

**Main Menu**

- [Home Page](#)
- [Trustee Guidelines](#)
- [GA Reference Material](#)
- [Keyword Search](#)
- [Download Center](#)
- [Contact Administrator](#)

**Cherry Hill - Spring 2011  
Information Section**

[Cherry Hill Conference Info](#)

- [Agenda Information](#)
- [Conference Bids](#)

**Submit an Agenda Item**

**BOT Committees**

- [Alternate Trustees](#)
- [BOR Procedural Review](#)
- [Blue Book Revision](#)
- [Conference Review](#)
- [GA/Gam-Anon Joint Hotline](#)
- [International Relations](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Member Retention](#)
- [Pressure Relief](#)
- [Prison - Canada](#)
- [Prison - US](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Rules and Procedures](#)
- [Trustee Area Demarcation](#)
- [Trustee Removal Procedure](#)
- [Trustee Website](#)
- [Video Conferencing](#)
- [Website Revisions](#)

**Trustee Line & Other Features**

- [Trustee Line Home Page](#)
- [Trustee Poll](#)
- [Trustee Poll Voting Blotter 1-10](#)
- [Trustee Poll Voting Blotter 11-20](#)
- [Local Area Website Guidelines](#)
- [New Area/Trustee Accommodation Fund](#)
- [Local Area Help Flyer](#)
- [Board of Regents News Page](#)
- [Trustee Memorial Honor Roll](#)

**Future Conferences**

- [Upcoming Conferences](#)

**Trustee Line for March 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

Item	Subject	Last Entry	Entries
1.	<a href="#">Cleaning Up Some Loose Ends</a>	3/4/11 7:34 PM	2
2.	<a href="#">The Passing of Arnie B's Wife</a>	3/4/11 4:21 PM	1
3.	<a href="#">The Russians Are Coming - Cherry Hill</a>	3/5/11 9:45 AM	1
4.	<a href="#">Remote Access to GA Meetings</a>	3/6/11 3:39 PM	1
5.	<a href="#">Online Meetings</a>	3/10/11 3:50 PM	3
6.	<a href="#">Our Primary Purpose - or Something Like That</a>	3/15/11 6:34 PM	3
7.	<a href="#">New Blue Book Committee</a>	3/15/11 7:57 AM	1
8.	<a href="#">GA Japan</a>	3/18/11 2:03 AM	1

**Cleaning Up Some Loose Ends**

3/1/11 - 12:01 AM

Hello to All my Fellow Trustees and Former Trustees,

It has been a while since I posted anything on the Trustee Line, but I do read it daily.

I would like to make 2 comments that I think would help ALL of us.

First when anyone of us quotes the Guidance Code on the Trustee Line, I think it is vital that the ENTIRE article and section be quoted. Otherwise it is misleading and inaccurate. I have found that posting some of the section or article is left out so the writer can justify their point of view.

The second topic I would like to address is a little more personel in nature.

Since I became a Trustee I have always tried to "uphold the Guidance Code". I try to educate, guide and explain to other members the reason that something is there and how it can be changed. If they so desire.

I try to behave in a manner that will incorporate those things in my daily affairs. I am not always successful at it but I keep getting better.

I do NOT "enforce the Guidance Code" as I have read here on many occasions. That is not one of my duties. And I believe there is a difference between enforcing and upholding.

Hope everyone is well and I am looking forward to Cherry Hill.

See you there.

Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

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3/4/11 - 7:34 PM

Richie,

I believe I was one of those who used the word "enforce" when referring to the guidance code. As I believe words have very significant meanings, I looked up both enforce and uphold in an online dictionary. I believe you are correct. The word "Uphold" seems more befitting the gravitas of our position of Trustee's. In fact, I believe I was told that a Trustee's duty is to protect and "uphold" the 12 GA steps of Recovery and Unity. So, while I still stand by my past postings, perhaps I should have used the word uphold as opposed to enforce. So, thanks Ritchie for your post, and I am looking forward to seeing you and all of my other brothers and sisters in New Jersey.

Levi B. - Area 2, Northern California

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#### The Passing of Arnie B's Wife

3/1/11 - 4:21 PM

It is with much sadness that I inform you that former Trustee and Board of Regent Arnie B. from Chicago lost his wife Sharon to a sudden death on Tuesday March 1, 2011.

The current arrangements are: At Arnie's house and final  
Visitation: Saturday March 12th from 5:00 PM till whenever  
Sunday March 13th - Time: 11:00 to 7:00

Kathy H. - Area 8, Chicago, Illinois

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#### The Russians Are Coming - Cherry Hill

3/5/11 - 9:00 AM

As many of you may know, I had my first exposure to our GA brothers and sisters in Russia, Latvia and Lithuania in December of 2006 when Moscow was celebrating the 5th anniversary of GA in Moscow. Subsequent to that it took 2 years of working with them to get the approval of the BOT to recognize Moscow, Latvia and Lithuania as Areas 29, 30 and 31. The very next meeting, the Trustees of each of those areas were in attendance in Kansas City '09. I believe there weren't many dry eyes in the room when they were introduced and were allowed to say a few words of gratitude to everyone in GA.

2 years later, we are looking at 14 of our Russian brothers and sisters that are knee-deep in making plans to attend the Cherry Hill Conference. This number may fluctuate up or down based on whether or not all of them are granted visas. At this point, they all have room reservations, but the next obstacle is transportation. Airfare from Moscow to the east coast is not cheap, especially if they have to fly in Philadelphia. It may end up happening that all of them come into JFK in New York on Wednesday, May 4th.

What I need to ask is for help from all people in the NY metropolitan area with transportation from JFK airport to the conference in Cherry Hill. If anyone has the ability to do this, it would be a great help. At this point I can't give anyone any specifics because the confirmation of the visa issuances has to happen first, then the flight will be arranged.

If anyone feels that they can volunteer to pick up some of our Russian brothers and sisters at the airport, please let me know. Try and remember page 17 - Get involved and be of service. Who knows, you might learn how to speak Russian on your trip down to Cherry Hill.

By the way, I will be bringing 2 Russian translators with me to handle this group of 14. Natasha, whom many of you have met at Kansas City, Montreal and Louisville, has been involved in online, telephone and conference translations in previous conferences, since 2006. The 2nd translator, Yuliya, has been translating for the last year both online and through the telephone, and Cherry Hill will be her first conference.

I mention this, because translating is extremely exhausting work, especially with Russian, where there are sometimes 5-6 words that could be used in Russian for our simplest of words in English. The printed Trustee agenda will be translated into Russian for everyone's use, which again is an incredible task, in and of itself. Translation in the actual Trustee meeting will be about who is saying what, and explanations of why things happen the way they do.

If you see these translators at the conference, please acknowledge your appreciation for their service, because these are non-GA people doing something wonderful for our Fellowship. I'd like to keep their spirits high, rather than watching them collapse from the work involved in translating.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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### Remote Access to GA Meetings

3/6/11 - 3:39 PM

In some areas meetings are small somewhat isolated. They may also experience low membership or consist primarily of new people so some meetings request speakers from other areas if logistically possible. If we were to allow speakers to attend remotely via some form of electronic bridge many more groups would get to observe the strength, hope, and experience from members who have benefitted from working the Gamblers Anonymous program. How do trustees feel about this? Anonymity can be protected by having either audio only or one-way video feed.

Jim H. - Area 8, Chicago, Illinois

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### Online Meetings

3/6/11 - 5:18 PM

Currently many areas do not offer Gamblers Anonymous meetings. However, due to lottery and Internet gambling there are a large number of gamblers in these areas that need help. One way we can reach out to the fellow gambler who still suffers is to establish an ISO approved on-line chat meeting. Many other twelve-step organizations already offer on-line meetings with great success. Some AA meetings average 60-80 people per meeting and have several scheduled per day. I would like to know how others feel about the issue.

Jim H. - Area 8, Chicago, Illinois

3/7/11 - 6:35 PM

Great suggestion and well worth exploring on line meetings in 2011. On line gambling is helping destroy the lives of compulsive gamblers and their families 24 hours a day; let us use the Internet positively to help suffering souls. Sounds like a great project to be developed by our fellowship. Possibly one of our existing committees can take responsibility for handling the setup and guidelines required to provide such a service.

Vinny B. - Area 12, New Jersey

3/10/11 - 3:50 PM

Hi guys...you need to check the GA Guidance Code. There are many changes that would have to be made for ISO to have an approved on-line meeting. What about the 39 meetings requirement in the prior 12 months for pinnings and for all successive anniversaries, just to name one. We have to remember that we are GA not AA. Also the General Service Office of AA does not list these meetings, see below from the AA Guidelines on Internet meetings.

#### ONLINE A. A. MEETINGS

Just like regular A. A. meetings, online A. A. meetings are autonomous. Due to the lack of a central geographic location, online A. A. meetings are not a direct part of the U.S./Canada service structure. A. A. members are encouraged to participate in service where they physically reside and to participate in group conscience decisions locally. In addition, some online A. A. meetings have business meetings and collect Seventh Tradition contributions.

**Our Primary Purpose - or Something Like That**

3/12/11 - 5:15 PM

The Trustees spend a lot of time plugging the holes and inconsistencies in our literature and Guidance Code. Here's one that really needs fixing.

Point 1 - Unity Step 5 - Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

Point 2 - Combo Book, Page 2, end of the 2nd paragraph: Our primary purpose is to stop gambling and to help other compulsive gamblers do the same.

Point 3 - Red Book, Page 56, on Unity Step 5: Personal direction and purpose of life are often different for each of us but hopefully we shall remember that the one common bond of responsibility that we share on a group level is to carry the message of hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. It should be noted that the suffering compulsive gambler can be sitting next to you at your meeting as well as those who have never heard of Gamblers Anonymous.

Reaching compulsive gamblers is a major goal around which the members of Gamblers Anonymous gather in unity. The perpetuation of the Fellowship depends on the practice of this principle.

The reason for this singleness of purpose is to maximize the efficiency of the Fellowship's efforts to carry its message to suffering compulsive gamblers, in or outside of the Fellowship. The gift of recovery works best when it is shared.

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Ronny W, from Area 17 in Connecticut, is embarking on an enormous task of trying to change a step. His item on the agenda for Cherry Hill, #96 (item #61 from the new business part of the Cherry Hill Rolling Agenda), is to add the word 'hope' to Unity Step 5.

Current version: Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

Proposed version: Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose - to carry the message of hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

Let's bring some consistency into an important part of what our Fellowship is, the Recovery and Unity Steps. Let's not sit back and turn our minds off by saying that we shouldn't ever change a step. Let's look at what Unity Step 5 says right now and ask yourself why 'the message' is not directly dealt with in the step. Ask yourself why we have made the 'message' a source of questioning what the message is. Now go and ask 10 members in your area exactly what 'the message' is. If you get an answer, ask them where you can find it. No doubt many if not all of them will not know.

It's time to make a difference that isn't going to turn the Fellowship upside down because we are clarifying the language used in a step. Support the change to item #96. Please respond with your feelings on this issue, even if you agree with what has been written by anyone who responds.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

3/13/11 - 9:21 PM

Kudo's to Ron W. for attempting to explain what our overall message consists of. If nothing else this is a start, and should open the door for discussion on possible changes (additions) to our steps. Perhaps this will initiate the desire to more actively participate in the UNITY part of our fellowship. We may even see growth in the step meetings on UNITY, where most step meetings now focus only on the RECOVERY steps. I have believed for quite a few years that change can be good if it is accomplished by healthy thought and togetherness. Openmindedness is sometimes difficult but also an integral part of our continued growth.

Bob W. - Area 12, New Jersey

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3/15/11 - 6:34 PM

I would like to add to the remarks made by David M. from Area 12 and Bob W. Current Trustee from Area 12. As David M. mentioned, the word "message" as presently seen in Unity Step Five does not explain what the message represents. Then in various sections of GA approved literature, we find the words "message of hope." Those three words are very meaningful to all early recovery efforts. The Steps of Recovery and Unity have served our Fellowship well for almost 54 years. We do not change their words easily; we defend them as the Board of Trustees members are the guardians of the Recovery and Unity Steps. Cherry Hill agenda item #96 does not change the Step in any negative way but absolutely adds valuable clarification to the primary purpose of Unity Step Five which GA members respect and follow to the best of their ability. "Message of Hope" will bring powerful inspiration to new members as they enter the Fellowship and remain in the Fellowship. .

I entered Gamblers Anonymous in June 1965 in a hopeless state of mind thinking that leaving a wife and two young children was the best thing I could do for them. I left that meeting that fateful night with the reality I was a compulsive gambler. I will forever have gratitude to the 50 men at that meeting who shared their stories of gambling pain, gambling misery, gambling suffering, and gambling debt with all who listened.. Most importantly those men stated they were not gambling because of their membership in GA. I felt for the first time a glimmer of hope that there might be an answer to my compulsive gambling and hopelessness. Thank God for the hope Gamblers Anonymous gave me at my very first meeting.

The definition of "hope" reads: "expectation and desire combined, ground of hope, promise, person, thing, or circumstance that gives cause for hope, a feeling of hope. The definition of "message" reads: "Oral or written communication sent by one person to another, report, communiqué, news, information, implication."

When Unity Step Five states (if this change is accepted) "Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose to carry the message of hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers" will represent another valuable tool in all our quests for recovery.

As the new (or old) member finds hope as one of the foundations for recovery, he or she will also find other foundation builders known as abstinence, courage, desire, faith, honesty. openmindedness, willingness, principles, and persistence to fight this truly baffling, insidious, compulsive gambling addiction. Those attributes starting with hope are the TOOLS OF RECOVERY we use every day.

I plan to suggest, and I believe other members of Area 16 Intergroup members will also suggest, that our two trustees John N. and John V. of Area 16 vote "yes" for this change.

Yours in recovery and honoring the Spiritual Principles of the Fellowship,

George W. - Past Trustee, Area 12, now residing in Area 16, Upstate New York

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<b>New Blue Book Committee</b>
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3/14/11 - 7:57 AM

A **working committee meeting** will be held on Wednesday May 4, 2011, at the International Conference, we will start by 10 a.m. and will go until about 6 p.m. breaking for lunch. At this time, the place will be in the hotel room of Carol K, however, if there is a place available in the business center at the hotel we will use that. Currently we have 3 active members of the committee so a large space is not needed. Information will be left with the conference committee at to where we are and I will have my cell phone with me which is listed in the confidential list for trustees.

We are inviting all GA members who wish to contribute to this endeavor to join us. This will be a real push in the editing of the book and copies will be there for your purusal. If you are available please give us a hand.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

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3/14/11 - 7:57 AM

My fellow trustees I have been in contact with Toshi K. one of our Trustees from Japan. and he is doing okay but very concerned for his country. The pictures are so devastating to watch on TV and the Internet. At least three cities just vanished. It would really be such a fine gesture for as many of us who can to send some words of support to our brothers and sisters in Japan in this time of despair. I haven't contacted their other Trustee as yet Masayuki N. but I am planning on doing that shortly. Their emails are on the Confidential Trustee listing if you would like to do this.

One other note Keiko T. has been there since GA Japan started twenty two years ago and is celebrating twenty years of abstinence. Toshi mentioned that in an email and I started thinking...what a great example of how an individuals recovery milestones are also the area's milestones as well. A real lesson in Unity and at a time when they all need it the most.

Hope all is well with you and yours and I will see you in New Jersey soon.

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee, BOT 2nd Co-Chairman

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