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Trustee Line for March 2009

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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.

Welcome Back

3/21/09 - 2:47 PM
Hello To All Trustees,

First on a personal note, I have used the Trustee Web site as a Co-Chair, A Trustee, and as a member. I find it a valuable tool in my recovery. I do not understand " cybernetics," but I use it daily and frequently and keep learning on how to use it better. So my heartfelt THANKS to David M. for his painstaking diligence in getting the site up and operational, and a Special THANKS for getting the agenda done on time. I know how difficult it was and I know the hours you spent. Not to mention the economic expense you incurred, but I know that will be addressed. I also know I speak for my fellow Chairs in appreciating your effort David. Thanks Again. I look at this computer age of data and information like I look at electricity. I have NO clue HOW it works, but when I flip the switch I expect light.

On another note, Kansas City is just around the corner and the agenda is ambitious. So please refer to the checklist, that was inserted in the agenda and let us all come prepared to do our service.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone, and expect a good turnout. And am especially looking forward to meeting our Brothers and Sisters from different countries,.

Take care and be safe,

Your Brother in Recovery,
Richie S. - Area 6, Southern Florida
1st Co-Chair BOT

3/21/09 - 5:38 PM
Richie:

Thank you for the "Welcome Back" as well as your acknowledgements of David M's efforts to get the site back up and running for us. Like you, I have absolutely no clue how it works; but I will tell you this: I will never, ever take this site for granted again.

David, thank you for caring and for being the good example that you are. We don't say it often enough, but we DO appreciate everything you do for the Program.

Respectfully,

3/21/09 - 6:26 PM

Just a quick note to all the Trustees and those reading the website. This last month has been filled with challenges and thanks to David M. we have been able to recover all the data that had been lost from the site.

Now since I was in contact daily with David I can tell you first hand this was not an easy task. I want to assure you that this could have happened no matter where we hosted this site. David is now coming up with a plan to assist in moving this site when the new website for I.S.O. is completed.

When you see David in Kansas City take a moment and thank him for all the work he has put into this effort.

Also take a moment to offer David your condolences as his father passed away yesterday March 20, 2009 and please keep David and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

My best to you all and I look forward to seeing you soon in Kansas City.

Tom M. - Chairman Board of Trustees
Area 2 - Northern California

Trustee Commitment

3/23/09 - 10:47 PM

Fellow Trustees,

As I sit to write this I am toiling back and forth as to whether or not I am out of line for saying what I'm about to, but I decided that someone should and believe if you're offended then maybe this is about you.

As KC comes upon us I have been thinking a lot about the work the Public Relations committee has done. I am very proud of these folks and the vigor with which they have attacked the tasks set for them. This is not to discount the work on other committees, I just can not speak as to the work others have done. These are not the brothers and sisters that I am going to speak of. We, the BOT, have over a hundred members yet we have committees that sit with no chair to lead them or, as I have seen on the PR committee, we have members who join a committee and do NOTHING!!!! Item number eight on the guidelines for trustees reads " Serve actively on committees on the Board of Trustees."

As the chair of the PR committee I kept emailing the non-active members hoping they would do something, anything, but nothing. They could not even call in for a half hour conference call ever second to third week. REALLY? Where is the commitment? Are we just here for the free trips? I say if we can't do what we are supposed to then let someone else do it. And this is only one of the fifteen trustee guidelines. Are we all lifeliners? Do we encourage our contingents to use GA literature? Do we ourselves follow and uphold the guidance code? A lot of times I need to check myself against the trustee guidelines. So as we come together in KC I ask all trustees to look inside yourselves and ask "Do I give the trustee job the respect it is due through my actions?" I believe if we all truly follow these fifteen items we, collectively, can take leaps and bounds in fulfilling the fellowship's primary purpose and touch so many lives.

Well there it is I said it. Looking forward to seeing all of you.

Matt H. - Area 16 Trustee - Upstate New York

3/24/09 - 10:35 AM

It was with great interest that I read Matt's submission. Clearly his frustration came to the surface along with the apparent apathy he cited regarding a general lack of follow-thru with commitments by Trustees to volunteer for his committee. To me, this opens up numerous talking points that should be addressed.

Having been a committee chair many times over my 9 years of being a Trustee, I can say that being a successful chair is about leadership, persistence and a commitment to being goal oriented. Speaking from one of my most challenging committee stewardships, the creation and approval of the Stock Market, Retirement Accounts and Gamblers Anonymous pamphlet, I completely understand the tasks, responsibilities, scheduling and babysitting roles that are part of the job of committee chair.

The most exciting part in the beginning of this process is coming up with the idea and having the support of the Board and the Chairman of the Board to authorize the formation of the committee. That is a fleeting moment in time, because immediately following that is the sheer terror of the Chairman asking for volunteers. Even with a statement asking people to make sure they are willing to work on this committee and not just to 'showboat' for the crowd, Trustees volunteer who have shown themselves to previously not be, shall I say, as cooperative as might be expected.

So let's get past that and go back to the leadership of a committee chair. How does that person swing between being the rudder to the ship and being a teacher looking to send a misbehaving student to the principal's office? The answer is that each committee is different and each committee member is different. So maybe flexibility and finesse is also a prerequisite to be a committee chair. But here is the ugly part, and I mean no disrespect to Matt, nor am I directing my comments to him personally. The committee chair is responsible for the performance of the committee. It doesn't get any simpler than that.

In order to perform to the best of a committee chair's potential, he/she has to use the tools of the Board of Trustees. To that end, I point to the Rules and Procedures Manual, which clearly deals with this subject, because it covers removals of committee chairs, co-chairs and committee members. Allow me to quote chapter and verse.

Committee Members - Removals

If the committee chair is unable to get the cooperation of any member, either through participation, sharing the workload or communication, the committee chair will have option to have that member removed from the committee. Removal may also be done if the committee member no longer meets the requirements of being a Trustee.

Unfortunately, the leadership of a committee chair includes taking the hard steps to purge the committee of people who fit this condition cited above. Yes, it feels good to get the frustration off one's chest, but it must be followed by decisive action by the committee chair. The committee I mentioned that I had chaired caused me to remove more than 6 members, who by the way were members with abstinence that ran the full range of time. It did not matter who they were or how much time they had in. It was strictly about matters that caused them to be nonresponsive and unable, for whatever reason, to do the job they volunteered for. As each member was removed, with the permission of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the committee became a leaner, more efficient machine. We put together a focused effort that resulted in a much needed piece of GA approved literature.

I believe that many Trustees do not volunteer for committees because they are unaware of what happens on these committees and may just feel intimidated by the entire process. My suggestion is that the committee chairs for any newly formed committee make contact with each volunteer on a one-on-one basis to have a very clear understanding of what the expectations are of the committee chair and the members. If this is done, then it should be very clear about whether the Trustee volunteered in a moment of enthusiasm that faded after the fact or has found out that the time commitment or anything else is something other than what they originally thought. It can also galvanize those committee members to step up and give the effort that is required for a successful completion of the task for which the committee was charged. Let's encourage people to volunteer, but give them a graceful way to withdraw from the committee if it doesn't fit their thoughts about how things are going to be done.

As a result of the submission that Matt posted, I am going to put together a committee roster page that will show all the committees and allow the chairs to make it known that committee members are needed to help, should the situations arise. The website is about better levels of communications, but that is only after the Trustees and the committee chairs improve their communications with one another, in addition to understanding what will be required of them.

Information brings questions
Questions brings communication
Communication brings understanding
Understanding brings involvement
Involvement brings information, etc.

Best,
David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

3/30/09 - 2:39 PM

Matt, my friend -

You are far more proficient in the Gamblers Anonymous Program than I, and I certainly have numerous character defects to work on, repeatedly. Frequently, I have felt the same energy you have expressed; and when I do, I am reminded by my elders that no one left me in charge. I have October 15th in my Day-at-a-Time marked permanently so that when I have those feelings, I return and reread it over and over. I would like to share some of that page with you.

"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."

I have learned the hard way that not everyone in the Program is willing to make the same commitment no matter how loud we shout, or how great the need is. Just like a birthday celebration.....those who want to be there, will be there. Those who don't, won't. And I can't change that. I have to accept it. I hope I haven't offended you - and I do have the same feelings as you from time to time. I have to let it go. I feel your pain and understand from where it comes.

With respect in our Fellowship,
Linda S - Trustee Area 3A, San Diego
