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**Trustee Line for March 2013**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 3/31/13.

**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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| 11.  | <a href="#">Fellowship &amp; Recovery</a>                    | 3/25/13<br>1:42 AM  | 1       |

**Hotline Realities**

3/1/13 - 7:13 PM

As the chair of the Hotline Implementation Committee, I just wanted to give a brief update on our progress. There are fifteen areas that have moved over to the Ring Central system and all are a part of the new [855-222-5542](#) hotline. There are six to eight areas in some stage of set up at this time. Ring Central has 24 hour technical support that is very knowledgeable and the last few areas that came on to the system did not need much help from our committee. We have an active committee that will be putting a survey out to the areas on the system to get their feedback on their experience on the system and I will report it at the Vancouver Board of Trustees meeting. I will also post it on our committee link on the Trustee website.

With the decision by Erlang to shut down his service, I encourage those areas who will be affected to contact me or any member of the committee if you have any questions about the Ring Central system we are setting up for GA. On our committee page is a link to "Hotline Transfer Guidelines" that lists the steps to take in preparation to move over to Ring Central. Sometime in the next week we will also post a couple of documents on setting up the Ring Central system - one with the full set up and one for just getting callers forwarded to a GA member with no menu options. I hope no one needs the latter, but it will quickly get an area set up to help the compulsive gambler who is calling for

help when Erlang shuts down his system.

Our committee will be posting several other documents that can be used as examples or guidelines for your phone service set up and maintenance and we encourage you to contact us if you have any ideas or suggestions. The next goal for our committee is to set up the option for callers to enter an area code if they want information from another area or they area calling from an out of state cell phone.

If you would like to hear how the system works, I can send you instructions on how to access the Connecticut and Western Massachusetts menu. Just send an email via the Hotline Implementation Committee page and I will send you the instructions. As always, I work for you on this committee and I am always available for questions.

In service,  
Paul S. - Area 17 Trustee, Connecticut  
Hotline Implementation Commttee Chair

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|                      |
|----------------------|
| <b>Dare to Dream</b> |
|----------------------|

3/6/13 - 1:16 AM

Ah...Spring is in the air, the days are getting longer and we have a Trustee meeting around the corner. So why am I not happy? Because I just received my BOR ballot and it's time for me to get this off my chest, much to the chagrin of some of you who read the Trustee Line on a regular basis.

When I get this ballot, now every 2 years, I am dismayed that we don't have a better idea for whom we should vote. The Board of Trustees deals with the Fellowship of GA. The BOR is about the business of the corporation of GA – 2 very distinctly different functions. I should not be voting for people that I know as the sole criteria for what's best for the BOR and GA as a corporation, yet this is what I feel I must do, because much of what is in the bios is useless for me in my determination who should be running the corporation of GA.

For 55 plus years, GA has grown and advanced. Technology, accountability and focus, through the efforts of the Board of Trustees and its committees, have done much to change the Fellowship at large. When I see what is going on with the BOR, it just seems to be an entity that is stuck in the past. We have 7 years of minutes of the BOR meetings on the website. If you think I am making up a distorted picture of this situation, check out the minutes for yourself. Meeting to meeting – month to month – year to year, it's the same old, same old. Is it so much to expect innovation and forward thinking to come from the BOR? Or are we just going to settle for the same template of mediocrity for yet another term?

After reading the bios for the new candidates for the BOR, I can say what I have said every time the bios are sent out... I don't care how the program saved your life. I'm not interested in whether you were Secretary of your room. What I want to know is what business experience you have? How are you going to make a difference on the BOR? How is GA going to become better and stronger as a result of your fingerprint?

I was comforted to a very small extent to see some of the nominees list some of what their business experiences were. Now, we're talking. My vote is going to focus on exactly that. What I would like to see, and probably so would other Trustees, is a real hard change to how we elect our Board of Regents. That means a meaningful change to By-Laws, Article V, Section 1. Who can possibly know anything about someone's qualifications in 200 words? If nominees can't figure out that the bios should concentrate on business knowledge for the BOR positions, then let's also change the wording in that section to make it more evident. Finally, if you're running for a position that is about the business of GA and you don't have any business sense to bring through the door, then maybe you should find another door.

Let me close out with this. The BOR's attitude is a direct reflection of its leadership. The BOR seems to be electing the same leaders that end up being nothing more than a name change. Stay the course – don't make waves – just get through the agenda. If we don't change this process also, then we are doomed to yet another 2 years of nothingness at the BOR. Will we ever see the vision, the innovative spirit? I would like to live in hope that all that has made me yawn about the BOR will some day change, but of all parts of this

Fellowship, change at the BOR always seems to be harder to make happen; harder than changing the Steps.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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3/8/13 - 12:42 AM

I don't read the Trustee line to often due to the constant negative attitude in most of the entries and without question in the replies. It disrupts my serenity and it always reads and feels like an editorial page for David M personal enjoyment.

A decade ago when David created the idea of the Trustee line, I thought it would be a very powerful tool to have an open forum of dialogue. A place where areas and trustees could share what is good and working in their own area or looking for suggestions on how to improve their area. I believed everyone would use it – "Dare to Dream".

The trustee line turned out not as good of a dream as I and many others would have hoped for. It has for the most part attracted, more or less, people that found fault with this or that and how much better GA would be - "IF ONLY THEY WOULD DO IT MY WAY".

Over the past decade it has been pretty much David's editorials trying to get people to react or debate to the negative and how to improve it, the "Dare to Dream" attitude.

The traditional example is his latest attack on the BOR and the people that are trying to help and give their time and experience.

For those new trustees, the BOT had decided several years ago to change how the BOR got the nominees. Prior to that was a BOR nominating committee that invited nominees from GA and if there were not enough nominees they would go out and work on getting more candidates. The wisdom of the BOT was to not have a BOR nominating committee and open up nominees to the entire GA body. The belief was that more GA members would step up to the plate and not be in the so-called control of the BOR itself. In David's editorial, at that time, it was getting the "good old boys club out of power and have a more open accountability".

The result now is far less people stepping up to the plate and barely having enough candidates to even fill the required 9 positions from the entire GA program. There used to be up to 20+ nominees with the BOR nominating committee.

This DARE TO DREAM editorial suggests that it is important to know what qualification a person must have to be on the BOR. No mention at what such qualifications would be, but suggest a resume that should include an MBA, BA, CPA, ESQ from Harvard or Yale or a 200 IQ maybe acceptable to some. Maybe there should be one lawyer, an accountant, a CEO from a fortune 500 company, a baker and a candlestick maker.

To me a qualified candidate is someone that is dedicated to the fellowship that has a desire to do the very best for GA. That has experience and knowledge on multiple levels about our fellowship. Of course it would be nice to DARE TO DREAM and have both. However, it is obvious that we have what we have and we should be grateful and not beat up or condemn those members and put a bad light on the BOR. Why not encourage others that may fit the position being suggested? The past BOR nominating committee used to do just that.

David's decade reign of running the trustee line has always been from the viewpoint of the glass being half empty and not seeing the positive and dedications of others. I invite the new and old trustees to go back and read the years of editorials and form your own opinion.

I was fortunate enough to be a trustee for 6 years and also on the BOR. They are two different boards. I had given my best effort and total dedication to both. The BOR was a joy to be on. The monthly dedication of any BOR member is one that I feel is very important to GA and to ones growth. The BOR meets once a month while having an ongoing conversation with its members. The BOR and its needs, along with all the responsibility of our members, are guided for the most part by the BOT and GA By-Laws. It is a dry monthly meeting with no bells and whistles. It is this dedication of its members

that GA has survived and existed from the beginning of GA time.

I have no idea where our fellowship would be without the past and current leadership and wisdom of the BOR Chairs and members. Bob W., Tom M. Benni F. and John C, have been great chairs that collectively have been Chairs for will over 15+ years. All of them deserve a major Thank You from all the trustees and the GA membership. They humbly do their job with no reward other than their service. Some trustees don't even know some of them, let alone the board members over the years. Yet, the DARE TO DREAM editorial suggestively and cleverly mocks their efforts because they do not add up to the standards of a single trustee.

Perhaps there should be the same "fingerprint" for the BOT Trustees and its chairs. This coming BOT officer election should have the same Harvard/Yale requirements. Why don't the trustees have a clue on whom maybe running in April's elections of officers? Where are their resumes to scrutinize and put it out to the GA world along with notarized signatures that they attended 39 meetings? Why is it held in a secret with only rumors on who may or may not be running? Talk about throwing stones at a glass house.

This belief that GA is a corporation business and not a fellowship is what is turning our program in the wrong direction and affecting GA AS A WHOLE. We need people in all positions that guide our fellowship to see the positive and benefits of GA and not see the negative glass half empty.

We are getting further away from the spirituality of our fellowship. GA will hopefully survive for many lifetimes well past our lives. But I fear this glass half empty and DARE TO DREAM attitude that David M editorial is stating is spoiling a good dream. Lets be real and wake up from a dream world and see the glass half full and be humbly grateful of what has been done by our predecessors instead of seeing what is wrong with GA and its past.

Very humbly submitted.

Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

PS: Do I DARE TO DREAM that the BOT creates an office for the editor of the trustee line and get a more positive editor that sees the glass half full and is grateful to the members that do they very best for GA?

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3/8/13 - 9:14 AM

Gary, hard to see your submission as anything other than a thinly disguised, cynical, personal attack. I'll keep trying though. I've been reading the trustee line for five years or so, I don't need to go any further back really. I don't fear the glass half empty brigade, just a number of members who humbly accept we are all imperfect and the biggest mistake is to sit back and watch the polyanna pumpkin people waiting for some magic fairy godmother to turn us into spiritually perfect creatures the minute we walk through the door. Never mind the no shortcut to gaining this faith and understanding, nor the need for structure, vigilance and accountability. Polyannas pumpkin says we're all in this together let's just sit back and enjoy it. Problem is someone has to wash the jerseys to ensure the team can play and if they dont do it someone else has to pick up the pieces. Anyway, on the issue of serenity two kinds come to mind, the kind I'm working towards slowly that I see in others, serenity through the program, real, solid serenity, and the fragile serenity built on ego and burying head in sand, that's the one that will stop me in my tracks. Mistakes are part of the learning process of recovery, sitting back and watching the same old mistakes, that's pure addiction.

Peace brothers and sisters.  
Odie B, - Area 36, SE Ireland

Ps, David, thank you for once again providing a thought provoking topic of substance.

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3/8/13 - 11:58 AM

Hi David

Hope all is well. I just finished reading your letter on the Trustee Line titled Dare To Dream. I have to say that as usual I disagree with you. I have no intention of getting into an email debate with you since I always feel like I lose. I would like to bring up a few points. Business back round is not an essential qualification for being on the BOR. Some of the best board members we have

ever had were insurance salesmen , plastics salesmen , business owners and yes even housewives. What the BOR members should really be are dedicated members willing to do what is necessary to make GA better. Of course common sense and yes business sense is desired. Your mention of a 200 word biography had me thinking. Sounds like you wanted it to be much longer. Any longer and very few would bother reading it.

You also mention (Meeting to meeting – month to month – year to year, it's the same old, same old. Is it so much to expect innovation and forward thinking to come from the BOR?). I really feel the BOR has accomplished considerably over the past several years.

We are presently investigating putting all-important items into a cloud format in the event of a fire or other disaster. We are also looking into putting the inventory into a scanning system. Right now the finances are dangerously low and we seem to be in the red every month. Finding ways to get into the black is a real priority.

So David in my final statement I would like to suggest if you need to champion a cause. Find out why So. Calif. Is by far the largest contributor to the ISO and Lifeliners even though NY and NJ have far more members.

Still your friend,  
Bob W. - Area I, Los Angeles  
Chairman BOR

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3/8/13 - 1:24 PM

Bob,

I am pleased you responded to this topic, because with you, I know we can discuss the points of any issue. It is inevitable that our online 'sparring' will always be different on issues regarding the BOR. I think it's a function of how highly revered the BOR is in California whereas the rest of the country...well, not so much. I never feel that I win or lose with our opposing opinions, as long as we stick to the subject. The gain comes from the airing of those opinions. The gain comes from someone latching on to something as little as a sentence fragment and then runs with the ball. Then a miracle happens, the Fellowship prospers because nothing was sugar coated and it got people thinking.

I understand that there is no business background requirement for being a BOR member. That is as it has always been with the BOR. That is truly the status quo. My point is that it is long overdue to change that. I'm not trying to put a specific requirement into effect, similar to college admissions requirements, but the BOR is about business...it's time to get people in the BOR who can take care of our business, because they took care of their business. The Fellowship must be overflowing with such talent, yet we make no attempt to unleash that talent. Nothing the BOR does points in that direction and it appears that everyone at the BOR is content with this posture. We need to harness this, yet we don't.

There may have been many dedicated people who have been BOR members. That shouldn't even be a discussion point. BOR and BOT members know that dedication is an unspoken requirement. I'm talking strictly about a major upgrade through the nominees outlining the really important aspects of what their business experiences are so we can be better informed about how that my improve the business side of GA, the corporation of Gamblers Anonymous.

Yes Bob, I am an advocate of expanding the 200-word limit for the bios to maybe 500 words. If, as you say, a longer version would be reason for many to not read the bios, then shame on the Trustees who make that arrogant choice. But think about what a better understanding everyone else would have. I'm in this Fellowship 24+ years and first became a Trustee 13 years ago. I don't know many of the people on the current BOR bio page. Their bios did nothing to help me make a decision because the vast majority of them didn't have any credible credentials regarding their business acumen. How are other people supposed to vote who may have much fewer year than I do? Do we go by their GA experience with how many people they sponsor, or what positions they held in Intergroup or their local room? Not me, I would rather only vote for 2 qualified people than play the warm and fuzzy game of personalities.

I still stand behind my statements of nothing ever changing for all these years, but I also want to acknowledge the strategic initiatives that you cite. These items seem to contain some forward thinking. Bravo.

The finances are a very serious problem, not just for ISO, but for every area. I wish I had suggestions on how to improve that situation, but I'm not the only one in GA trying to improve whatever can be done. I work on many items on an ongoing basis, few people question that. Figuring out where the money comes from in the area of Lifeliners is not one of them. If there are so many able-bodied and dedicated members of this Fellowship, as you said, maybe the BOR could think 'out of the ordinary brown cardboard box' and make the ISO contribution differentials a national directive. That's par my assertion for the innovation and vision that I and others yearn for with every new Board of Regents. Results Bob, results. History shows that it just ain't happening.

I enjoyed the opportunity to chisel away at some of your ideas. Again, in the spirit of loosening up the cobwebs of apathy and hopefully giving others a pivot point for different opinions and viewpoints.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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3/17/13 - 7:24 PM

My involvement with the Board of Trustees, in one way or another, has spanned more than twenty years. The changes that have taken place in that time is nothing short of amazing.

Way back when the second co-chair was responsible for publishing the Trustee Line. Submissions were snail mailed to the co-chair who then typed it up and mailed it to each of the Trustees. It was my very first job as a co-chair. Back then the submissions, for the most part, consisted of a report from our IES, a note from each of the chairs, a cooking lesson or a recipe or two and perhaps some news of local happenings by a few of the Trustees. It was pleasant, easy to read and, for the most part, of little importance to the working of the Board.

I tried to change that to an exchange of ideas between Trustees, discussion of Board business and requests from areas seeking guidance or feedback from other areas. It was not very successful. Very few were interested.

Over time came the implementation of the Trustee Website. Once established, David suggested adding the Trustee line to the site. We did so and had much better results. That said it still has not come even close to being utilized to its full potential.

Anyone who has read the Line over time knows that we have had many charged but fruitful and thought provoking debates. The Line has also been used to disseminate important information on all sorts of topics. Sadly, we have also seen far too many unpleasant exchanges and it has sometimes been used by some to foster their own personal agendas.

While I choose not to get involved with many of the discussions I continue to be a very regular reader. I have been heartened to see that some of our newer Trustees have jumped in and are participating in the Trustee Line and I hope that the trend continues. I decided to contribute now because I am fearful that the decision by Gary S. to use the Line to once again personally attack another member for their thoughts will discourage others from writing.

My suggestion to all of you is to ignore this type of type of behavior and not allow yourself be be scared away by it or to be sucked into the undermining of our goals but ignoring the principals we all aspire to.

Keep the good stuff coming!

I look forward to seeing many of you in Vancouver. Get some rest beforehand as I think we will all need it.

Brother Denis M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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3/20/13 - 12:28 AM

I was not sure where to put my next reply after reading "BROTHER" Denis's disgruntled entry about singling me out for attacking another member. This entry really belongs on the so-called principals before personality section but it would get a little lost in the context.

I was amazed and disheartened by Denis's reply. My original thought was that he has the right being the commandant of the GA police and I thank God that I am still allowed to be in GA with a desire to stop gambling.

For those who do not know me, I am from New Jersey who is not shy about speaking out and was taught in GA to be honest and not hold anything back. I tell it as I see it and no longer have blinders on my eyes and mind.

By no means am I making an apology for my first entry in over 3 years and maybe had 6 or 8 entries in the Trustee line lifetime. So I am not sure how I could be blamed for the trustee line failure to participate.

Our Chairman has chosen to defend someone that was clearly attacking and ridiculing the BOR and its current and past Chairman's as well as its board members.

Sentences like this from David M entry:

"When I see what is going on with the BOR, it just seems to be an entity that is stuck in the past." "Or are we just going to settle for the same template of mediocrity for yet another term?"

Or the last paragraph:

"Let me close out with this. The BOR's attitude is a direct reflection of its leadership. The BOR seems to be electing the same leaders that end up being nothing more than a name change. Stay the course – don't make waves – just get through the agenda. If we don't change this process we are doomed to yet another 2 years of nothingness at the BOR. Will we ever see the vision, the innovative spirit? I would like to live in hope that all that has made me yawn about the BOR will some day change, but of all parts of this Fellowship, change at the BOR always seems to be harder to make happen; harder than changing the Steps."

I am a very proud member of GA for 15 years. A trustee for 6 six, served on the BOR and spent 10 years creating and developing the first GA hotline. Yet, according to David's entry and backed by the Chairman of the BOT, I would not be qualified to run for the BOR.

The fact of the matter is I do not even come close to the wisdom and guidance of the people like Bob W., Tom M., Bennie F and John C. These dedicated people are referred to bluntly as "mediocrity" and "nothingness."

Where is the UNITY and RECOVERY? Is it fair to criticized the entire structure of the BOR and its members for the last 50 plus years?

Is it right to have the Chairman state "I decided to contribute now because I am fearful that the decision by Gary S. to use the Line to once again personally attack another member for their thoughts will discourage others from writing."

It is the old saying, "I may have been blind before but now I see the light" This is a true politics and favoritism of the good ole boys of the duel D's.

When you are able to sit back and review the question that the BOR should find more qualified people. The true question is where does one go and how? The answer is the BOT. The BOR puts it out to the trustees and it is their lack of response that has created this. The BOT should do a better job on finding the right people and encouraging them to step up.

Also, the BOT has been reviewing the BOR's By-Laws for 3 years. David could easily just add his thoughts as agenda item, without belittling the BOR on the trustee line.

When Bob W, a true diplomat and GA leader, tried to reason with David to see a very serious and real problem with the funding being in the red every month. The response was just words and quickly turned back that the BOR needs change. In David's own words "no real thinking out of the card board box."

How long can GA run in the red? It is not a question to overlook and skate with words. This is not one to gamble on or to play word games.

The BOR handles the demands or requests from the BOT, along with handling the daily invoices for GA business. As well as paying for the new or revised literature and items that the BOT passes and to make sure that GA stays financially solid.

It is the BOT's responsibility to raise funds for the BOR and GAISO. The BOR does not have the power or the authority to rise funding for GA, as David so claims. If the BOT would focus on another part of their responsibility and what

is going wrong with GA funding, maybe we all would be doing better for GA.

The fact of the matter is the BOT has been in the wrong direction for several years, not the BOR. Instead of playing the defense game and pointing fingers, they should look in the mirror and get their own house in order.

The BOT would rather create more rules or GC laws to tighten up the rules that got passed last year. Many trustees would rather focus on making the GC larger on pages totally skipping over the first several pages, which is our true purpose. There are over 130 agenda items this conference, half of them by just 3 members. The extra cost burden is sure to keep GA income in the red, let alone our respected intergroups.

We have lost our sole purpose in why GA is here. GA has succumbed to a corporation of law for its members along with some trustees that are half empty people that enjoy playing the word shell game, instead of looking how to improve unity and GA as a whole.

Gary S. – Area 12, New Jersey

PS. I have a final suggestion – if David and Odie want to help the BOR change they should put their names in for election into the BOR? Now that is thinking out of the cardboard box instead of throwing dirt on it. Actions speak more than words - Anything less is just words.

PSS. Also, if Brother Denis believes that the trustee line has not met its potential maybe the trustees should be ask – WHY? When at its best, 10% of the trustees chose to write in.

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3/20/13 - 1:09 PM

Brother Gary,

My heart truly bleeds for you and I wish you peace. Sadly, my empathy now encounters serious barriers.

You have chosen to remove the benefit of the doubt afforded to you and continue personal attacks. Sadly, your efforts to turn Factoids into facts will confuse only the most vulnerable among us.

As for your factoid of me denigrating the BOR or anyone else, it remains exactly that, nonsense without a shred of evidence behind it. I fear this is a fairly common theme for you, at least since your submissions in the Trusteeline of 12/10/8 and since.

In the intervening period, thanks in no small part to the courage, vision, dedication and accountability of those you attack, the fellowship has moved on and fantastic structure, accountability etc. is being reached, through the proper process and structure that you seem keen to dismantle.

Let me quote your own words from 2008, " It is easy to throw potshots from the peanut gallery under the cloak of the trustee line " " Why would anyone take a position where they would get beat up, why should they get beat up " All your words Gary.

If the fellowship and successive BOTs and indeed BORs remained stuck in that moment with you, Gary, WE would surely have no fellowship.

A desire to help being the prime qualification for BOR, seriously, my little sister really wants to save the world but she ain't on the ballot. I really want to help but I ain't got the wherewithall so I ain't on the ballot.

There is a difference in election procedures but to suggest that the Executive committee process is inferior, where members stand before the conscience at large of this fellowship, the BOT, is to suggest that the entire fellowship are idiots and have been for some time. Another factoid and utter nonsense.

Gary, your own idea, if you want to change it do it through the proper procedure and due process, that is what this is really all about.

For yourself alone, Gary, stop the way you're trying it, it hasn't helped for the past number of years and it wont help now.

Free yourself from the nightmare, Gary, see the truth you need, beware the factoids.



I hope we get time for a coffee and a chat in Vancouver.

Peace, Brothers and sisters.  
Odie B. - Trustee area 36, S- East Ireland

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### **Recovery Step 4 Experiences**

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3/6/13 - 1:31 AM

Can the old timers share how they worked step 4? The guide to step 4 inventory booklet was very confusing to me...anyone ever worked step 4 using that model? Any feedback would be very helpful.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California

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3/23/13 - 5:35 PM

Sorry for the delay in responding to your question Joe.

My first time dealing with step 4 came shortly after entering GA. At that time my focus was mainly on the financial. I looked at my character but just wasn't ready to really deal with things. I talked about it at meeting and was told that as I continued to go to meetings and to pray about things it would get easier. I found that as my recovery progressed it was easier to understand what I needed to do but that alone did not make it easier to do.

I thing it was my third or fourth attempt at doing my inventory that I turned to the Step 4 Handbook. I found it was helpful in guiding me in some of the pluses and minuses I needed to look at. That said though I understand your difficulty.

My sponsor is a wonderful man and I don't know where I would be without. Unfortunately however he is not a "step guy". He was smart enough and humble enough to know I wanted help that he could not give me. He suggested I get myself a step sponsor. I did so and that is when things fell into place for me.

So my best advice is, with or without the handbook, don't try and take on the task of working the steps on your own. If you don't have a sponsor get one. If your sponsor is not into working the steps find someone else that you can turn to. My first step sponsor was not even a GA member. He was a personal friend who was member of AA. He worked with me and guided me and even introduced me to open AA step meetings which I attended regularly.

That was more than twenty years ago. Fortunately I find many more members of GA who take the steps seriously these days so I doubt you will have to look very far.

Best wishes in your search.

Brother Denis - Area 12, New Jersey

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### **Telephone Conference Call Meetings**

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3/6/13 - 12:41 PM

By now, my hope is that everyone has seen the upcoming agenda for the Vancouver Trustee Meeting. One of the items is about authorizing telephone conference call meetings to be approved GA meetings listed on the ISO website. To that end, I would like to formally invite all Trustees and interested parties to join one, if not more, of the trial meetings that are planned to show exactly how these meetings work. In the next several days, an email will be sent to all current Trustees with the time and date of the first of these meetings. What you will witness is a platform that has no limitation on the amount of people who can participate. The meeting will officially be classified as an Open Meeting, so anyone may attend, but only GA members or those who have a desire to stop gambling will be allowed to speak. The phone lines will be open for a period before and after to answer any questions that anyone may have. As our Fellowship grows and technology advances, I feel it is vitally important that we, as a Fellowship, try and keep pace. That is why this subject, about telephone conference call meetings, was added to the agenda, as items 76 and 109. I'm extending an invitation to current Trustees and those who may want to join in these telephone conference calls.

## It's Not About The Money

3/10/13 - 5:25 PM

Knowing how you feel and being able to express those feelings in print have always been difficult for me. This subject has been taking up so much of my thoughts, I just needed to finally put them down as best I could for everyone to see.

The title of this post is "It's Not About The Money" which on it's own can mean so many things. We hear it mentioned all the time at meetings. It wasn't about the money, it was... and then we go on from there. How about the social events in our area's? Banquet's, dinner dances, picnic's, mini's, etc., at some time in my recovery, I was told it's not about the money, you can't afford NOT to go. I listened, I budgeted and I went.

Here we are getting ready to tackle a monumental agenda in Vancouver loaded with many important items and all I can think of is "It's all about the money".

There are several items that address 1 conference a year on the agenda. I'd like everyone to take a deep look at this subject before coming to any conclusions.

1. Financials - It was stated in the January issue of the Trustee Line that a respective area could save approximately \$450 per Trustee only having 1 conference a year while still having 2 Trustee meetings. So let's assume that the amount that was used is the sum of 2 night's extra stay at the hotel and the cost of a Plan B.

We need to take into consideration a couple of things. Part of the package the Conference Committee makes with the hotel includes free usage of a conference room to handle our large group for two full days and sometimes even more. The coffee service that we all receive is also absorbed through the budget of the Conference. This is done by making certain guarantees with the hotel in regards to room nights sold and a minimum food and beverage guarantee. We will no longer be able to do that, so where would the money for the use of the Trustee Meetings come from? From ISO, Inter-groups, Trustees? I don't know, do you? How much would it cost? Will the room nights be discounted without all the other guarantees? Again, I don't know, do you? We also need to figure out how to pay for all the audio/visual equipment we use that is normally absorbed by the Conference.

Our agenda has been growing in recent years, so much so that the Chairman of the BOT had to be pro-active in scheduling an additional session for Saturday in Vancouver. We voted to hear Combo Book changes once every 2 years which happens to be the Fall session every 2 years. We don't yet know how large the agenda is going to swell as a result of this change. In Orlando, we will find out. One could say that without the Friday night banquet at a conference we would have the extra session Friday night if needed. That's probably true. My question is.. Do I want to or rather will I be able to get a flight out that late or am I stuck to pay for yet another night at the hotel?

An extra night here or there, extra meals and the cost of the meeting rooms will certainly add up. Additionally, maybe someone could help me and let me know if the cost of flying on a Friday night or Saturday is generally more or less expensive than a Sunday.

2. Unity - We hear and have all seen our numbers dropping at meetings, social events, etc. Yet, historically participation at an International Conference has relatively remained the same. Some have smaller turnouts and some have larger turnouts.

The Trustee meeting are for business. The Conference that follows is where ideas are shared, friends are made and breakthroughs in recovery happen. I would like to hear the feedback from the Trustees that attended their first Trustee Meeting/International Conference for the first time in San Diego. For the recurring members that attend most International Conferences like myself, please take a moment and reflect on what that first Conference was like and how it affected your recovery. Food for thought... If there is no bid for the 2014 Fall Conference, all new Trustees will be attending their first Trustee Meeting without a Conference to "re-energize" themselves before going back to their groups. What message will they bring back with them? We can only hope that

they feel the love and unity that takes place during a Trustee Meeting.

Now look at the friendships that were made, not during a Trustee Meeting, but the time spent afterwards in a workshop, at the banquet, in breakfast, sitting by the pool, in the hospitality suite or in a therapy room at 3:30 in the morning. This is how I met so many of my mentors and friends in this fellowship whom I now share a great bond with. I know I'm not alone when I say some of these contacts and "moments" have changed my life. I can assure you of one thing, I truly look forward to the Trustee Meetings, but none of the bonds I'm speaking about ever took place there.

3. Local Areas - The impact on a local area is immeasurable. The list of stories and ongoing recovery as a result of hosting an International Conference is a testament to how and why it just "works".

I do not know the last time the Trustee's met for a Trustee Meeting without the back up of a Conference, but if we do not get a bid in Vancouver for the Fall of 2014 we will experience it first hand. If in fact this should come to fruition, why make a decision now based entirely on fears and the unknown? Let's take a deep breath and see what happens. This way, we will be able to see the true financial gains/setbacks and the impact it may have on our Inter-Groups, Trustees and the meetings themselves. Will we even get a quorum for said meeting?

One more thought comes to mind.

I'm curious how many Inter-Groups fully fund their Trustees. For the record, it is my opinion that a Trustee should be fully funded for both the Trustee Meeting and the International Conference. However, if a Trustee feels so strongly about saving their Inter-Group money by not having them pay for 2 Conferences a year, then I say, why have them pay for either of them? If they just fund the Trustee Meeting portion, wouldn't they save double the money? This can be done now without a vote or anything else.

I guess what I'm trying to say is if your Inter-Group is struggling financially, doing away with 1 of the Conferences a year will not change that. It may actually cost more to some areas depending on their local guidelines. It is obvious that changing to 1 Conference a year has no financial benefit locally, Nationally or Internationally. How much money would our ISO lose a year by not having a Fall Conference? If there is no Conference, there is no profit.

The list goes on and on and on.....

Looking forward to your feedback and seeing you all in Vancouver.

Yours in Recovery, Andy R. - Past Trustee, Area 13B, South Jersey

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| <b>Trustee Line Principles Before Personalities</b> |
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3/11/13 - 11:34 AM

As a first term trustee, I attended the initial orientation to the Trustee website and was looking forward to keeping informed about what was happening in other areas. I also thought this was a good source to obtain input on issues that may be affecting our area; I might even have input that might help other areas!

The first paragraph on the Trustee Line Publications page says "This is the platform for Trustees to give a greater level of focus on any pertinent issue between the semi-annual Trustee conferences." I obviously misunderstood that statement. I assumed that meant we would be helping each other, not "slinging mud" at each other. As an organization of primarily adults, I assumed (again wrongly) we would act as such when putting ideas/comments in print. This latest round of "communication" between Trustees regarding the election of the BOR is appalling!

If this Trustee Line was used as I believe it was intended, it may have eliminated the need to extend the length of the Trustee Meetings each time we meet. To have to meet for 3 days is horrendous! Even fortune 500 companies can complete annual meetings in a much more professional manner which then leads to a shorter length of time for an annual meeting.

Our program is based on "principles before personalities" – I guess this does

not apply to all areas of our organization, obviously not the Trustee Line anyway.....

Paulette T. – Area 6B Trustee, Florida

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3/11/13 - 8:31 PM

Hi Paulette, as a fellow new term trustee I enjoyed your submission. I'm also a big supporter of principles before personalities. I don't think you misunderstood the second part of the first paragraph you quoted and I believe that's exactly what was being done in the topic on the upcoming election. I certainly was unable to make a particularly informed decision on a fundamentally important issue with the information provided. From my point of view the first part of the paragraph you referred to was also happening, trustees using the trustee line to air opinions on issues that affect trustees...all issues seemed pertinent to me. Having read the trustee line for some time before I became a trustee I cannot recommend it highly enough and I would recommend it to all and encourage participation. In the true spirit of this fellowship let's get together, let's get stuck in and let's make it better for all of us. I will appreciate the efforts of all involved, its a good tool to have.

Odie B. - Area 36, S-East Ireland

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3/11/13 - 11:35 PM

Paulette and Odie,

I would like to thank you both for your submissions to the trustee line. I have to say that I was very dismayed by what occurred in this particular issue and Paulette, you hit it right on the head! Principles before Personalities should be followed by everyone in the program, most especially by those of us who need to set the example. We can disagree with others in the program, however; I don't feel we ever have the right to be so blatantly disrespectful and rude in that disagreement. David simply stated his opinion and by doing so, gave us all a little something to think about. This next BOT meeting is going to be extremely long, there is no doubt about it. Unfortunately, one of things that is going to make this meeting long is that we will probably witness more of this behavior. It used to really irritate me until I was told something that really made me step back and think about it. I will pass this wisdom on here because it is really very simple. "We can't be upset with others for how they act or what they say. They are doing the very best that they can at this point in their recovery." As long as I know that I am doing the very best that I can, I cannot fault someone else for doing the same. I live by a motto that a past trustee in my area taught me, Principles before Personalities...Service before Egos.

Paulette, to touch on a little something else that you said about the length of the meeting. This will be my 5th meeting as a Trustee. You said that there are Fortune 500 companies that do the same thing in an annual meeting and in less time. Just keep in mind, we do this every 6 months! I am ever hopeful that we figure out how these meetings should run to be the most effective and efficient for all of the fellowship, and that we can accomplish this by meeting once a year! Principles before Personalities, Service before Egos.

Looking forward to Vancouver!

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

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3/12/13 - 4:54 PM

Hello to all my GA brothers and sisters. I have been reading the submissions for this month, and I would like to add a couple of comments related to current topics. Let me first say that I always, and I mean always, look forward to reading what other members have to say. This is a great forum in which I am able to read the insights and ideas from other brothers and sisters from around the world. This month's submissions are no exception. As always, I agree with some, disagree with others, but always learn from both. Yes, the tone can get contentious at times and some personal attacks have been known to crop up. However I believe most of the writers have a great passion for this program, and are not shy about expressing that passion.

On that note, I would like to address a comment make about David. I would agree that David (and I might add, several others) can be abrasive. But I don't believe his abrasiveness comes from an inherit meanness and I certainly don't believe he has exercised a "reign" over the trustee line. He simply writes more

often than any other member. That is his right, and his comments certainly create a lot of feedback. That is a good thing. It encourages others to write and share their ideas. In the last couple of years I have seen many new names on the line, and this month there are two new trustees's writing, I believe both for the first time.

I am not defending David's ideas and comments and I don't find them to be personal attacks. In fact, I find myself disagreeing with him on many topics, and he and I have sparred several times on this line. I am defending his and other member's right to say what they want and how they choose to express it. GA is made up of a myriad of people with very distinct and different personalities. Those personalities influence how we express our ideas.

Which allows me to segue to Karen E.'s submission about our commitment to Principals before Personalities. Judging others is not what this program is all about. We all struggle with it, at least I do. But when I put that motto to work, really think about it, I am able to hear the message regardless of who delivers it or how it is delivered.

Thank you for reading, and I look forward to seeing all my Trustee friends again in Vancouver.

Your Brother in Recovery,

Levi B. - Area 2, Northern California

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### **First Time Submitter**

3/14/13 - 9:51 AM

As a new trustee this is my first response to the exchange of ideas line. I've read many entries over the past six months and find I simply can't complete the reading. It goes on and on.. There is much though that I have read that has opened my eyes to recovery and service within that recovery. Thank you to all who participate your thoughts, ideas and opinions.

I participated in the demo for the conference call meeting. I was glad to have had the opportunity to be a part of the experience. I am excited about the possibility of this platform going forward in the future. I know its not meant to replace but add to the meeting experience for those who can not physically attend a meeting for what ever reason. I hope the agenda items are received well at the Vancouver conference.

I will be sending my votes in for the upcoming BOR election. I appreciate those who gave the background of how they came in the program and service to GA and thank you for stepping up to serve. I feel though the business aspect is very important and what that candidate can bring to the exchange of ideas for BOR. I have not been able to ascertain much from Meeting Minutes from the BOR; and would like to know more about what's going on.

While I am unable to attend the Vancouver Conference my vote will be there so I will be there. To all attending I hope you will have a productive exchange of ideas and that we will continue to think, act, and grow within the principals of our fellowship.

Pauline D. - Area 2B, Sacramento

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### **Agenda Realities**

3/20/13 - 2:38 PM

On a previous thread in this month's issue of the Trustee Line, a member wrote how 3 people have over half the agenda items. True, this is a long agenda. However, during my involvement with the BOT, I have never been this excited about an agenda. For the first time in a long time there are actual substantive items that will help our Fellowship. It was brought to the floor of the BOT that we spend too much time discussing changing one word in one sentence of our literature. That we really aren't helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers. This agenda, if certain items are passed, will no doubt be helpful to the compulsive gambler who still suffers, which is the primary purpose of the BOT. If this isn't getting our own house in order, I don't know what is. Or perhaps, maybe, that member didn't read the actual items on the

agenda.

The way our rules work, each piece of literature that could be affected needs to be changed individually. What I see with this agenda is not many items, but few concepts that enable a Trustee to show what their vision moving forward may be. It's just unfortunate that many items need to be changed in order to see that vision come to fruition.

But this agenda speaks volumes on how we are trying to improve GA as a whole. From the possibility of online meetings, to phone meetings, here we have the possibility of substantial changes that will have a positive effect on our Fellowship and no doubt help the compulsive gambler who still suffers. I have received nothing but positive feedback from the Trustees who have been able to participate in the trial run for the phone meetings. If this item is just the BOT playing a "word shell game", and not actually helping unity and GA as a whole, then I'm at a loss for words.

And yes, I do have many items on this agenda. The truth of the matter is many of those items would still be on the agenda because they have come out of the work of the BOR Procedural Review Committee. This committee, by the way, has been tasked with separating what belongs in the By-Laws and the Guidance Code. Any changes that are on the agenda that affect the By-Laws have gone through the BOR for approval first. And there have been some changes from what the committee recommended to what is on the agenda, thanks in part to the BOR suggestions. It was decided as a committee to split up the work of presenting these items to the BOT. Otherwise the chair would have done it all on his own. So to say any member has too many items, as was mentioned in a previous thread, is off the mark.

Pete K.-Area 13B

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| <b>How Sick Is Sick?</b> |
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3/21/13 - 4:30 PM

Communication between some members who express their personal opinions on various topics posted to the trusteeline has turned rather ugly. The discussions and opinions have become a battleground for who can hurl the most egregious insults towards another member somewhat like the political climate in our country.

Gamblers Anonymous is a Fellowship that champions spiritual and democratic principles. Fellowship stands for freedom and equality between all members. Those ideas are irrefutable. The members the fellowship elects to serve Gamblers Anonymous as a whole are referred to as "trusted servants" they do not govern. They are not law making senators. To think otherwise is a violation of Unity Step Two.

They, the Board of Trustees have a prime responsibility to act as guardians of the 12 Steps of Recovery and the 12 Steps of Unity and are to be guided by those precepts in all decisions they make—particularly those decisions that affect Gamblers Anonymous as a whole. For the most part over many years the input and wishes of the membership as a whole on very important issues have been totally ignored or dismissed out of hand.

Gamblers Anonymous is not a business or company that enforces, or has the right to enforce on the membership as a whole any dictates, mandates, censorship, or edicts, as those ideas would be a violation of the guidance code which clearly states we, the fellowship, have no rulers or superiors. This opinion does not champion anarchism which is a doctrine that all government and laws be abolished. Most importantly, Gamblers Anonymous is not a government, nor does it have or enforces any laws. To have that mindset particularly as a BOT member would mean we could possibly have no fellowship and that would be a crime against humanity. What we do have to guide us in all our recoveries are the spiritual principles of kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility. No personal opinion of any member can defeat or degrade those principles.

For any member, group member, intergroup member, or member of the Board of Trustees to slander or hurl wild unfounded accusations towards another member, or group of members is unthinkable. That is not what recovery and spiritual principles stand for. That is not what Unity stands for and to knowingly or uncaringly create disunity is a danger to the essence of our

Fellowship.

A prime example of this is reflected in a recent posting where the writer claims to have recently heard that some trustees both current and past are trading in the stock market through their 401k investment vehicles, and called for those trustees if they have any honor to resign, and referred to them as being filthy dirty. There can be no justification for that contemptuous statement. That is not only uncalled for but is arrogance, dishonesty, and hubris on a completely irrational scale.

No member is gambling or can be accused of gambling except by his own admission. This writer has made a serious violation of GA spiritual principles which are presented as kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility. This writer seems to have little regard for those principles and owes an apology to his fellow trustees both current and past. It is not a personal attack when a member responds to what a writer actually says or believes. Unity is of no concern on many subjects this writer promotes and I do not expect an apology to be forthcoming but I do expect a vicious tirade from him or one of his followers. In fact, if words were gunpowder some writers to this forum could blow up the world.

This is why I asked the question, How sick is sick! Our literature clearly states that compulsive gamblers are very sick people and because if by their own admission they have stopped gambling does not guarantee they are still not sick. Many abstinent members remain emotionally sick because compulsive gambling is an emotional illness. Emotions such as anger, resentment, frustration, even hatred rear their ugly head on the trusteline. The only problem with being emotionally sick is not knowing it!

I care enough about this life-saving fellowship to present these thoughts, and yes I am proud to say this program of recovery and unity saved my life. I do not consider that to be a warm and fuzzy idea but a true reality.

I will no doubt upset some trustees by reminding them they are not gods, nor lawmakers, nor controllers, nor elite, other than their willingness to be involved and of service to the fellowship. The heart and soul of our Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous are the individual members and individual groups who honor the principles of recovery and unity on a daily basis to the best of their abilities for without those people there would be no program and without the program there would be no people.

In conclusion, may God, of our understanding, bless Gamblers Anonymous and all members. To those who may be reading this who may not feel close to God--Guess who moved?

Yours in recovery, and most of all in unity,  
George W. Past Trustee Area 12 - New Jersey, Now in area 16, Upstate New York.

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3/21/13 - 11:06 PM

I make a motion that we clone George W. 200 times to represent GA as a whole at the next BOT meeting.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California

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3/22/13 - 11:56 AM

Hello All,

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I would like to 2nd Joe T's Motion- Good letter George I totally agree and that is exactly why I only concentrate on our local GA meetings , keeping harmony and fellowship the focus of our meetings and do not serve on the BOT anymore.

Good luck in April at the next BOT meeting and I can honestly say I am blessed that I do not have to attend.

Yours in recovery,  
Gary G. - a grateful former Trustee from area 6C, North Carolina

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3/23/13 - 9:32 AM

Point of information, did anyone bother asking brother George if he wanted to be associated in any way with the idea of anyone representing G. A. As a

whole ? No, I thought as much. With friends like the above comments you don't really need enemies. I always felt the hit and run smart Alec stuff served only as a barrier to communication, still do.

Brother George, reading back trustee line January 2009 I can't but feel underneath the bluster you have a much better legacy to pass on than being consumed by the emotions you attribute to others and I hope you can see past the current opportunity for disunity to follow your own instincts of the best way to proceed. Peace, brothers and sisters.

Odie. B s-east Ireland

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3/23/13 - 11:47 AM

After reading most of the Trustee line, I have to say it made me very sick, sad and ashamed. Thanks to my HIGHER POWER currently I don't belong to the B.O.T.

A very big THANK YOU George W, you spoke through my heart

George G. - Area 15, New York

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3/23/13 - 12:01 PM

Ever since my involvement with the BOT began in 2008, I have noticed one thing at every BOT meeting. The wishes of the Fellowship on important issues are not ignored as was mentioned earlier. At every Trustee meeting, there are items added by Trustees based on what someone from their local area wishes to be heard. These items are presented even if the Trustee that submitted them doesn't believe in the item. That shows that we are listening to our local groups. To that end, I can't even recall how many times I've heard a Trustee approach the microphone and state the opinions of their local membership. If this isn't following the wishes of the local area, then I don't know what is.

That brings me to my second point. I love attending the BOT meetings. For people who feel we don't do anything of consequence, just take a look at this agenda. There are items on this agenda that could have a profound impact at growing our Fellowship and bettering it ways that I don't think have ever been conceived. True, it's long. And yes, I have many items. Some people would feel it's an ego thing. Far from it. Most of the items I have authored come from committee work. Items that would still be on the agenda even if I didn't submit them. I won't apologize for that. It's the work of these committees where a lot of ideas and growth come from. It's also been said people who get up to the microphone a lot are people with big egos. Again, I find that faulty. I never knew it was a bad thing to have an opinion on something. It's these exchange of ideas that make these meetings worthwhile and can sometimes sway the vote of an item. It's unfortunate that some feel it's a chore to show up at these meetings. I look forward to them. Not only because we have a chance to move forward, as this agenda suggests with the concepts of phone and online meetings, but because attending these meetings has shown me what unity is all about. I'm proud to be a Trustee. I'm proud to be able to attend these meetings and I thank God I'm able to. But I'm even more proud to be a Trustee with an opinion.

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

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3/24/13 - 12:41 AM

I am getting a lot of press for someone that seldom views my opinion on the Trustee Line. I related to George W's submission and it had sparked some additional thoughts. Just like someone's therapy in a GA room.

For those who do not know about my relationship with David M, he and I had been close friends for several years and had done some good work together for NJIG. We bonded and saw things a little different and were very creative in our visions about GA. For the most part we agreed on many items but had different approaches. Many times we came to a point of agreeing to disagree. That was due to a face-to-face conversation that was ongoing and I believe and hope that it made both of us grow. It was and is an understanding that we both have to this day. Also, over a period of time we probably know each other, better than ourselves.

I believe our continuing differences grew from his viewpoint that GA needs the strongest structure possible when we first come into program and must continue throughout recovery. He controls the tempo on the Trustee Line and



has often expressed this.

Mine has always been to build a faith of unity through honesty and positive direction and that being boxed in with so much structure is not the way. I believe that we must have room to learn and grow through our own experiences and being compulsive addicts repulses the new members with rules and laws. It is difficult to surrender to ones addiction at the same time as trying to understand and obey the rules or laws of structure.

Just different logic or understanding about program, unity and recovery. I know there are many people that share both viewpoints.

At the BOT conference there are many opinions that clash. They are worked out by verbally communicating and reasoning face-to-face and that most of us walk away with a good sense of achievement and fellowship.

Prior to the Trustee Line those differences were done over the phone. I myself had experienced several great phone calls with people I never thought I would agree with. The result was always positive and a mutual respect for one another and fellowship. NO matter what the final opinion or outcome were.

George's " HOW SICK IS SICK" is a very good reminder that we are all sick in many ways. So are the many comments that have been hauled back and forth in this month's Trustee Line.

The people that know me always say that I'm always positive and very serene. Recovery has taught me to try to look at the positive side of life and efforts that most people have or at least their intent.

David's DARE TO DREAM entry took me to his viewpoint of the not so positive side of the BOR and my entry reflected that. I was defending the BOR, which I believe is run by the best people I know and would have them advise me in my own business affairs. I still do not make any apology for it because it is what I believe. Once again, it is clearly a difference of views and all of us are entitle to have it.

My strong unity belief is expecting good things to happen will lead to taking actions that produce positive results - the glass half full. Expecting only more bad stuff to come your way will keep you from doing the very things that might have minimized or avoided just that - the glass half empty.

One of my mentors in program always told me "you will always catch more bees with honey than vinegar". Another great mentor also taught me "patience would always win out". Both of these I did not apply in my entries and the response resulted in the same manner as my paragraph prior and my belief in unity.

My personal viewpoint is that the Trustee Line has taken away the verbal communication and that most people are not comfortable posting their thoughts on it for fear of being criticized. I have heard this opinion many of times from other trustees and members over the years. What went on in the DARE TO DREAM and other entries this month is proof positive. It was truly "Expecting only more bad stuff to come your way will keep you from doing the very things that might have minimized or avoided just that."

I believe this is the basic problem with posting on many websites, especially true on the Trustee Line. We have lost ourselves from the needed verbal communications that is necessary for unity growth through recovery and fellowship.

It just shows how truly "Sick is Sick" we are.

I thank George for being that person he is. You have helped me many times in your wisdom.

Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

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3/30/13 - 12:01 PM

Gary: Your submission cannot be humble. I agree with you that a lot of the new trustees will not submit anything because of David's counter attacks telling them why they are wrong.

David: You have a right to state your opinion and so does everybody else, without having to hear your counter point.

Everyone else please keep your opinions succinct. Too much pomp and bluster. I would like to read your opinions on one computer screen without having to scroll down and down and down.

Joe: I am not sure about this, but I think that the only thing cloned as of today are sheep?

Steve: I agree with you whole heartedly that a new member reading the Trustee Line must scratch their head and wonder is Gamblers Anonymous is really based on Kindness, Generosity, Honesty and Humility? Then ask is this program for me?

Not Humbly Submitted and also Short & Not So Sweet, well opinions will vary on that.

Ronny W. - Area 17, Connecticut

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### Thoughts To Ponder

3/23/13 - 6:56 PM

The words and ideas submitted to this forum matter. They really matter. They really matter because words represent attitudes and ideas that can weaken program unity so vital to all members, all groups, the fellowship, including the BOT and BOR. Some written words on this trustee line push aside as non-important the Spiritual Principles of the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship. It does not make any sense or promote unity to attack member's opinions with personal disputes because opinions differ. This should be an arrested compulsive gamblers a win or lose proposition. In my 48 years in the Fellowship I have fought for unity, spiritual principles, tolerance, and what is the best for Gamblers Anonymous.

To not respond is to allow those individual personal opinions to be accepted as some type of truth. Personal opinions do not always represent the truth. They are just personal opinions.

My defense of the concepts of Recovery and Unity and the principles they represent are responses to actual attacks on those principles. No elected trustee, current or past has the license to degrade those principles. I am entitled to respond to words and ideas that are alien to the principles that keep our program alive. You have the right to disagree with me without being disagreeable.

Impaired thinking is the definition the medical profession applies to compulsive gambling. Our thinking should improve when we stop gambling and work the Programs of Recovery and Unity. This change in thinking is not automatic and need diligent effort on the part of all recovering compulsive gamblers.

The more information we have regarding the illness we possess is to be armed against the illness wishes for our eventual destruction.

Do we believe that THE RELAPSE of 90% of our membership is due to weakness in our program or that the program is inadequate? The program never fails people who are addicted to gambling who find the desire to stop gambling-- it is people addicted to gambling and not desiring to stop gambling who fail the program. They fail and they fall but the GA door will always be open to them if they return. Desire to stop gambling will come as we continue to attend weekly meetings. Never underestimate the power of diligent effort and blind faith that the program works.

No member of Gamblers Anonymous regardless of clean time should consider they are immune from a relapse. This reality is awareness and humility as the illness has eternity to plot our destruction. We, on the other hand do not have eternity—we only have today to get better.

Mitch R. of New Jersey a great member of GA and father of Marshall R. always said he was blind when he gambled and GA restored his eyesight. Mitch always said as he encouraged fellow members in recovery to look for the pluses in their lives and to count their blessings each and every day. Mitch R. also believed everyone had the right to be wrong but quickly added "don't stay wrong too long".

I appreciate and respect the effort and dedication of all members of the BOT as

they act as guardians of the 12 Steps of Recovery and 12 Steps of Unity and to all Gamblers Anonymous members whose primary purpose is to carry the message of hope to those compulsive gamblers who still suffer.

The future of our Fellowship is not tomorrow's decisions that the BOT decides but the strength and honor brought to decisions the BOT will make today. All BOT members have a responsibility to the membership that elected them to serve and be their voice in all matters that affect GA as a whole. BOT members are not loose cannons doing as the please but are responsible to the membership who elected them. If that statement is incorrect please let me know so I can be enlightened or corrected.

BOT members should understand how decisions the BOT makes now will affect compulsive gamblers who are now members of the GA program and as important the effect on generations of compulsive gamblers yet to enter our fellowship for help. We should strive for the best answers and hopefully principled decisions we make as the legacy of our time as Trusted Servants of the Fellowship.. What seems good is sometimes the enemy of what is best. Strive for the best we can be—it matters.

The decisions BOT members decide should not be based on winning or losing on issues, we were all experts on winning and losing before we came to GA. The GA Program in the Guidance Code endorses spiritual principles our Fellowship presents as kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility. Were those ideas be removed from the Guidance Code and the Guidance Code be made a legal document I would not have a leg to stand on and fall back on the Serenity Prayer. The spiritual principles cannot be defeated by personal opinions as that would be a violation of the Guidance Code.

Jim W. founder of Gamblers Anonymous said with great conviction that the most important principle in a GA meeting room was LOVE. Love for recovery, love for our fellow members also struggling for recovery, and love for this magnificent gift we call recovery. At the same time Gamblers Anonymous grew and prospered with conflict and conflicting opinions in the early days of the Fellowship. Not much has changed in 55+ years.

Yours in recovery and great hope,  
George W. - past trustee from area 12, New Jersey, now residing in Area 16, Upstate New York.

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### **Fellowship & Recovery**

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3/25/13 - 1:42 AM

I've sat quietly reading this month's Trustee Line entries and many thoughts have surfaced. I know most of the submitters this month pretty well. There are points that have been made on both sides of these discussions. Recovery is a great path to take but no one should be so naive to think that there won't be rocks..sometimes boulders on the way down it.

Our Fellowship is based on many things: Integrity, Being responsible, compassion, caring, forgiveness and yes "love" to name just a few. Those don't come in a goody bag when we get here they take some work on our part. For some this comes a little easier than others but with hard work it comes.

When I get angry or lathered up about something I tend to write down my thoughts. Once I'm finished I look over what I've written and eliminate anything that doesn't speak to a person in recovery. Most of the time after removing those items I'm left with a blank piece of paper.

I think we can all agree a newcomer reading this month's Trustee Line can't help but wonder if there is anything this fellowship has to offer in the way of help.

Cooler heads usually prevail. Let us all take a deep breath and refocus on the principles this fellowship is built on. let us calm the negativity. If we see something we feel isn't any good, rather than cast aspersions at it do some brainstorming and offer alternatives for a better way.

Hope to see you all in Vancouver,

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee, Sacramento

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