1/24/11 - 9:08 AM

"The new blue book is to include the reprinting of the "Promises" from pages 83-84 from the AA Big Book and the final draft of the blue book will be submitted to AA for their approval as to the insertion prior to printing."

Where are the AA Promises in present GA literature? They are nowhere. I don't think these promises should be put in the new Blue book. I find this item out of order, I hope you agree. If the AA promises were part of our existing collection of approved literature, I would have a different view.

Thanks,  
Richard C. - Area 2K, Past Trustee, Calgary, AB Canada

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1/26/11 - 10:43 AM  
Hello Fellow Trustees,

I remember when I first came to GA in 1995 and attended my first Intergroup meeting, there was a discussion on trying to have the 12 AA Promises approved as GA Literature. Being an active member of AA at the time, I strongly agreed with the idea. After discussion, the Intergroup finally gave the OK to our local Trustee (Pierre L.) to go ahead with it and present a motion to the next Board of Trustee meeting agenda, which he did.

So, I looked at the Minutes from Ellenville, NY in the Spring of 1996 and from Whistler, BC in the Fall of 1996 and here is what I found:

Ellenville, N.Y. Spring 1996

16. Approve as new literature The Twelve GA Promises (Enclosed) (Montreal) Motion to approve item #16 and if it is accepted, go to A.A. to receive the authorisation. Approved: 32 Against: 7 Passed (1st vote)

Whistler, B.C. Fall 1996

6. Approve as new literature the 12 GA Promises. (Enclosed). If accepted, must go to AA to receive authorisation. (Montreal) Motion to table.  
Approved: 8 Against: 32 Failed  
On the motion.  
Approved: 28 Against: 15 Passed (2nd vote)  
Karen H. will contact A.A.

So, it is clear that the Board of Trustees has already approved the 12 AA Promises as GA Literature. What I don't know is what happened after Karen H. went to AA to receive authorisation. Were we denied that authorisation or were there unacceptable conditions for GA not to follow through with the printing of it as approved literature? I suppose Karen H. or a member of the Board of Trustees in 1996 could tell us. There may also be something in the Chicago Spring 1997 Board of Trustees Minutes, but I do not have access to this document for the time being.

Now the Blue Book Committee wants to include in our Literature something we already approved. I'm fine with it, unless the present Board of Trustees thinks and votes otherwise.

André G. - Area 5B (Québec)

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1/26/11 - 9:45 PM

Please don't think that I want to include the promises in the Blue Book, I have no opinion either way. I have been approached by members with this desire. I do not have an AA background. I prefer that our program be ours. That said, being asked to chair this committee I believe that the revision belongs to the fellowship and not just Carol K. I did the leg work and am presenting the item to find out what the group conscience wants.

I will present my letter to AA and the letter I received from them in the committee report. The results of the agenda item will let me know what to do next. Obviously, not having it in the book is less work.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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<b>Rolling Agenda Item #41</b>
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1/28/11 - 4:00 PM

On January 24th, 2011, Trustee Carol K. from Area 9 proposed an agenda item for the Cherry Hill Conference Trustee meeting. I oppose this idea and will communicate my beliefs to the Trustees who represent Area 16 members.

Agenda item #41. "Request that the chair form a committee to review all literature for conflicts of the Guidance Code and literature with direct contradictions in them-- notification of the existence of and suggestions for correction for each item to be presented to the Board of Trustees."

The Guidance Code is a tool of guidance not a tool to legitimize authority, edicts, mandates, restrictions, or censorship of new ideas for recovery. To

not honor the Twelve Steps of Recovery and Unity, our GA combo book, and Articles 1, II, IV, and VI of the Guidance Code that guarantee freedom and equality of all members would be a risky proposition. The conflicts in the Guidance Code affecting Fellowship spiritual principles might be a better place to start.

The Guidance Code was not designed to erode, weaken, or dilute the foundation of principles this great Fellowship was founded upon. The purpose of the Guidance Code is a roadmap for aims and purpose of the Fellowship. The structure indicated in the Guidance Code is for service structure...i.e., Board of Trustees, Board of Regents, and the I.S.O.

To begin with, if the committee Carol K. wants the Chair to form were to seek reviewing or changing the possible contradictions between our GA approved literature and the Guidance Code, the first corrections that this yet unformed committee would consider might be to weaken, if not remove, the spiritual principles and protections against authoritative rules limiting the rights of the membership as proscribed in Guidance Code Articles 1, II, IV, and of utmost importance, Article VI, Members. Then, the principles contained in Unity Steps One, Two, Four, Nine might come under attack. This should not be allowed to happen. It has the potential to tear the Fellowship apart. The Fellowship cannot risk that possibility even if it was a remote possibility.

We are all blessed and owe a deep debt of gratitude to this Fellowship that saved our lives and can save the lives of those we seek to carry our message of hope to. We, as past and current Trustees, are not the House of Representatives or the United States Senate. Thank God for that as we see in the political world where that conflict would lead us.

We are "Trusted Servants" elected by our group members to serve the best interests of our groups and our Fellowship. Unity Step Two addresses our responsibilities as Trustees to the Fellowship in clear non-debatable words. "We shall be held responsible if we elect irresponsible Trusted Servants who cannot serve the group in the manner determined by the "Ultimate Authority" which is the spiritual concept of "Group Conscience." **They are not elected to command, order, demand, change, alter, but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by all members of that group.** Trusted Servants in each group are rotated so that each of us may be reminded and remember that we serve for the good of all, **without authority over anyone.**"

Board of Trustee members who have served multiple terms, some with ten years or more, should look more closely at the concept of rotation and admit over time they have instituted their right to ignore that principle by adding to the Guidance Code a provision stating "No one (group or intergroup) could tell them what to do relating to the length of time they wished to serve." In addition, disregarding words and principles set forth in Article 1, Name, Section 1, Article II, Guidance Code, Section 1, Article IV, Declaration, Section 1, and Article VI, Members, Section 1.

That disregard might satisfy some trustees who champion first, and foremost, the concept of Gamblers Anonymous being a Corporation while defending ideas meant to weaken or replace some Spiritual Principles that our Fellowship was founded upon. I believe our spiritual principles of kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility need to be strengthened not ignored or weakened. I also believe the vast majority of Board of Trustee members would not be in agreement with altering the Spiritual Principles of our Fellowship.

I believe, and have the right to believe, that rolling agenda #41 would not be in the best interests of Recovery, Unity, and Fellowship.

I pose this question for all Trustees to answer "Would any of us as "Trusted Servants" dare to be the judge, jury, and executioner of the Spiritual Principles of our Fellowship or cast them aside into the darkness?"

I may be right or wrong in my assessment regarding this issue. Mitch R., father of Marshall R., told me many years ago that "I had a right to be wrong!" If I am wrong, I apologize in advance to any Trustee offended by my right to express my views. The decision of what is "right" or "wrong" will be made by the entire Board of Trustees in exercising their "Group Conscience" to the best of their abilities.

When our days of being "Trusted Servants" conclude and we pass the torch of guardianship of serving the Fellowship to others, we become "Elder Statespersons." The pioneers of the Fellowship laid the groundwork for the

present and future members of the Fellowship. It is hoped that we would want our legacy to be built on kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility - not super-ego, arrogance, or authority?

We have been given the gift of changing our lives and the lives of others who travel this recovery journey together with us, and the time has come to give real meaning to the word "trust" in "Trusted Servants." And "Servants" being another important concept to consider as we act as guardians of the 12 Steps of Recovery and Unity.

Yours truly in recovery, unity, faith, and hope,  
George W, - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee, Area 12

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1/30/11 - 1:45 PM

It amazes me how many people do not realize that the 12 Steps of Recovery and the 12 Steps of Unity are part of the guidance code. However, based on the responses I have received publicly and privately I have requested that my agenda time read as follows:

Request that the Chair form a committee to review all literature for conflicts with the guidance code, paying particular attention to the 12 Steps of Recovery and the 12 Steps of Unity which are part of the Guidance Code, along with literature that has direct contradictions in them. Notification of the existence of and suggestions for corrections for such items to be presented to the BOT.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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**Submit a response to the [Trustee Line](#) because of something you have read in this or any other issue.**

Should the link above not work, copy and paste this email address into a blank email: [trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com](mailto:trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com)

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