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## Trustee Line for February 2008

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### From The Trustees

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

#### BOR nominating process

2/1/08 - 12:22 AM  
Dear Trustees,

I hope this finds everyone doing well and getting ready for Portland. I wanted to respond in regards to Ian's submission to the Trustee Line in the January issue. While I think withholding money from ISO is a bit harsh, I also believe that Ian is just trying to be heard and it looks like he caught the attention of the Chairman of the BOR. Are threats like this what it takes now to have your voice heard in this fellowship??

In just a few short weeks we will be in Portland. There we will be voting for nine members to sit on the BOR. It was just recently brought to my attention that before we are able to elect the nine members, a committee has sat together and thumbed through every person that has submitted his or her name to be of service at the level of the BOR. No beating around the bush here...there were 23 people that submitted their names to serve on the BOR. All they submitted was their name...no bio, nothing, just their name. A few members that decided to make themselves the nominating committee (there is nothing in our guidance code that states who the members of this committee are, so I assume anyone that wants to be on the nominating committee can be.) decided that five of the 23 people were not worthy of doing service at this level.

The only requirement to serve on the BOR as stated in the Guidance Code Article XIII Section 1. The ISO shall be guided by a BOR of nine members of GA who have abstained from gambling for at least two years. That's it, just two years of abstinence. So any member with two years of abstinence can submit their name. However, if John S. from my area with 25 years has never done any service work in the fellowship and decides he is ready to be of service, if he wants to put his name into the BOR, is anyone going to nominate him if they have never heard of the guy before???? You see if I submitted my name because people on the committee might know me they may be more likely to select my name. Or, just the opposite, maybe the committee will feel I won't work well with the BOR and therefore not put my name on the ballot...should that be their decision if I have the qualifications or the BOT?

I believe that if the BOT is to elect the 9 members to sit on the BOR, then any member with the minimal criteria that is stated in our GC, should be able to submit a bio to the BOT and then let us vote. Maybe I won't know someone that submits a bio, but maybe that member will have some qualification that we need at the BOR. Folks this is the 'O' in the H-O-W. Are we really allowing a group of individuals to make biased decisions for the fellowship??

One last thing, in dealing with this as I was inquiring about how a member with all the qualifications could get passed up (and I believe it is because of personality differences) one phrase that was given to me as an answer really bothered me and I would like the opinion of other trustees. I was told that the BOR deals with the financial aspect of GA and the BOT deals with the recovery. I understand that the BOR deals with the finances, but I would sincerely hope that these members when making decisions to produce new literature or to have a National Hotline, that they are thinking first about how these things are going to help the compulsive gambler that still suffers. Yes, they make the financial decisions, but I pray to my higher power that the decisions are coming from people with recovery and based on recovery.

I was taught here in my area that recovery is not just in the meeting room, but I should take it with me in my everyday life and my everyday decisions, so if the BOR is making financial decisions, I still believe they should be recovery based.

Dina P. - Area 6B

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2/1/08 - 1:28 PM

While I do not respond very often to the trustee line I feel that the letter from Dina needs some clarification regarding the nominations for the Board of Regents.

The process for the nominations for the Board of Regents is covered in the By Laws which are the required document for non-profit corporations and are actually for any corporation.

The by laws state that all past member of the Board of Regents are invited to gather for the nomination meeting. Each person present is given a ballot and the top 18 people are placed on the ballot to be voted for by the trustees. Since I was the person who changed the voting process for the Board of Regents from all groups voting to the trustees voting for the members I am familiar with the process.

Now for the record the Chairman of the BOR only calls for the nomination meeting and sets the date he or she does not decide who is on the committee. As I said before any past member of the Board of Regents is entitled and invited to be there to vote.

Are the most qualified candidates put on the ballot? Who knows? Just as are the most qualified people nominated to be trustees? It is a process that is in place that has worked to allow many people to serve on that board and dedicated many hours of their time to the business side of the fellowship.

Just as with any process is it perfect? Maybe not, but then again we can find fault with everything. Maybe a trustee should have 20 years of recovery before they can be a trustee. With any process there will be those that disagree but I witnessed the processes take place and it was conducted fairly and within the guidelines of the By Laws of the Corporation of Gambler's Anonymous.

When we decide to have qualifications for the Board of Regents we should also look to have qualifications for others that serve at any level. Dedication and hard work is the qualifications that I think are important and I have found over the years I have been in this program, that while we are each at a different intelligence level I have learned many valuable lessons from people who might not have the qualifications that I have in business but they have common sense.

When we start having to have an aptitude tests for people to serve is when I know the fellowship is not what I need. As I always say the primary purpose of this fellowship is to help the compulsive gambler who still suffers. It is not about how many years you have been around, how many degrees you have, how much money you have lost. It is about standing up and helping those that need help.

I feel that most of the people I have met over the years who give services do exactly that. I also say rules are there to be changed and if change is needed then do it but do it right.

I recently told another member that if I had my way every meeting would have to be run exactly the same. The guidance code would be expanded to detail everything a room or member could or could not do but as you all know I do not have my way so I live under the guidelines that those before me made and that have for over 50 years guided this great fellowship.

Not that I have my say I want to thank each of you for your hard work and dedication to this program.

Tom M. - Area 2  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

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2/1/08 - 5:21 PM

Dear Trustees

I thought it might be a good idea to respond to Dina's letter in the Trustee Line so here goes. To begin with Ian was heard by myself and the entire BOR. It was decided that we were doing the best we could on the minutes and we and many of the Trustees were quite satisfied. Last year when I was secretary of the BOR I went the extra yard and took the minutes home and expanded them with hours of extra work and there were still a

few Trustees unhappy with the minutes. We on the BOR are not paid secretaries we are mostly business men and woman with little if any secretarial skills. We honestly try our best to give the fellowship the best minutes we can. As for the election process of the BOR. The BOR nominating process is outlined in the bylaws Article V, section 1. The BOR is governed by the bylaws and is required to follow these bylaws. My feelings are very much like Dina's. I feel anyone wishing to be on the ballot that is qualified should be on the ballot. On the BOR agenda for February there is an item that addresses this issue. I hope to see this changed to a much higher number or perhaps changed to whomever is eligible will be on the ballot. Article VI sections 1 & 3 will also have to be changed if this is approved.

It is true that 23 GA members submitted their names for nomination and we could only put 18 on the ballot but I do not believe personalities had anything to do with it. I truly believe the nominating committee voted for those they felt could do the best job. A very close friend of mine from the LA area did not make the ballot probably because those voting felt those they voted for could do a better job. Even though I took the time to mention each member that was running and what their present and past service to the fellowship has been, a present member of the BOR who was well qualified did not make the ballot. Why was this, I really can't tell you since I cannot judge those voting and how they voted. Yours in fellowship

Bob W. - Area 1  
Chairman, BOR

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2/4/08 - 1:42 PM

Well, well...I do feel honored to be responding to Dina's submission in such distinguished company.

The distinction between the BOT and the BOR is that the BOR are the officers of the corporation of the Gamblers Anonymous. They are there to take care of business. The BOT takes care of recovery. The BOT is represented by the world. The BOR is 77.8% represented by California. Therein lies the 1st of many problems.

Although I wasn't around when the BOR was structured, the world of technology was very different back then. Clearly a strong argument could have been made back then to justify why the BOR members had to be within a short radius of the ISO office. It's nice to see at some point that the BOR let go of this requirement and 'allowed' 2 people to be outside that area.

Having attended my first BOR meeting this past November, it is now easy for me to say that I felt that I was stuck in the pre-Internet era regarding technology. The members sit around a table and a phone with a speaker is used to patch in the 2 BOR members outside the 200-mile radius. That is the extent of how technology is used by ISO. The BOR and by definition ISO is stuck in the 80's. We need to use some openmindedness to be more efficient and more inclusive than we are in those areas. But that is a subject for a different Trustee Line.

I listed this as a preamble to Dina's subject. The nominating process for this past period only had 1 person participate who was outside the area, and that was Tom M. Even though all the qualified people that could participate in the nominations this year were invited to attend, whomever was outside the immediate area chose not to participate. Saying that does not make it less of a problem. Since our Chairs are quick to cite segments of the By-Laws, I did not see anyone mention that those qualified nominating committee members must be physically present in order to participate. The fact is they can't because it is not mentioned in the By-Laws. This is where technology can fix the problem, but current thinking by those involved with making such changes are not thinking in that area, or maybe even worse, are unwilling to entertain solutions to that extent.

We are an international fellowship and there is no justifiable reason why any of the members of the BOR must be in California. Yes, GA is a California corporation and someone has to sign checks. There is no reason why this can't be done via FedEx or some other overnight courier service. They can go out on Monday and come back on Wednesday. Far more important documents are sent via these carriers than whatever checks we must send out, not to minimize the importance of the business of GA.

The nominating process cannot be equitable with the current structure it operates under. How do all those from California know about people in Virginia, Indiana, Oklahoma or from any area or state outside California? The answer is they simply can't be fair about the nominating process. I don't propose to outline how people are considered for the BOR, but far too many people are under the belief that if you are not 'inside' you are 'outside'. That relates to being in California and on a 'preferred' unmentioned priority list, or being on the 'obligated to consider outsiders' list. Yes, that is not what a lot of people want to hear, especially BOR members both current and past, but the reality is if someone conducted a poll, the results would probably verify how members outside California exactly that way. I can certainly attest to that overwhelming opinion from those in my area. It's also one of the reasons why few people care about the BOR, because it is thought to be the 'good ole boy network'.

Back to the nominating process. If we are electing people to run a business, why would we not try to get the best business minds in the fellowship? How can the nominating committee even grasp the capabilities of those who wish to run for the BOR with a 200-word bio? What are the committee members seeing on these bios - how the program has saved the lives of so many members, or how the program is so important to them in

their daily lives, to mention just a few. Don't get me wrong, these are important considerations for recovery, but the BOR is about business. What about someone who has been a Trustee for many years, 2nd Co-Chair of the BOT, 1st Co-Chair of the BOT and Chairman of the BOT? How does someone like Denis M. who submitted his name for consideration as a nominee for the forthcoming BOR not get nominated by this past California-only nominating committee? I only have a few possibilities to work with and none of them center on the concept of principles.

The BOT is about recovery and having said that, anyone with the passion and drive to follow through with wanting to stand up and help those in need should certainly run with that. Our local areas determine who is capable of doing just that when they cast their bi-annual votes for Trustees. This is not at all the same thing as the jobs of the members of the BOR.

A statement was made in a reply about starting to have aptitude tests for people to serve. For business issues, we should act like the corporation we are at the BOR level and do what other corporations do. Instead, we use some a different form of an aptitude test for a select group of people that make up the nominating committee that haven't the faintest idea about the rest of the world when it comes to making a decision to nominate someone for the BOR. Saying that the nominating process was followed based on the provisions of the By-Laws only makes them valid. It doesn't make them right. But the By-Laws can't be changed from outside the inner sanctum. The BOT cannot make the BOR change anything if the BOR doesn't want to. Yes my fellow Trustees, we have no checks and balances in place. A unanimous vote by the BOT to 'request' the BOR to change a procedure could be summarily voted down by the BOR. It's ironic that the BOT votes in these members but then gives up all ability to do anything to change it. But that is a subject for a different Trustee Line.

I submit to those who take exception to what I have said here to go back to the archived BOR minutes on this site and tell me and the rest of the fellowship how the business of the BOR is about 'standing up and helping those that need help.' We have the minutes going back to the August '06 BOR meeting. Using that as a starting point, I don't see how the topics listed below have anything to do with standing up and helping those who need help.

- 1) - recapping lifeliners
- 2) - items regarding intellectual property
- 3) - renewal of the office lease
- 4) - items regarding balancing and reconciling the bank statement
- 5) - reviewing the insurance coverage
- 6) - current rates on bank CDs
- 7) - and 5 similar items under new business

To say that education, degrees or how much money has been lost by a member is completely off the topic. We are always talking about Experience, Strength and Hope. Let's evaluate prospective nominees for the Experience they have in running or working within a business and dealing with the problems that face a corporation. I know many people that have done an extraordinary job for other companies or their own that never graduated from high school, or have still have 2 jobs after 15 years or more in the program.

Experience before personalities should be the operative consideration, which is also not going to sit well with many who read this, but if we don't embrace technology and how it can help us grow within the fellowship and all its components, then we are left to a world of nominating only those we know and like or worse yet, those who only agree with how the current regime thinks.

David M. - Area 12

P.S. - After posting this, it was brought to my attention that NO bios are provided to the nominating committee, contrary to what I thought above. Does it strike anyone who is reading this how completely wrong this process is where people just discuss things about those prospective nominees they know and have no way of assessing anything about those they have never heard of? I see no principles whatsoever with this process.

Another little tidbit that is neatly tucked away in the BOR Standing Rules that few people have seen is this little gem. [#25 - 'The names for the Board of Regents ballot will be listed according to the number of votes by the Nominating Committee in descending order 1-18.'](#) Is this supposed to let the Trustees know who the current BOR wants to be voted in for the new BOR? The listing should be in alphabetical order to show a fair roster of nominees that have been untainted by the indications of favoritism by the nominating committee.

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2/5/08 - 11:25 AM

Dear Trustees

I write this letter to do a step 10.I stated in my last letter that personalities had nothing to do with the nominations for BOR.I was wrong as far as I am concerned the nominations were handled completely honest and everything was totally done correctly. I let personalities cloud my own judgement by specifically not voting for someone well qualified. I associated one member that I have been having trouble with with this other member therefore not voting for him. I hope my apology is excepted by all .

On another subject I would like to comment on one of David M's Trustee Line letters. He stated that if the BOT voted unanimously for the BOR to have something done they would not have to do it. He is so right about that but in my 11 terms on the BOR I have yet to see one item that the BOT passed with a simple majority not done. He also makes some good points about the ISO being behind in technology. We do sit there for the meeting with 7 members around the table and 2 on the phone. My feeling is we would have a better more efficient meeting with all 9 members in attendance. I serve on the board of 2 other non profits and occasionally there is a phone meeting. In my humble opinion it never goes well and I always get off the phone feeling nothing was accomplished. Tom M spent 2 terms on the BOR and flew in for every meeting. Tom P drove in from Arizona every month for over a year. Others have driven in from San Diego and Las Vegas. It gets very tiresome trying to defend the bylaws and BOR standing rules especially when information is given incorrectly. David M states that we put the names on by those receiving the most votes on top when it should be alphabetically. We tried that but the Walt's and William's complained. Then we tried it reverse alphabetically and the Alan's and Bill's complained. We found this to be the fairest way. He also said no biography is submitted.

Anyone is welcome to submit a biography. In the last 10 years there were only 2 members I did not know and they were both local members. These are just some points to ponder.

Yours in Recovery  
Bob W. - Area 1  
Chairman BOR

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2/13/08 - 3:07 PM

Dear Trustees,

First, let me start by saying thank you to those that did respond to my letter both here on the trustee line and personally. Everything that was mentioned to me was heard. I realize now that I was incorrect in stating that anyone could make themselves part of the nominating committee. Some corrected me that it is stated in the by-laws of this fellowship. Thank you for the knowledge and passing it along. It is this type of service from older members (sharing experience, strength, and hope) that will help the up and coming generation of the fellowship to carry on traditions.

Now that, that has been said, I believe the purpose of my letter was simply to state that I don't believe if a group of 5-13 individuals sit down together and eliminate people from the possibility of serving this fellowship, it can be done without bias. I think it is very obvious that if only names are submitted to the nominating committee, that the folks on the nominating committee can only possibly choose people they know (and like). Would it make any sense that this committee would choose the name of an individual they did not know (or anything about them) over someone they did know? Or, would this committee choose the name of someone that maybe they have had previous disagreements with in the past? Bob even alludes to this in his response to my letter. He makes a statement that, "a very close friend of his did not make the ballot." This is my point, it should not be even taken into consideration that this person is a friend of Bob's. In this case maybe it didn't make a difference, but the point is, friendship should not even be a consideration. If we now as the BOT, can assume that friendships are being mentioned during this nominating procedure, then wouldn't it make the same sense to assume that if the committee (or someone on the committee) is not fond of a name presented that that too would be mentioned.

In Tom's response he mentions the fact that, "are the most qualified candidates put on the ballot?" He then compares this to, "are the most qualified people nominated to be trustees?" I can only speak from my experience. In my area each individual member has the opportunity to elect the trustee. ANYONE with the necessary requirements to be a trustee can submit his/her name with a bio. This is then passed out to each room in my area. Each room sets a date for elections and each INDIVIDUAL member votes on the trustee. We do not let the officers of intergroup narrow it down to five of the names submitted and then only the intergroup representatives get to vote. Again, I state my point. At any level of the fellowship, I believe it is impossible not to have biased decisions with only a small group of people making the decision. This is also why many of our changes at the BOT either state a 2/3 vote.

Lastly, to close this letter, I would like to comment on David M's response to my original letter. I understand when members explain to me that the BOT is about recovery and the BOR is about the business. I hope that we all realize that this business would not be here today if it were not about people trying to recover. Therefore, I still believe strongly that the people I want to see serving on the BOR are people working recovery and with recovery the top priority of the business list. I believe every decision the BOR makes the members should ask themselves first, "how will this decision affect the recovery of the fellowship." Finally, I also wanted to reiterate David's comment about the names being listed in accordance to the number of votes. Bob says, "This is the fairest way." There is nothing fair about this system. Everyone (at least I hope) can recognize when a list is being compiled alphabetically. There is no bias in alphabetically; it is just the way the cookie crumbles.

I look forward to seeing you all in Portland.  
Dina P. - Area 6B

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2/14/08 - 2:33 PM

n reading this months submission to the Trustee Line in regards to the BOR Nominating Committee. I was wondering if the BOR would consider giving up the Nominating Committee. They could just have elections, where any member that meets the requirements...(abstains from Gambling etc.)..can have their name placed on the Ballot, By a set date. Those that wish to run will notify the ISO, they can also submit a bio by a date, if they so wish. They may be placed on the Ballot in the order on which the ISO office received their request. This way we will longer have to have a member openly make a step 10 statement, after the fact when nothing can be done. This will also eliminate some of the current questions, on how & who can get on a Ballot, and also what order that the names are printed. It most deffinetly would remove the Principles before Personalities question, which at times does take place.

Joe B. - Area 6C

**Prisons, jails and institutions listing**

2/1/08 - 9:26 PM

Hi fellow Trustees,

My name is Mike M from Area 3D (Arizona and New Mexico) and I am also Chairman of the Trustees Committee on Prisons (US).

I am writing to ask for your help in putting together an up-to-date listing of all GA meetings currently held in prisons, jails, and institutions. I know this is what our committee is trying to do, but we only have six, hardworking members and there are 50 states. Therefore, progress is slower than I would like so I am asking for your help (This shows progress in me; I could never ask anyone for help before GA).

Would you please ask anyone in your Area, if they know of any prison, jail or institution GA meeting, to please contact me with the following information:

Name of Facility  
Address of Facility  
Day of Meeting  
Time of Meeting  
Contact Name  
Contact Title  
Contact Email or Phone# (If available)

Right now we have only nine (9) known meetings (in Arizona, California, North Carolina, New Jersey, and Oregon). I'm sure there are more.

Hopefully, the list we are creating will be made available to judges, prosecutors, probation/parole officers and the like so as to give the compulsive gambler who faces incarceration a better chance of getting the help he/she needs while 'in school'.

My Email address is mmendick@cox.net and either you, as Trustee, or the individual member with knowledge of what we are looking for, can contact me.

Thank you for your consideration. Looking forward to seeing you in Portland. Remember, there will be a US Prisons workshop/presentation at the conference.

Your GA brother, Mike M. - Area 3D

**United we stand - divided we fall**

2/6/08 - 3:10 PM

This appeal to the Board of Trustees is based on words expressed by Jim W., the founder of Gamblers Anonymous. Jim W. wrote these words in a letter to Eddie L. of New Jersey in 1972. 'The most important element in all Gamblers Anonymous meeting rooms was love.' 'Love for our recovery. 'Love for our Fellowship.'

In our life-saving Fellowship there is no issue more important than Unity. Unity is the principle that binds all Gamblers Anonymous members together, not only in purpose, but respect for all members' journey to recovery. We are a band of brothers and sisters on this recovery journey. Yes, there can be bumps in the road, but we have a Program of Recovery and Unity to guide us back from any temporary detours back to the right road, which is the recovery road. That is why our program champions "Principles before Personalities" as guidance in all our affairs. Arguments, heated disagreements, bad feelings towards other members, resentments, etc. over what is the best direction for our Fellowship risk sliding down a slippery slope to disunity. That is a luxury the Fellowship cannot afford. That is a risk as individuals we cannot afford.

When the Board of Trustees was founded, the trustees embraced a great responsibility to act as the guardians of the Twelve Step Recovery Program and the Twelve Step Unity Program. The trustees sought to build unity within the Fellowship as most important to maintaining harmony, growth, and civilized communication between all members and all groups. That effort took awareness of the importance of equality among all members, that no member is superior (including members of the Board of Trustees) to any other member and awareness that we are all arrested compulsive gamblers in recovery.

Compulsive gamblers have been known to possess strong opinions and at times possess super-egos. To strengthen the unity and purpose within the Fellowship meant we had to modify our opinions and egos to find a way to honor the spiritual principles that were more important to maintaining unity than our strong personal opinions and strong egos.

The trustees decided in order to honor and practice the principles of recovery and unity, and in recognition of the diversity of our membership, that a Guidance Code needed to be formulated spelling out the guidelines the membership would be encouraged to follow. I say 'encouraged' because the Board of Trustees granted themselves no authority or ability to impose any restrictions, limitations, or dictates upon the Fellowship as a whole. To insure this freedom of choice for all members and in keeping with what our Fellowship presents as spiritual principles, our approved literature presents those spiritual principles as kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility.

In Article VI, Members, Section 1, the Guidance Code States, "No one is more important in this Fellowship than the individual member. He has no ruler or superior, but he or she may select a person or group of persons to represent him or her and his or her rights within the Fellowship."

An example of the Board of Trustees not following the Guidance Code was an agenda issue presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at the spring 2007 Trustee meeting. If approved, the decision would have been added to the Guidance Code. The proposed addition to the Guidance Code was defeated 65-35. What seemed surprising were the 65 'yes' votes that did not consider Article VI, Members, Section 1, to be important.

Item # 5 was unfinished business and the vote appears on pg.19 of the July 2007 I.S.O. bulletin. This motion was presented by a trustee from Area 2. 'No individual member, group or Intergroup can instruct a National Trustee on how to vote on any issue.'

Item #5 was not original. It was Past Trustee Decision #10, being resurrected by the current board to give the Board authority over individual G.A. members or G.A. groups. A compliance squad (area trustees) would be assigned to determine what individuals or groups were not obeying the Guidance Code. Is this what a Fellowship champions?

The penalties imposed could be expulsion/banning for what the trustees consider wayward members, or wayward groups, remaining part of Gamblers Anonymous. Could a Gamblers Anonymous member (whether they are a Trustee, a group member, or Intergroup member) be able to grant themselves the power to ban another Gamblers Anonymous member from recovery, signing that fellow members' death warrant? I'm sorry! That practice would destroy the Fellowship! It is the self-governing principle of freedom from any imposed authority while honoring the noted exceptions of Unity Step 4 'where it would affect other members or G.A. as a whole' is what our Spiritual Fellowship stands for. We humbly obey—or we risk relapse and a "return to evil ways!"

Some current trustees and some past trustees have paid little attention, or decided to bypass the true meaning and precise principles outlined in Article VIII, Board of Trustees, Section 8 of the Guidance Code, which clearly states: 'The Board of Trustees shall act as guardians of the Twelve Step Recovery Program and the Twelve Step UNITY PROGRAM and must be guided by these precepts in all their decisions.'

Guardians, which the Board of Trustees is bound to act as, is defined as protectors, defenders, and keepers. Somehow, somehow, in a past trustee decision the Board of Trustees voted to override section 8, and passed amendments, sections 9 and 13 of Article VIII that gave them authority to act as the changers of the Programs of Recovery and Unity. For 73 years the A.A. Fellowship that graciously allowed our Fellowship in 1957 to use A.A. Recovery and Unity traditions have honored A.A. traditions by not adding or subtracting a word that would dilute the principles as originally written. Gamblers Anonymous Trusted Servants are guided by the Unity Program. Trusted Servants are asked to honor those principles in guiding our Fellowship.

Unity Step 2. Our leaders are but Trusted Servants; they do not govern.

Gamblers Anonymous relies primarily on group conscience to keep functioning. Leaders within the Fellowship are entrusted to carry out the will and conscience of the group. They have assigned responsibilities but they act only within the authority granted to them by the group to serve the group. 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 be reminded and remember that we serve for the good of all, without authority over anyone.

Unity Step 9. Gamblers Anonymous, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Gamblers Anonymous is run by the spirit of service not by the force of vested authority. The service boards that have been created have no formal veto power and are responsible to the will of the membership as a whole.

The issues presented in this submission try to explore the lack of communication

between the membership as a whole and the Board of Trustees. There is no fault or blame to any past board or to the current board as how this lack of communication came about. I believe the membership did not understand their responsibility to become involved.

Therefore, group opinion and issues that concern the groups and the Fellowship as a whole were put on a back burner by the Board of Trustees. Membership was excluded when the Board of Trustees did not seek group opinion on vital issues. The Board of Trustees took it upon the Board itself to make all decisions concerning the Fellowship. The Board created an aura of (assumed) authority which covered many years of Board of Trustees decisions. My humble suggestion is that the current Board of Trustees, in whatever way they deem proper, hold a 'Group Conscience' meeting to decide if principles, not punishment, are honored as we travel on the road to recovery. At stake is our Fellowship.

Yours in recovery,  
George W. - Area 16

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**Reapportioning Trustees allocation**

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2/15/08- 1:28 PM

I just reviewed the Portland rolling agenda and noticed a new item submitted by Marc L. of Area 1, item # 47, about reapportionment of trustees allocation for all areas. We have looked at this situation a number of times in the past and a B.O.T. Committee was even formed a few years ago that did not bring any viable solution.

And now, this new item on the Portland agenda brings what appears to me as the solution. They say to keep it simple and this item just does that. One trustee per area plus one additional trustee for every 20 meetings. How can it be any more simple ? It is based strictly on the number of meetings in any given area and not on GA history or areas influence. The starting date in Spring 2010 also makes a lot of sense as it will give each area time to adjust.

I strongly support this initiative that will allow our Fellowship to have a balanced representation from all areas. Thanks Marc for your input. Well done !

Andre G. - Area 5B

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2/18/08 - 7:47 PM

To put it simply and plainly, I too support this motion.

In Service and Serenity,  
Ed K. - Area 1

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2/22/08 - 11:15 PM

Greeting all,

I would like to state that reapportionment of Trustees via a formula based on meetings held in an area is a great idea. Area 6C for instance would be limited to 2 trustees instead of the 4 we have now but the number would be easier to fund for the area. Participation in the area elections might be better if a Trustee had more financial support. \$300/400 dollars in expense money hardly covers the Airfare and this year if you live on east coast and have to travel to the great Northwest. The Airfare alone exceeds the funds that are available to the Trustees in a lot of areas. example below:

- Airfare--Greensboro NC/Portland Or----- \$542.00
- Conference Registration----- 410.00
- 2 extra night-board meeting----- 246.00
  
- Total not including Food for 2 extra days-----\$1198.00
- less area funding----- (300.00)
  
- Balance out of pocket to Trustee-(estimated)----- \$898.00

This expense eliminates many people from the process. I feel that this would allow the areas to fund trustees with having to limit who attends or carry a vacant Trustee Position on the record.

Great proposal Marc.

Thanks,  
Gary G - Area 6C-NC/SC

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2/22/08 - 2:04 PM

Fellow Trustees:

On to Marc L's idea, simply it is simply brilliant!! Ever since I became a trustee back in Toronto, we have been trying to limit the amount of trustees and Marc has hit it right on the mark. I am going to echo Gary g's breakdown on costs. It is going to cost me approximately \$1200 to go to Portland in a couple of weeks. I will get approximately \$275 assistance from my meetings in the area. Trips like this would become more



affordable if there were fewer people to send. I know the area with large trustee population like New York and Los Angeles might revolt against this idea but for the rest of the world this makes perfect sense.

Ian S. - Area 6D

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2/22/08 - 4:17 PM

So it looks like Marc's item for Trustee allocations is getting some favorable opinions. Before we make this into an early celebration, let me remind everyone of item 61 from the Chicago agenda that dealt with the same subject, but from a committee chaired by Debbie W. from area 2C, that made a similar recommendation to have 1 Trustee for every 10 meetings. The vote failed 15 to 68.

The allocation process has been upside down ever since the BOT voted to make the alternate Trustees, regular Trustees. There was no uniform way to align the number of Trustees for each area. The only way to do so would be on a ratio of Trustees to numbers of meetings within each area.

Marc's version is putting more stress on the Trustees and the areas they would have to cover. Change is necessary, but the meeting numbers should be different. Trustee 'allocations' should be as follows:

1 to 19 meetings - 1 Trustee

20 to 29 meetings - 2 Trustees

30 to 39 meetings - 3 Trustees

etc. with a limit of 10 total Trustees regardless of the area's size.

You will notice that I used the word allocation. Our once every 2 year Trustee alignment process should be to reaffirm the number of meetings in an area to reset the allotted number of Trustees for each area. Additionally, to change the geographic areas as needed.

Areas get the allotment, but they don't have to vote for all the allotments. This is a critical distinction because of so many areas that are unable to handle the costs of sending their Trustees to a conference and reimbursing them for their expenses. Speaking for NJ, we recently faced the prospects of running out of money and cut the amount of money we give our 6 Trustee down to \$300.00. Being a Trustee should not be about who can afford all the out of pocket monies that are part of representing our areas. But cutting down the expenditures makes being a Trustee a position for elitists.

If an area like area 3 in Las Vegas has 90+ rooms, they should be 'allocated' 9 Trustees. If they choose to not elect 9, but keep the 4 that they currently have, then that would be the area's choice. If the area gets to be too big and allocations are either too many or too expensive, then the area can request a realignment to bring the numbers down to something more reasonable. Again, it's the area's choice.

Although I completely understand Gary's and Ian's points about more Trustees meaning fewer dollars for every Trustee, but I don't think that this issue will be solved by this formula. What we should be concentrating on is the equitable distribution of Trustees to ALL areas so that we truly represent our respective areas without over or underweighting that is self-evident with the allocations as they currently exist.

David M. - Area 12

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<b>Rule and procedures</b>
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2/12/08 - 3:36 PM

Dear Trustees,

I am happy to announce that the Rules and Procedures Committee has completed the initial mandate requested by the BOT, and the Chairman of the BOT, 2 years ago.

We have introduced an agenda item for the Portland conference requesting that the BOT approve the manual that the committee has produced and subsequently used as a guideline for all procedures outlined at all future BOT meetings. The manual currently on the Trustee website, will be available as an attachment on the Portland agenda.

I would like to point out that this is not the work of one or two individuals, but, the combined effort of 5 extremely dedicated members of the committee who met diligently at least 25 times on conference calls to formulate and approve (by committee majority) all the items in the manual.

As we have been emphasizing for the last 2 years, this is not a manual that is etched in stone. It is a living document and any part or provision can be changed by the BOT during the Trustee meeting by following the agenda process.

I hope that even though you may not agree 100% with all the items presented, you will all approve this manual and finally give the BOT a uniform and consistent set of procedures.

If anyone has any opinions on any of the items please feel free to communicate at any time with me, or any member of the committee. The work in progress for this manual has been constantly updated on the Trustee Website and we hardly had any comments or

opinions during this time. I hope this means that all of you approve of the work that has been done and you are pleased that there will be no variations between Chairs and Trustee meetings.

Herb B - Area 5  
Chairman, BOT Rules and Procedures Committee

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<b>Recording the BOR meetings</b>
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2/12/08 - 3:36 PM  
Fellow Trustees:

I know it seemed like saber rattling when I suggested withdrawing funds from ISO because BOR will not get out of the Stone Age in giving out information but it looks like it got the desired effect; you are talking about it a lot! All that I was asking of the BOR is to give their members some tangible and effective minutes of what happens once a month between 9 people. It is not hard to do but I was receiving negative responses stating it can't be done. When I heard that I placed on the BOT agenda a straw vote suggesting to the BOR that a recording device would be a good idea. We record BOT meetings with a hotel recorder which costs us hundreds at a time. If we purchased one and stored it at ISO, the cost of the recorder would be saved in less than a year.

Ian S. - Area 6D

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