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**Trustee Line for February 2013**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 2/28/13.

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

The subjects listed below are 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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| 1.   | <a href="#">Passports - Continued</a>              | 2/1/13<br>12:01 AM | 1       |
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**Passports - Continued**

2/1/13 - 12:01 AM

Its a nice situation that new area trustees from outside north America are assisted via the accomodation fund. On that matter I am grateful. It seems right, fair and appropriate that trustees within north America, at the very least in this passport scenario, should receive where necessary. Can we do this by altering the wording of the above fund purpose to include this scenario ? I'm thinking of agenda item if necessary and backdating to include this conference if passed, or would it need two votes ? Furthermore, suggest that where the majority of funds donated originate in north America, the disbursement be prioritised ahead of new area disbursement, and vice versa. Nothing to stop once beneficiary new areas popping a little bit back now and then, that's how it works after all ? Love to get feedback.

Odie B. - Trustee, Area 36, Ireland SEast

**Thoughts On Being A Past Trustee**

2/1/13 - 12:55 PM

I am submitting this with permission of a past trustee of area 8A.

Hi All,

Thoughts on being a "Past Trustee"

When I look back on my involvement and participation in Gamblers Anonymous, I find some of my best memories are those connected to being a Trustee. There are friends I met who were a great help to my son and myself as he battled cancer. These memories and connections are a source of comfort and healing when I am down.

However, after leaving the position of Trustee and becoming a "Past Trustee" I was promoted to "GA Member". I was not granted wisdom that exceeds the collective wisdom of the meetings in Area 8A, nor did I feel that I represented Area 8A in perpetuity.

There are a number of "Past Trustees" who feel they must have the privilege of

submitting items to the BOT agenda and be vocal at BOT meetings. They, like me, represent none but themselves. Even worse is the fact that "Past Trustees" are not held to the same standards set for duly elected trustees. They need not attend 39 meetings per year, they are not expected to attend all meetings in the area they formerly represented, in fact, they don't even have to live in that area. On a more disgusting note, there is no clean time requirement, and yet, they seat themselves among the Duly Elected Trustees, closest to the microphones and use time best left to the current trustees.

As dysfunctional as Congress seems, can you imagine what it would be like if former Senators and Congressmen were granted the same privileges as "Past Trustees"?

The only message I have for "Past Trustees" is this...Thank you for your service, now go home and do good things.

Karen E. - Area 8A, Minnesota

*Note from the Trustee Website Admin: The person responsible for the content of this item is a past Trustee. Past Trustees are permitted to participate in the Trustee Line. It was the choice of this past Trustee to have a current Trustee from the area submit the item. Please be aware that current of past Trustees are not allowed to submit items for the Trustee Line from GA members who have never served on the Board of Trustees. All items must be original work.*

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12/2/13 - 4:00 PM

Karen,

My thanks to you for sharing the past Trustees' thoughts. I waited over 22 years into recovery to run for the position of Trustee and am grateful Area 14 has given me the privilege of representing it. That said, I agree with your post and recognize that while my service time as Trustee will end once I step aside or am not re-elected, that will not inhibit my ability to participate in adding to the overall welfare of the fellowship. As it is, there have been numerous instances of rifts created by Trustees' unwillingness to honor the rotation principle and allow others their chance to serve. This is only compounded further when the situations you posted about happen at the Trustee meetings.

In fact, given this mind set in some people, I am hardly surprised and no less disappointed at the tepid support (at best) your trustee poll item received.

Looking forward to Vancouver,

Steve T. - Area 14, Long Island, NY

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2/2/13 - 10:56 PM

Steve ( t ) congratulations on becoming a trustee after waiting 22 years, I only held out for less than 18 years. To be frank, acknowledging the commitment of those who did the business while I held out, sat back or whatever and expressing my gratitude is higher on my list than jumping on the bandwagon of blanket criticism of members including former trustees. I'm intrigued by the rifts you refer to and fail to see how any present or former trustee could cause them. If a member is elected then the responsibility lies with the pelectorate, to whom the trustee is in turn directly accountable. The structures and procedures are there to deal with such instances and a general criticism of the entire former trustee element is not the way that leads to unity. Furthermore, any member with disruptive inclinations will be delighted to see such turmoil. I'm not yet a former trustee so that had nothing to do with my no vote in the item you referred to, there are clear fundamental reasons why the item is out of order and will not likely succeed, more from me on that and the runaway yes item that I also believe will not stand up to detailed scrutiny. Just a little info on a previous request you made regarding how many committees there are and your observation that 10% of people step up to the plate while 90% don't. It seems there are over 20 committees, nearly 200 seats representing around 50 areas, just a rough look at the details onsite. Way off the business paradigm figures you feared. Well done to you for serving on more than one committee.

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland SEast

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2/5/13 - 11:17 PM

Odie,

I am glad to see this Trustee Page getting increased dialogue. I am not sure what you read into my reply on this thread but I imagine most would agree I

did not besmirch or diminish any Past (or Present) Trustees performance in this thread. I have previously posted my gratitude to those that have paved the way to allow me and others to serve and the passion and commitment with which they served to bring the fellowship to where it is today. The crux of my reply whether misinterpreted or not was two fold. The first part was simply agreeing with Karen that when a Trustee becomes a Past Trustee, I feel they should not be an active participant at the BOT meetings. The second part was that I have in fact, heard instances where newer Trustees were either dissuaded from serving or not given an opportunity to serve when another Trustee was completing more than 3 or 4 terms as a Trustee. I am not a person who believes in term limits per se, but that said I am an ardent supporter of the rotation principle which is a critical component of our fellowship. Assuming the newer candidate is qualified and the incumbent Trustee has served multiple terms, they should step aside and allow the other candidate to serve without causing a potentially contentious election.

On your other point, perhaps 10% was likely an exaggeration but the general theme of the message was, are the Committees functioning at the level this fellowship needs to handle the increase of members due to the rampant proliferation of gambling in society? The survival of many peoples' lives will rely on the answer to these questions.

Lastly, I was doing anything but touting my own efforts. I simply feel all of us as Trustees must challenge ourselves and the entire membership to make this the best fellowship it can be to carry out our mission to the compulsive gambler who is still suffering.

Steve T - Area 14, Long Island, NY

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2/6/13 - 12:39 AM

This has been an interesting thread, one that I originally thought might not get a large number of responses. So far, it's not a lot, but it has the most items in this month's issue.

My story is that I first became a Trustee after 12 years in the program in 2000. My area has 6 Trustees allocated to it and generally speaking, New Jersey Intergroup has just barely been able to fill all positions in the last 12 years. This current term, we only managed to get 4 people to take the positions and one just recently resigned.

I believe in the rotation principle at the group and Intergroup levels. However, when it comes to Trustees, the rotation principle is called elections. Trustees carry a bigger responsibility than any other position I have come across in this Fellowship, with a possible exception for the Chair of the BOT. I am not trying to diminish the positions and efforts of Intergroups or room positions, but there is a larger scale involved at the Board of Trustees. However, all that can be negated when we vote in Trustees who are highly opinionated locally, but turn into mutes at the BOT meetings, we vote in Trustees who come to Intergroup meeting and say 'no report' each month or worse yet, we vote in Trustees who allow violations of the Guidance Code and decisions of the BOT in their local areas. That last one affects GA as a whole, which is outlined in the Responsibilities of International Trustees.

Having said that, I was the subject of an orchestrated personal attack in 2010 that caused me not to be re-elected as Trustee. Needless to say, I was disappointed at the outcome and consoled myself by saying that the only change for me was that I couldn't vote, because I still had a voice at the BOT meetings, as per the Rules and Procedures. Yes, it is different being a past Trustee and I am happy to have been re-elected for this term. This gives me the perspective from both sides of the fence.

Everyone knows that I am an active participant in every Trustee meeting. I try to bring a different perspective to the points that have been previously raised. I wear my passion for making things better and more efficient for the BOT and Gamblers Anonymous as a whole on my sleeve. Getting involved and being of service and participation at every level is what makes me tick.

My feeling is that only current Trustees should carry on the business of the Board of Trustees. That means past Trustees would just be a distinction for people who have previously served. Past Trustees should be stripped of their current ability to submit items to the agendas, speak in any debate, unless it is about an item they author, they should not be part of any committees, and probably a few more things that I have omitted. The only exclusion would be

for the Executive Board. Any past or current Trustee would be eligible to be elected, as they are afforded all the privileges of a current Trustee, without the ability to vote if they are not a current Trustee. A rough parallel would be with Congress in Washington. Is the BOT as crazy as Congress? That's for another topic on the Trustee Line. The point is that Senators and Congressmen get elected and no one other than those currently in office speaks on their respective floors. Committee members are current members. The nuances of Washington are far more complex than the BOT and the wealth of knowledge of the past members is profound. That wisdom comes in guidance to the current members, not a voice on the floor. Why should the BOT be any different? We don't lose our past Trustees' experience, either they don't offer it or we don't ask for it.

I will also draw this conclusion. I believe that areas may have trouble finding Trustees to fill their positions because past Trustees currently have the ability to speak at Trustee meetings but don't have any of the responsibilities of being a current Trustee. To that end, let me bring everyone back to the state of committees that were chaired many years ago by Trustees who lost elections. Almost without exception, those committee completely stalled. The chairs who were now past Trustees, lost interest in getting things done. Why should the change of now being a past Trustee have made such an impact on the effectiveness of the committee chair and committee members who were in the same situation? It was only through the actions of the Rules and Procedures that a past Trustee can only chair a committee if there is a current Trustee to co-chair that committee. That was the remedy to keep those committees with the wheels on the track. In other words, when it comes to past Trustees, it is a lot about 'Do as I say, not as I do.' Take away the rights of the past Trustees, and we just might see a bit more competition for those positions from people who really want to make things happen.

I hope to serve area 12 in NJ for as long as the members feel that I am doing a satisfactory job of representing them both through the activities of the BOT and locally. When the day comes again that I do not get elected, it will have a certain sting to the reality of the situation, but this is about principles, and I will accept the fact that as a past Trustee, I will be a spectator.

Yes, past Trustees have a wealth of knowledge and experience about many things regarding the BOT. But if they have something to say, then they should speak to their current Trustee(s) and have them reflect such knowledge and experience through the current Trustee(s) who would need to do so at the microphone. Anyone who clings to the idea that past Trustees should have the current level of privileges they do, and votes against any motion to curtail those privileges is too immersed in their own issues and dare I say it – their own egos.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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2/6/13 - 8:49 AM

Steve, I can see how you would have taken that inference from my post, unreserved apologies from me and absolutely no negatives intended.

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland SEast

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2/6/13 - 1:12 PM

Hello everyone,

As a former Trustee, I read the line every week. I have given the web site address to everyone in my rooms and encouraged them to read the comments that are posted. I chose not to run for the position this past year after being a trustee for almost 11 years. I felt like Karen E. and others feel that several past trustees were becoming a disruptive influence in the BOT meetings. Former trustees should be seen and not heard at the BOT meetings. Area 6 C has 4 positions only 1 is filled. 6 C has several past trustees like me that have just gotten tired of the way the BOT meetings have been run during the past few years. The meetings have been hijacked by a group that -Yes I am saying this- have major ego problems. I will not return to the BOT until I feel that these issues have been addressed. The former trustees should not have a voice and should only be heard through their current trustee at the meetings. The BOT meetings have gotten completely out of control. Some complain that trustee line is not used. I feel that members do read like I do but just do not comment.

Gary G. - A former Trustee, Area 6C, North Carolina

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2/8/13 - 7:51 PM

First of all, I would like to thank all of you who have responded to this. Now to give MY point of view, (the first post was copied directly from what I received from our past trustee). If anyone inferred from the original post that we are in any way trying to devalue past trustees or the service that they gave, let me just say this; the knowledge, wisdom and experience of the past trustees is invaluable! I phone the past trustees in my area seeking their advise, their wisdom, their support, on a regular basis, as I hope future trustees of area 8a will do with me. The key word is PAST! Our areas elect trustees every 2 years to represent their area. We are elected to perform the business of the BOT for our AREA. I do not wish to silence the past trustees of area 8a (it could never be done anyway!), I simply want to perform the duties that have been entrusted to me and to my fellow current trustees by our areas. Past trustees should also be able to serve on committees that they wish to serve on. Again, their wisdom is invaluable, it is just not needed at the BOT meetings. If they have an item they wish to have on the agenda, it is up to the trustee of their area to place it there and speak for it. As it was stated in my original post, only current trustees are there to represent their area. Past trustees represent themselves and at the BOT meetings, they should not be as involved as current trustees. And Gary, I agree with you, the BOT needs to practice Unity step 12....Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the Gamblers Anonymous program, ever reminding us to place PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES! It's time to get the egos out of the room!

Karen E. - Area 8A, Minnesota

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2/10/13 - 1:12 AM

As a current trustee in my second term I am proud to be able to serve my area 8D. I have been elected to represent them. I want to begin by saying that I have the greatest respect for past trustees. They have served our organization well and have given us a foundation to continue the work they have started. I often see them as our parents and grandparents (age doesn't matter). But as in all families parents have family rules and goals for their family. As parents we remember from our parents and grandparents and use much of their rules but we have to adjust to the times. We are the next generation and are leading our family to be the generation that follows us. At the trustee meetings I have seen past trustees give us their guidance and share their history. This has been a valuable resource. But, yes there is a but. It's time for the current trustees to take the lead. Too often I have seen people at the microphone that are past trustees time and time again and the current trustees aren't able to speak. Maybe we should allow a specific amount of microphone time just for past trustees so current trustees can have their given time. Current trustees are the current voting members not the past trustees. I've also found first hand that getting on a committee is difficult. I have volunteered for several committees and only serve on one. How many past trustees serve on committees and how many current trustees serve on these committees? It's hard to be recognized to serve on a committee when so many past trustees who have been around for years are well known and a current trustee can't get a chance to speak at the microphone so he or she can't get known. We talk often about how much time a trustee should serve their area. Some of us that are newer are willing to pass the rein on to someone else after we have served. But yet so many past trustees don't seem to be able to do the same. They continue to be on committees that take spaces that current trustees could have. Please allow us, current trustees, the opportunity to serve our area by recognizing who we are and our responsibilities as a trustee. Those of you who are past trustees, I have respect for you just as I do my parents and grandparents but it's time for us (current trustees) to be allowed to care and serve our family (GA) as you did when you where in our shoes years before us.

Jo K. - Area 8D Trustee, St. Louis, Missouri

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|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Possible Change To Recovery Step 7</b> |
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2/1/13 - 5:23 PM

I have submitted an item to the Trustee Poll as given to me for consideration by the Board. It pertains to Step 7 as proposed by a meeting room in Area 2. I think it would be helpful if the item were voted on by the Trustees in the Poll prior to it becoming an agenda item, if at all. The vote may go pretty much as I suspect, so I have not voted on it myself. I would like to see the vote of others on the subject. Please check the Trustee poll, item number 4. Thank you.

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| <b>Phone Meeting - New Concept</b> |
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2/10/13 - 3:05 PM

Hi,

I just got off the phone, being on over 1 hour. It was a test run of a GA meeting on a conference call, with about 20 GA members, more were invited but couldn't make it. Before you ask, it was decided that before the next Trustee meeting in Vancouver, there will be more test meetings. All you need is a phone, hopefully with unlimited calling then there is no cost.

This first section was more of a question and answered one, but it also allowed you to see how a meeting would work if it actually was a phone meeting. To me this would be a better answer for people to get to a meeting that cannot make a face to face meeting, rather than go on the Internet.

The two who were hosting the meeting and who will bring it to the Trustee meeting in Vancouver, are Pete K, from area 13 B & David M, Area 12. It went so well as a test that some stay connected and they had a real GA meeting after the test.

I'm sure there will be a lot of questions, but if you have any, as we did during this 1st test meeting, they will be answered, as just about all that were answered during this 1st test meeting.

Do yourself a favor and attend the next meeting on this new concept because as I feel, IT WAS GREAT!!

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

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2/11/13 - 7:53 AM

Joe,

I also had the opportunity to test this out and I agree with you, it was a great concept! I can see many advantages to this vs. an on-line meeting. One of the big advantages will be actually hearing the person doing the speaking. As many of us know from experience, the typed word can be easily misconstrued. It is sometimes more important to actually hear the voice rather than just read the word. I hope that many of us take advantage of this before the next meeting so that they can speak on the subject with the actual knowledge of how it works rather than just trying to assume it won't work for this reason or that.

I also want to stress to everyone, this is not intended to replace a physical meeting! It will be useful tool for someone who needs a meeting and for whatever reason, cannot get to one. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in April!

Your Sister in Recovery,  
Karen E. - Area 8A, Minnesota