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Trustee Line for April 2010

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From The Trustees

The subjects listed below are just a listing of themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them or start an entirely new subject

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

Should the link above not work, copy and paste this email address into a blank email: trustee@trusteewebsite.com

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Don't Carry the Mess - Carry the Message

4/1/10 - 12:01 AM

No matter how unfounded the attack, or how irrational the accuser, it is difficult to be attacked and not respond in kind. It is equally hard to watch the Board Of Trustees disparaged by former members and not cry foul.

I found myself tempted to stoop to the level of some of the entries in the March trustee line and attack the attackers. Sometimes it just feels good (God forgive me) to throw a punch and hit below the belt. When not surrendering my will I like a street fight as much as the next guy and years of acting out on my impulses has made me fairly good at it.

Thank goodness for the delete button and thank goodness for the lessons I have learned in recovery.

As a member of Gamblers Anonymous and as a member of the Board of Trustees I have a responsibility and an obligation to myself and to this fellowship. I have to do what I believe is right even when it would feel so good to do what I want instead!

Anyone who has dealt with me knows I have no problem speaking my mind. I also have no problem with telling people I think they are wrong. I can also get hot during a good debate. I don't speak behind someone's back and I try not to say anything I would not say to someone's face. I also try not to think badly of people who disagree with me.

As long as I can remember there have been problems between the BOT and the BOR. When I was elected chair as the BOT and Bennie F was elected chair of the BOR we agreed we would work together as best we could. He and I speak regularly and have disagreed on several important issues over the past year. I don't think either of us have questioned the others motive or commitment to the fellowship.

Legitimate questions have been raised about the BOR and its operations. A committee has been formed by the BOT to review the guidelines governing the BOR and to help both boards function together for the betterment of the fellowship. This committee is not some radical group of trustees trying to take over the fellowship. The committee consists of trustees as well as the current chairman of the BOR and the former chair of the BOR. If memory serves, of the nine or so members of the committee, at least four are current and or former members of the BOR. Hardly the makings of a coup d'etat.

Things change. The BOR needs to. Maybe the BOT needs to as well. The tone of the debate surely needs to. Questions aren't bad. Debate isn't bad. Spirited disagreements aren't bad.

It is time to stop the hurtful speech not stop the debate. It is time to remember why we are here but not forget where we come from. It is time for each of us to take responsibility for our part in the past and commit to begin the debate anew.

I call on each of you who have made an attack to drop your weapons and reach out your hand. I also ask that those of you who have sat on the sidelines to step up and join the debate. Take the responsibility of being a trustee or regent seriously and don't let others do your talking.

I am not asking for a group hug here but we need to find a way to disagree and debate and to change without losing sight of the spiritual foundation which supports us all.

Brother Denis - Area 12, New Jersey
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

4/1/10 - 12:01 AM

I find myself shaking my head in disbelief while reading the thread on the trustee line about the BOR and ensuing accusations, innuendos, and name-calling. First let me remind everyone that we are members of this Fellowship. That is the highest position ANYONE can achieve in this Fellowship. You can state ALL the positions you have held in this fellowship like medals on an army uniform, and you can state ALL the wonderful things you are responsible for happening in this fellowship, but at the end of the day, we are ALL members, and anyone who holds a Trusted Servant position of any kind in this fellowship is answerable to the MEMBER. PERIOD!!!!

Any member may ask any trusted servant any question they would like answered without the questioning of why are they asking that question?? I have asked many questions to Trusted Servants, BOT Chairs and our I.S.O. for the purpose of curiosity, knowledge, or to just plain learn and I have never been asked, "Why are you asking that question?" What is your motive? What, you think we are hiding something? NO!! I always got a civil, polite answer. I have never heard of any member calling or emailing our ISO and asking a question and not getting an answer. The member is entitled to an answer. That is what we are here for. So whenever any member asks a BOR member, why can't we have video conferencing?? They are entitled to an answer. If a member asks, a BOR secretary, why can't we see in the minutes what Regent voted for or against an item, that member is entitled to an answer. They do not need to be ridiculed for asking the question, or questioned on their motive. I think more Regents ought to take a lesson from our ISO, and just be responsive to the membership. And respond to any members question.

It seems to me that when a question is asked that is uncomfortable for a Regent to answer, the response is to attack the questioner. But the question is being asked by a member. And no matter how distasteful the question may be to the Regent, a response is required. It is a common tactic, if one does not like the message then let's just kill the messenger, and disregard the real issues. Why should we confuse anyone with the facts? Pardon my sarcasm.

Sorry BOB I cannot agree with you when you say Arnie's and Gary's letter need to be applauded. I think it is a sad day when I read letters like that. I thought I was watching a very old episode of 60 Minutes with Point / Counter-Point, with Shana Alexander and the other guy going back and forth and being so UN productive!!! That's NOT what this fellowship needs, insinuating that David gets special treatment because he puts together the agenda. How childish is that. Or insinuating that the Chair of the BOT is doing something inappropriate. There is NO place in this fellowship for those accusations. What Unity or Recovery Step Were They WORKING, when those arrows were being slung?

So to sum up, with taking no one's side except the memberships. If we chose to be a Trusted Servant in any capacity, let's choose to serve for the opportunity to GIVE BACK to this fellowship and not for any other reason.

Thanks for listening,
Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

4/1/10 - 12:01 AM

I'm going to follow as much of Denis' lead as possible with what I write in this posting. Much that I would like to once again talk about the principles of what I started in last month's Trustee Line, there really needs to be a 'set the record straight' response, so I will mix that in with yet again, another reinforcement of what the original subject matter was. Obviously, the rhetoric needs to be addressed and I would ask those hardcore opponents to all the real issues to try and address the issues, rather than to resort to name calling, which is always the act of desperate people who really can't directly deal with the facts.

We all saw a response about looking at the Trustee Line to see how 'LOW the Trustees would go.' If you ask me, the Trustee Line is doing EXACTLY what it is supposed to do - airing opinions about issues that affect the Trustees. This may be a problem for some viewers if the problem envelops those who read it. Oh well, as they say... 'S--t happens'. So if you're a critic of the Trustee Line, defend your position or lick your wounds and step aside, because the Trustee Line is bigger than you.

If nothing else, the contrasts in the understanding of what BOT members feel should be the case, versus what people who have had connections with the BOR perceive.

From a subject that started with the focus on the BOR and their inadequacies, it turned into a problem with the BOT. Suddenly the BOR is the savior of the Fellowship and the BOT is a sewer pit? What do you say we stick to the subject and get some answers? Besides, if there is this overflowing number of problems with the BOT, then someone should start a new topic.

Let me clear the foul smell in the air leftover from last month. The Rules and Procedures Manual is a document that governs how the Trustees run the Trustee meetings. Every current Trustee knows about it and it is not a coincidence that the Trustee meetings are far smoother in how they run, since the implementation of those Rules and Procedures. This manual does not involve any other members other than Trustees. If anyone is interested in a copy of it, it is hiding in plain sight on the Trustee Website under the Reference Material link. The document gets updated after every Trustee meeting. Each change is voted on by group conscience of over 100+ Trustees. All the Trustees know about it. The Rules and Procedures has eliminated much of the controversy that was a part of the Trustee meetings in the past. Order, Structure and Consistency now prevail, and the BOT is far more efficient and able to handle greater quantities of work for the betterment of the Fellowship.

Now, as to the Confidential Trustee Listing being given to the GA membership. I think anyone who is or was a Trustee will clearly agree that such personal information is not for distribution to the Fellowship. This listing is only for the current Trustees, and there shouldn't even be a discussion to the contrary for reasons that are all too clear.

Let's drive the point home about how people are entitled to their own opinions, but NOT their own facts. How do we get in touch with the BOR members? There is absolutely no information about that other than the BOR Chairman's info on the Confidential Trustee Listing. That means ZERO information for any GA members. No phone numbers are listed anywhere, no emails are listed anywhere. Try to get that information and you will run into a dead end. If you are lucky enough to get an email from one of them, then you are ahead of everyone else. 'Send your questions in to the ISO and they will be forwarded to the BOR members at the next BOR meeting.' That's what I have heard numerous times. I understand anonymity, but these are people that

should be available to everyone somehow.

Does every member know about the Trustee website? Good question. If that is important, then I suggest that someone try to find out and let the Trustees know in Tampa. The Trustee website is not restricted to only Trustees, but it is primarily a tool for the Trustees. All the Trustees get their information for the meetings from it, in addition to many other important developments with the Trustees, so my answer is that there is a very high percentage of awareness on the part of Trustees, but probably a very different case with non-Trustee members. A great parallel question would be to get some statistics about what percentage of the Fellowship knows about the BOR and what they do. But that's for a different issue of the Trustee Line.

Transcripts of the BOT meeting for all to see was another point that was raised. Let's think about the feasibility of that action. 2 full days of transcripts, with information from a field of 125 Trustees, showing every vote just makes no sense. Time and tactical issues are the problems. Every vote would have to be a roll call vote. This Kentucky agenda has 113 items, if we had to take a roll call vote on each item, that would be an extra 113 pages to the minutes. I'm not even including roll call votes on challenges to the chair, which can be numerous additional roll call votes. 15 minutes of debate on agenda items, with possible 15 minute extensions and transcribing what can be 10-15 people getting up to the microphones per segment and putting in a summary of what each person says. That sounds like 3-4 pages per item. Let's just add an approximate page count for that of 350 more pages to the minutes. Oh wait, we have committee reports and questions that also need to be added, not to mention Points of Information, Points of Order, items called out of order. All this would probably require 4 days instead of 2 for the meeting just to get everything done. I'm not really clear on how all of this gets paid. More cost for the Trustees to attend longer meetings, more impact on the areas financially, not to mention the additional costs for ISO.

Karen, at ISO, has said at many meetings that if there are some discrepancies, that she would have to refer to the tapes. Not that I want to speak for her, but I have spoken with her about this subject for many years. She is and always has been ready and willing to play back the BOT meeting tapes to clarify issues raised during the Trustee meetings. She has done this on numerous occasions.

When my wife asks me where we will be going for a vacation, a Trustee meeting is NOT on any list of mine choices. Sorry to inform those who believe that the 2-year term of a Trustee is about vacation time, but when I want to go on vacation, I need to pull the plug, lay in the sun and only worry about not getting a sunburn, or if my drink needs more ice. If I am on vacation, I am not interested in paying intense and focused attention to the BOT agenda and the discussions both pro and con on EVERY item for 2 solid days. If anyone can call that a vacation, then I'm doing something wrong. I should also add the Area 12 gets a good level of funding relative to other areas, but we still have money we lay out of our own pockets for each Trustee meeting. It's not an 'all expenses paid' trip to some exotic place, contrary to what has been suggested.

One thing I do agree on is that some Trustees don't get up to the microphone during the Trustee meetings. Marshall R. has an agenda item on the Kentucky agenda to discuss just that issue. Maybe extra commentary can come from those who are intent on trashing the BOT for multiple unsubstantiated issues.

What still remains after last month's diatribe are the same issues that were raised by everyone who asked the questions. Defensive statements of how the BOR is doing a great job do not in anyway deal with the issues. The fact that respondents still are looking for us to ask the questions is beyond belief that even when presented with them in print, they are still not visible to the BOR supporters. Where are the members of the BOR to answer them?

The BOT meetings are NOT the platform to air problems that I or any other Trustees may have with the BOR, unless it is an agenda item. The Trustee meetings are about taking care of the agenda, not airing dirty laundry. My visits to the BOR were as a guest one time, where I just observed and the other time when I brought up a lengthy printed report with problems concerning the hotline's business side. I made my statements and nothing was discussed in detail in front of me. It was only when I was not there at the next BOR meeting that a rebuttal filled with lies, distortions, and what appears to be a recurring theme for the BOR, discrediting the people who question the status quo, was produced without my ability to respond. When I asked the then Chair of the BOR to clarify these inaccuracies, I was told the matter was closed.

Minutes are made comprising statements and decisions of all that happens during a meeting. There are real issues of practicality about doing this with

the BOT, but when I sit in a BOR meeting of about 1 hour in length and hear the Recording Secretary ask the group 'What should I put in the minutes?' and the Chairman uses his own words to give a very brief summary of what happened discussing the subject, that is outright wrong. When the Recording Secretary asks what should be put into the minutes and the Chair says, 'Don't put anything in there, they don't need to know anything.' That's a serious problem.

Silence is consent. If you don't speak up and voice your disapproval, then you are defending the status quo that everything is 'just peachy keen' at the BOR. Much needs to be fixed and more than just a few Trustees have stepped up to the plate to say so. Why isn't there anyone from the BOR eager to address these issues in an honest and forthright manner? We will all speculate in the absence of information and facts, which is never a good environment for a compulsive gamblers.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

4/1/10 - 2:48 PM

Although I have volunteered to try and answer Joe's questions I still do not qualify these items as concise questions. Since I have not been a member of the Board of Regents for the past few years I do not have answers to these BOR items concerning Erlang or the Hotline. It is my belief that if the members of the BOR had the answers to the Hotline problems they would certainly share them with any GA member asking them. I do believe they will have a report in Louisville.

My concerns have mostly dealt with policies and practices of the BOR. Some Trustees have complained about the quality of the minutes and there are many times I would totally agree that the minutes are unclear and too brief. I also believe the BOR is aware of this and they are trying to do their best to improve this. There are no secrets when it comes to the BOR meeting. Any member of GA is free to ask any BOR member anything about the meeting and if an answer is available it should be given. Unfortunately the answers are not always there. The Hotline is a very good example. Being a member of the BOR is an easy task. The meetings are on Friday night and just fighting the traffic to get to the ISO office can take 1-2 hours and are very exhausting. The meetings are never just one hour but usually 2 or more hours. I can recall the days when the former BOR members would have to nominate and vote to get the ballot down to 18. Sometimes we had 25 or more local members wanting to run. Nowadays we're lucky to get 10 members in So. California willing to serve. We ask ourselves "Why is that?". That's because of the harassment and aggravation involved.

I truly believe all the Trustees questioning the BOR mean well and believe what they do is in the best interests of Gamblers Anonymous but I think they are going about it in the wrong way. I am very much in favor of the committee that Denis set up to review the BOR and try to make things work better. I think this committee can solve a lot of the problems that now exist but I think we have to give them the time and opportunity to do the job they were set up to do.

Richie's letter didn't agree with my applauding Gary and Arnie's letters in the Trustee Line. Although I don't agree with everything they said I do agree with their right to say it just as I agree with David's right to write long elegant letters to bring his points across. Not everyone is going to agree with everything I say here but I feel I have the right to try and get my ideas and thoughts across.

I applaud Denis M Chairman of the BOT for his letter and especially the following statements: It is time to stop the hurtful speech not stop the debate. It is time to remember why we are here but not forget where we come from. It is time for each of us to take responsibility for our part in the past and commit to begin the debate anew.

I call on each of you who have made an attack to drop your weapons and reach out your hand. I also ask that those of you who have sat on the sidelines to step up and join the debate. Take the responsibility of being a trustee or regent seriously and don't let others do your talking.

Joe does have one agenda item that does not deal with the Hotline that I may be able to answer. I assume he wants to know the reason for this change. Previous to this change the By-Laws only referred to the Unity and Recovery Program. Now this item refers to all GA literature which as we all know can only be changed by 2 votes of the BOT.

C. Discuss By-Law Changes.

C1. Article VII, Section 3: Change to read: The Board of Regents, any officer or appointed officer of this Corporation, unequivocally will have no authority or power under any circumstance to add to, delete or change any work in ANY Gamblers Anonymous literature.

Motion seconded and passed
For...8 Against...0 Abstained...0

Joe keep asking questions but try to understand that the answers are not always there.

Yours in Recovery
Bob W. - Area 1, Los Angeles

4/2/10 - 7:51 AM

I am very pleased that our BOT Chairman Denis M. has come out and "tactfully" delivered a message that we all need to reread a few times. It is one thing to disagree and it is truly something different when it gets to be personal in the heat of exchanged ideas. I would hope that cooler heads prevail here and there be no need to continue to use hurtful language and insinuations at each other. If we speak from our hearts maybe we will get something accomplished. This fellowship deserves responsible leadership at all levels and our continued recovery depends on just that. I for one do not want to experience a shouting match in the BOT meeting in Louisville. There certainly are things that need to be said, explanations hopefully, suggestions for how to resolve the issues (that old saying "be part of the solution" comes to mind), and lastly I would hope some apologies on both sides for the sarcasm that has fueled this fire.

Having said that I still have my three questions in mind that I hope will be answered soon. 1) Can we at least see a spreadsheet that shows what each area is paying Erlang and the minutes they are using. Numbers speak for themselves usually, and I for one would really like to understand fully how this is being handled from all the areas involved. 2) I think its apparent a little bit more description in the BOR minutes would really be appreciated. 3) From the start I have been amazed by the decision to not allow trustees to listen in on the BOR meeting. I am sure this opinion is shared by many. I can't ever imagine banning a BOR member from a BOT meeting. I certainly hope the BOR Chairman will address this to clear the air.

The committee that was formed is very active on this agenda and I am looking forward to the discussions and hopefully resolutions to these issues.

I also call on those of you who sit back, want to talk and share your opinion but wait to long to get up, to rise and join in the discussions you owe it to your area who put their trust in you to serve them. "Get involved and be of service" it will enhance your recovery greatly.

I will see you all in Louisville soon.

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

4/2/10 - 5:38 PM

I read the Trustee Line several times a day and I'm always interested in what is being discussed or debated. I don't submit as much as others simply by choice, but with that said, there are some areas that definitely can be improved. Living in Los Angeles, I have attended one BOR meeting, when I was not on the BOT. I believe every member should have that right to be there. I also agree that that the minutes should be readily available and not have to wait so long to find out what happened over a month ago. I understand that for the ISO Bulletin, there may be that lag time, but the minutes should have no problem being recorded and written up for the BOT website, to see what was discussed, so that if something needed to be added to the next months meeting, there would be ample time to do that. Right now, that's not possible. Next, I would really like to see the meeting minutes recorded on tape, and be available for any trustee to listen to. I agree with what has been said about this. What is there to hide? Also, why are we asking the BOR to vote whether or not this is a feasible option? Is this not something that the BOT can vote on and give to the BOR to implement as guidelines to their meetings? Also, has the IES always been present at the BOR meetings? Is this in the By-Laws or something done by choice?

I think changes definitely need to be made, but like everything else, those things will take time. There is a process for everything, whether it's the BOT, the BOR or personal recovery. I didn't just wake up and here I am. It's all about staying on the road, and believing each day, that "We can do what I can't". I'm grateful that there is a committee that is overseeing the BOR, and perhaps in Louisville, we will have some answers. I too applaud Denis for his

words, and I hope we all can join together, and build a foundation and a bridge between the BOT and the BOR. It's definitely something that needs to be done. Steve F. - Area 1, Los Angeles

4/5/10 - 6:58 PM

To all current Board of Trustee members,

David M, in an earlier submission to the trustee line suggested that if you want to read warm and fuzzy messages you should read the ISO monthly bulletin. I agree with David and will attempt to deliver my message as un-warm, un-fuzzy, and as fairly as possible. Unlike Brother Denis M., incoming chairman of the Board of Trustees, I harbor no aggression to punch anyone or hit them below the belt. That may go over well in a bar room brawl but would be a tragedy within our Fellowship. I hope that statement from Denis was just a metaphor to vent his anger, as our GA combo Book on page 12 informs us that compulsive gambling is an emotional problem—not a financial problem. Some vexing emotions are anger, frustration, hatred, and resentment which are harmful to all recoveries regardless of the length of abstinence of any member or their position as a trusted servant within the Fellowship.

David M. I assume, has not been elected President or King of Gamblers Anonymous and his lone voice which is his undeniable right to express within the freedom of Fellowship does not stand for 99 other trustees who have principles they honor and minds of their own. Sarcastic remarks to the “BOYS” at the Board of Regents who should come out of hiding, is just a continuation of unprincipled attacks by a small group of Board of Trustee members who have disparaged the Board of Regents since the inception of the trustee line in 2006. The second transmission to the trustee line in the initial edition from Ian S, area 6D, set the tone for the subsequent condemning insults towards Board of Regents members and GA members in California in general. This verbal assault in writing has not subsided over the past four years and now is a threat to Unity within the Fellowship.

Jim W., the founder of Gamblers Anonymous who I met in 1966 at one of the first East Coast conferences in Albany, New York said that the most important principle in a GA room was love— love for recovery—love for our fellow members, warts and all, and love for the freedom, sanity, peace of mind, and serenity that recovery freely offers to every compulsive gambler who is a member of this life-saving Fellowship.

What has been happening over the past five years fostering anger and acrimony between the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents is not an example of the love Jim W. our founder thought to be vitally important to Unity, progress, and reasonable communication between fellow GA members.

The problems are emotional problems which all compulsive gamblers possess which many times are lurking below the surface with eruption always a possibility. When differences of opinions arise, sometimes confrontational differences, those emotions come to the surface and hairs start to rise up on the back of many necks. Those members involved in these differences tend to become defensive and emotions begin to fly. We see this every day in our political structure, particularly the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives but they can cause unwanted and unaffordable disunity in our Fellowship. “Together in Unity” should be a GA principle we honor putting aside personalities.

When emotions and personalities enter the picture to decide any differences concerning the best results for Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, then “all hell can break loose!” There is much evidence in trustee submissions to the trustee line to support that statement. Some of those submissions illustrate volatile emotions as, anger, frustration, resentment, and retaliation.

When volatile emotions and personalities take control of issues that should be solved by using GA Spiritual Principles presented to all members as the highest and finest qualities of the human mind including kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility---THEN TOGETHER WE RISK DISUNITY! That would do harm to our Fellowship.

I do not believe any member of Gamblers Anonymous from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to the member making coffee at a local meeting can afford the luxury of risking or, worse yet, causing disunity---no matter how worthy they believe their personal opinions to be regarding any issue they champion. .

Our Fellowship will be well-served when all our trusted servants serving the Board of Trustees and Board of Regents honor “PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.”

The Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous encourages us to do no less.

Yours in all that is good for our Unity and our Fellowship,

George W. past trustee, area 12, now residing in area 16 - Upstate NY

4/6/10 - 12:19 PM

I too was shocked to read that our Chairman of Trustees stating that he wanted to take the ATTACKER (me) out to the street and punch me below the belt. Those that know me understand that I was trying to make a point how easy it is to take any point of view and turn it in a personnel negative commentary. In my exercise I had merely taken David M issue and words about the BOR and shown how a member could possibly view the BOT. Apparently, my written words hit David and Denis below the belt of truth. If they read the SUMMARY it express my effort in the exercise.

THIS IS A MESS, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLEANED UP A LONG TIME AGO. SO DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER.

We all know that David M has been personally attacking the BOR for over 4 years. It has been an ongoing assault to the point that BOB W stating that "I got so tired of dealing with this small group of Trustees that I decided to never again run for either board. Someday I might change my mind but not until these insults and innuendos cease."

To me this is a very sad and discouraging statement from a man that has dedicated so much time and leadership to our fellowship. Let alone to those that now will think very hard to run for any position that is subject to such assaults that David does on his trustee line. Bob's words could be heard from many of the Chairs and some of the BOR members for the last four years. At one point David had to be told from a Chairman of the Trustees to stop his attack. However, in David's own words his advise was "if you/they can't take the heat got out".

This is a fellowship that means so much to those that want to serve and dedicate their available time and give back to it. Not to get to the point of losing serenity and being judge on how bad you are doing a job vs. how much good you are doing for our fellowship. That point of view is exactly what is going on here and it is breaking down our unity and detrimental to our fellowship.

ALL I DID WAS TO SHOW AND EXPRESS THE OTHER POINT OF VIEW AND IT WORKED.

Denis M stated that the BOR and BOT has always had problems. While this may be true to a certain level and degree, however never in the history of GA has there been a Chairman of the Trustees been so bold to allow and form a committee to totally revamp the BOR. That is a monarchy action and should never have been permitted and it is totally against our GC and the foundation of our fellowship. Both boards are suppose to work as two distinct boards that each works as one of three pillars of our fellowship being, the BOR, the BOT and our membership. Take one away and the structure will collapse.

This action has the possibility to open many other issues that will not bring unity and strength to our future.

Let me just suggest a few problems or possibilities:

- 1.) What if all of the effort is not accepted by the BOR? Than what are the next steps? Who makes that judgment call? Both boards will surely be at odds on which is best for our fellowship and unity.
- 2.) Does the BOR have the same option to totally revamp the BOT? Why not?
- 3.) Does this open the door for the BOR to say - it doesn't want to make a combo book change that the BOT voted for? Or rejects a new piece of literature that the BOR feels is not right and kicks it back to the BOT for review?
- 4.) What if the BOR makes a financial decision and the BOT doesn't approve it or like it?
- 5) Why have a BOR at all? - Let's setup a committee under the BOT and do it ourselves? The BOT can do it better, is the suggestion, what does that say to our membership - that the BOR never had it right and its members have never been competent to see it?

Over the years the BOR have always taken the suggestions from the BOT and has acted responsible. Now the Chairman feels that a total revamp is in order.

MAKE NO MISTAKE THAT BY FORMING THIS COMMITTEE IT IS DOING JUST THAT - BRINGING THE BOR UNDER THE BOT RULE.

These are not just some crazy examples of making a point - these are very

serious questions and have the potential for a total breakdown. In one short 6 months there are over 30 motions that affect the BOR, over 1/3 of the agenda. This is not a subtle change; it is a major restructure of the BOR. Both boards should look after itself, like it has been for decades.

Contrary to David's point this is not an Example of Success of the very few submissions to his trustee line, but is detrimental to our fellowship, as we know it.

I ask one final question - "How did our founders get it so wrong? Or did they?

Fellowship first.

Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

4/7/10 - 1:07 PM

Principles before personalities is one of our guiding messages. The unity of our fellowship is more important than any personal differences we may have. There seems to be an impression that there is a conflict between the B of R and the B of T. There is no truth to that belief. Because we may have a difference of opinion does not equate to conflict and rivalry.

Denis and I have had a amicable and meaningful working relationship. We don't always agree but we always remain agreeable. The goal we all share, Trustees and Regents is the betterment of the GA fellowship so that we can bring recovery to the compulsive gambler.

I look forward to meeting with you in Louisville and enjoying the Conference.

Respectfully,

Benni F. - Chairman of the Board of Regents

4/8/10 - 2:46 PM

My thanks to Benni F. for his confirmation that, while there may be differences between the BOR and the BOT, the working relationship between the two boards (and the Chairs) is alive and well.

My last post was a call for unity and I am happy to say those almost everyone accepted it as such. The tone of almost every post since then agreed we have a right to disagree but a responsibility to be respectful. In addition, inroads have already been made between the two Boards based on the most recent conversation between Benni and myself.

Many of you have reached out to me about the posts from George and Gary. Many expressed anger and shame. I wish I could explain their personal attacks against me and their distortions of my attempts to calm the waters. I wish I could explain, but I can not.

What I can do is relate to them. I have known rage. I have known irrational anger. I know how sad and lonely those feelings are. As brothers in fellowship, I can only hope they find their way to a better place.

Meanwhile, what I can also do is refuse to take the bait. I encourage all of you to do the same. Discuss the issues. Agree or disagree, but stick to the issues. Remember why we all do this and don't allow anyone to divert us from our purpose or our calling.

We now have the Chairmen of both Boards acknowledging that work needs to be done and our commitment to work together.

Join us.

Brother Denis M. - Chairman of the Board of Trustees

4/8/10 - 4:12 PM

This is crazy, now people are taking my inventory. First, Denis wanted to punch me below the belt and now I am the one with RAGE. I am not in a rage or lonely and care and love this program very much. It saved my life and now I am in the heat of the battle with it. How very SAD! Let us not confuse the points I have made with distractions. I have not attack Denis or either of the boards. My letters are very calm compare to most of David's. So, please save the pity for someone else.

I have zero problems with either board. It is this process of revamping the BOR that I have been addressing with no answer from anyone. This process is against our GC, that all trustees and especially the Chairman are supposed to be guided by. I know understand how Joe B feels. I am not getting any

answers about the points I have asked in my last entry. Joe B said it well - I am just getting Lip service.

Like David has stated in the beginning of all this, the Trusteeline is a forum that ideas and questions are supposed to be aired and discussed. Sometimes they get difficult but stilled should be answered by the Chairman. This is the TRUSTEELINE! So let's stick to the questions Mr. Chair.

In my first message last month - all I did was compare David's comments about the BOR and applied it to the BOT. Clearly, I had expressed my reasons in the summary and did not accuse anyone or any board. The message was that we should look at was being said and try to understand how the BOR and its members must feel like from David's attacks for the last 4 years. Also try to see and understand that the possibility of 2 sides of the story and to bring unity back in focus.

My second statement, the first this month very clearly I asked some direct questions and now it is being put off as RAGE? That is not unity or respectful, when I member is concerned about the future of our fellowship and ask a question to the Chairman of the BOT and I get a disrespectful off-color comment in front of the entire BOT. Something I would never expected from my manager, clients, parents, friends, fellow GA members and especially from the Chair of the BOT that has recovery. This is just not what fellowship is all about.

I am not going to speak for George's letter or speak for him. It screams unity. It was one of the most powerful encouraging letters I have EVER read on the trusteeeline. It was right on target and I would not know how anyone could get rage from that letter.

If people are upset at me - PLEASE I encourage them to call me, I welcome discussing this issue. This is main problem with the trusteeeline that I had from the very beginning and why I compare it to the GLOBE or ESQUIRE. People can take pot shots and not be man or woman enough to call that person on the phone. Denis can take my inventory without even understanding were I am coming from and make the entire process my fault.

I don't understand when David or Joe asks a question and people take the side for them and when others go against their opinion they are put down or some other diversion.

Where are the principals here? Where are the answers???? OR is the trusteeeline a controlled forum?

Fellowship First,

Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey
PS - Very calm for the moment.

4/10/10 - 12:25 PM

This letter may not be suitable for the trusteeeline. It is a warm and fuzzy letter and maybe should be in the ISO bulletin.

I went to my GA homeroom last night and asked for my higher power to help me in this entire BS that is being thrown against the wall. As normal, it came through to me when a fellow member commented back to me "Cool heads will prevail - keep your cool" I have heard that before and it was the same advise a VERY dear friend had given to me awhile ago. Of course bells went off and the light was turned on in my thick German skull.

AND THAN: it told me that no matter what the outcome is in this - it will never matter to my home room. But it does affect GA as the whole and that is the issue. What is going on is and well affect our fellowship.

So keeping it to just "Principals" was the next thing that came to me and asks one straightforward question, while KEEPING IT SIMPLE.

So that is what I would like to ask and hopefully get a straight answer.

Where in the GC does it allow the BOT to make any motion change (or a total revamp) to the BOR GC and By-laws? And if so, what is the procedure?

Thank God I have a higher power that speaks to me on a daily basis and gives me serenity.

Gary S. - Area 12, New Jersey

4/11/10 - 2:17 PM

KEEPING IT SIMPLE, and answering Gary's question in his last posting on the trustee line:

Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous:

Article VIII - Board of Trustees

Section 13.

Changes (in G.A. approved literature) can be made by the Board of Trustees at two (2) consecutive physical meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Both the Guidance Code and the By-Laws of Gamblers Anonymous are G.A. approved literature.

Herb B. - Area 5, Montreal

Questions...No Answers

4/1/10 - 12:01 AM

Well I do know I read the BOR minutes as well as the Trustee line. I have been asked by a Past BOR member and Chair to be CONCISE. I will use the minutes' words not mine, other than STILL NO ANSWERS AS OF 3/29/2010.

Feb '09

Speaking of the Erlang contract, the BOR has sent it to an attorney for review and suggestions, made some minor recommendations and we are in the process of finalizing the wording.

May '09

B. National Hotline. Hotline Committee has reviewed new contract and they are still discussing many of the items

C. Discuss By-Law Changes.

C1. Article VII, Section 3: Change to read: The Board of Regents, any officer or appointed officer of this Corporation, unequivocally will have no authority or power under any circumstance to add to, delete or change any work in ANY Gamblers Anonymous literature.

Motion seconded and passed

For...8 Against...0 Abstained...0

July '09

Benni F., Gary S. and Steve Zimmers will have a conference call to discuss the new contract.

Sept '09

B. National Hotline. Gary S. is presently negotiating with Erlang for the universal npackages that would apply to everyone who has signed up with Erlang, but it would be based on minutes used. packages that would apply to everyone who has signed up with Erlang, but it would be based on minutes used.

Oct '09

B. National Hotline. Benni F. gave a report stating that he is compiling as much information as possible about the National Hotline to see what changes, if any, are needed. The Hotline administrators will be contacted through the Trustee Website and also through the I.S.O. Bulletin and asked for the following information.

1. Copies of the last 3 months invoices.
2. Any problems you are having with the Hot Line.
3. Suggestions to improve the operation of the Hot Line.
4. Procedures you have to replace the administrator.

Jan '10

B. National Hotline. Benni F. reported that the I.S.O. received an email from a G.A. member complaining about anonymity issues by a G.A. member who answers the hotline in his area and threatened a lawsuit. Benni answered the letter stating, "This would not come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents but rather the Intergroup that sponsors the "GA Help Phone Line" in your own Area". After receiving this email and reviewing the situation, including that the International Service Office no longer has any financial obligation for the Hotline, the Board of Regents agreed that the oversight of the Hotline should be with the Board of Trustees or some place other than with the Board of Regents.

Above are 5 items I would like to get the answers to, and please I really don't want a one line answer, they have been around and unanswered for a long time. Just like May '09, C item, is a year old now and I know its not on the agenda for Louisville, when will it be?

Most importance to me, about someone on the Hotline giving up a member's

anonymity, to whom another member or someone from outside the program, and is that person still on the Hotline?

Joe B. - Area 6 C, North Carolina

The Trustee Line - An Example of Success Using Group Conscience

4/3/10 - 12:39 PM

The Trustee Line - An Example of Success Using Group Conscience Much to the dismay of some who read the Trustee Line and look to complain about its tone and temperament, it would appear that this is the right vehicle to 'help' get things done. If you look at the BOR agenda that was emailed to the Trustees on Friday, April 2, there is an old business item on the agenda entitled 'Revisit conference calls during BOR meetings.'

This issue was brought up previously, at the December 18, 2009 meeting. Here is what the minutes of that meeting reflect.

C. Communications at Board of Regents Meetings. A motion was made to open up the phone lines to all the Trustees during the Board of Regents meetings.

Motion seconded and failed

For...1 Against...6 Abstained...0

Benni F. was the sole vote in favor. However, any member of the Board of Trustees is welcome to attend any Board of Regents meeting in person.

First let me say how appreciative I am of Benni's minority position to vote in favor of the motion. Having said that, if every there was a reason to be disturbed about a complete lack of communications due to the BOR minutes that bring new meaning to the word 'abbreviated', this was one of them. 7 BOR members were present in that meeting. 6 if them voted against the motion. Where are the questions, discussions and opinions from everyone at the meeting? Why is using a conference call service a problem for anyone on the BOR, unless there is something about the BOR meetings that the members would not like to be shared with other members of the Fellowship? Yes, this sounds like a broken record on my part, but it is especially pertinent for the April BOR meeting this month.

I have a 3-point plan for this coming month's BOR meeting

1) - The Recording Secretary should make a specific point to record EXACTLY what each member's discussion points are about this.

2) - I would go even further and ask that the BOR Chair to poll all the BOR members for their opinions and reasons for their votes, even from those members who might not normally say anything and just vote.

3) - Ending this death-defying leap of faith by the BOR into the world of total transparency and accountability, should be a roll call vote to see exactly who votes how. I don't think the earth will stop rotating on its axis if these steps are taken for this item.

On a secondary note, I am also interested, as are other Trustees, as to whether or not the procedures I have outlined will once again be ignored in favor of the status quo, or will it be something more insidious like 'Who does he think he is to tell us what to do?' I know I have 'charmed' my way into favoritism with the BOR, but face it boys, you're on center stage now. The time for hiding is behind you. Step up and do the right thing - hard though it might be for some of the BOR members to change. Let me help you to look at this from a recovery standpoint. In fact, let's take the last paragraph of the 1st question on page 12 of the Combo Book.

'The most difficult and time-consuming problem with which they will be faced is that of bringing about a character change within themselves. Most Gamblers Anonymous member look upon this as their greatest challenge, which should be worked on immediately and continue throughout their lives.'

I have an item on the Louisville agenda (#29) which reads: All Board of Regents meetings will incorporate the use of a conference calling service to allow all interested GA members an opportunity to hear the meetings as they happen.

It would be nice to see the BOR respond to what the Trustee Line has been voicing, as far as opinions on this subject, in advance of the vote by the BOT on this subject in Louisville. Give me a reason to withdraw my item from the agenda. However, if the BOR votes once again to turn this down, then their next obstacle will be how to refuse doing something that will no doubt end up as a BOT decision. There is a groundswell of sentiment in favor of this conference calling and the vote on the floor could be very close to unanimous, if the BOR stubbornly defies the will of the Trustees in this month's BOR meeting.

The conference calling service I initially suggested to Benni would have no

impact on the meetings and how they are held. Any interested listeners would have to contact ISO to get the access code for that evening's meeting. The members of the BOR would not even know that anyone is listening, because none of those callers would be able to speak. They would be in a 'listen only' mode for the entire call, unless a decision was made to allow them to speak, which can be enabled at the push of a button either way.

Additionally, the service would be a no-cost situation to use, with the exception of the toll call for making a call from California to Iowa. If this is a hardship for any out of the area members of the BOR, I suggest they send in an expense item to be reimbursed. Let's see, a 90 minute call at \$0.05 per minute is \$4.50, that's of course providing that the callers don't already have unlimited calling plans for their phones. I think the ISO can afford \$4.50 per month for one caller or \$9.00 for 2.

When it is passed, I hope the BOR will utilize this service immediately, and not push the decision off to the next BOR board in July. By the way, maybe some of you reader of the Trustee Line could express your thoughts to help the BOR members make the right decision. It's all about the group conscience.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

Fellowship and Unity

4/13/10 - 7:31 PM

To Board of Trustee Members Dedicated to Recovery, Unity, Fellowship,

I am submitting this message hoping to change the tone we have seen on the trustee line over the last few months. I have no desire to cause or create any anger, controversy, or gotchas.

Anger is a destroyer of positive communication between GA members at the group level or GA service board members who express differences of opinions on any issue that affects the good and welfare of Gamblers Anonymous.

There is great value to all GA members when we honor the Spiritual Principles in deciding any issue that stirs our emotions by applying kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility which are freely presented to all GA members as a solution in bringing compromise to our differences of opinion.

The GA Combo Book says that adherence to those spiritual principles seem to solve our problems particularly when we suffer mental blank spots. When Spiritual Principles are applied to our individual differences of opinion how we best serve the Fellowship those Spiritual Principles will never fail. But, as human beings afflicted with a baffling, insidious, compulsive addiction we have in the past, in the present, and in the future possess the capacity to fail those Spiritual Principles. Those Spiritual Principles are essential for guidance, direction, and we should strive to avoid dishonoring what are basic foundations of our Fellowship.

I want to touch on a subject that has rarely been discussed at any level of GA communication and that deals with the first paragraph on page 12 of our Combo Book. Simply stated, it says "compulsive gambling is an emotional problem."

We need, and would be well-served, to have more understanding of how our emotional problems have the power to negatively impact recovery efforts of many newer members to the Fellowship and the ability at times to negatively impact the recovery efforts of longer term members.

Naming some of those negative emotions is not meant to disparage any other GA brothers or sisters but to bring awareness to all members of their existence...and how we can calm, correct, and modify their ability to disturb our peace of mind, serenity, and most vitally our ongoing recoveries.

The most serious negative emotion, which in the early days of many recoveries results in relapse (a return to evil ways) is Anger! Following closely in their ability to disturb recovery are; Fear... Frustration...Resentment...Hatred... Revenge...and Worry. They are as negative as the Seven Deadly Sins! Most important is our growing awareness that because we have entered Gamblers Anonymous for help that those emotional problems do not automatically disappear and our awareness as we battle for Recovery that many of those emotions were the fuel necessary to keep our gambling addiction alive. There is an old GA saying "we have met the enemy and the enemy is US!

The antidote to any emotional problems is the commitment to practicing on a daily basis to the best of our abilities the Twelve Steps of Recovery and Twelve

steps of Unity in all our affairs. To build a stronger foundation for recovery we faithfully attend as many meetings as possible and accept being guided by the key words to recovery, Honesty, Openmindedness, and Willingness. Why not build a stronger foundation by embracing kindness, generosity, honesty, humility in our daily affairs and while were building a stronger foundation add Love, Compassion, and Tolerance. These ideas are not alien to Unity, Fellowship, and Recovery. They are Fellowship.

The last phase of this message is about Fellowship and Unity. When Fellowship and Unity become our highest priority the Fellowship will be well-served. We as GA members will be well-served. Our individual groups will be well-served. Our families will be well-served. Our peace of mind and serenity will be well-served.

We as GA members in Unity should find the formula for easing confrontations, for not relying on personal opinions as the way to decide issues, for not advancing personal agendas that oppose Spiritual Principles, or animosity towards each other as we decide the issues as what decisions are best for our Unity, for carrying the message to those that still suffer, and for the good and welfare for the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous.

To not stand up for, not to believe in, not to honor, not yo defend the Spiritual Principles of Gamblers Anonymous means we might fall for anything that looks good, but might be the enemy of what is best.

These are just idle thoughts from the mind of a blessed, arrested compulsive gambler. I wish you all good health, continued recovery, continued good works in service tp our life-saving Fellowship.

Yours in Recovery, Fellowship, and Unity,

George W. past trustee area12, residing now in area 16.

What's Our Real Goal?

4/15/10 - 1:38 AM
Fellow Trustees,

On behalf of the International Relations Committee I am bringing to the Trustee Line the following discussion topic which we have debated thoroughly. There are a few countries out there that have their origins using AA literature not knowing at the time they began that Gamblers Anonymous even existed. Their cultures over a number of years have settled into using the AA traditions. Some use both sets of literature AA and GA in their quest to help the compulsive gambler find recovery. These differences are keeping Gamblers Anonymous from listing their meetings on the International Service Office website meeting directory. After much discussion the IRC is proposing that we list these meetings under country links on the Master directory of the website with the following disclaimer. This disclaimer would be to put the following statement at the top of each webpage.

[“The fellowship of “Gamblers Anonymous \(Countries Name\)” is its own separate organization which is not affiliated with the Gamblers Anonymous International Service Office. The meeting information listed on this website for “Gamblers Anonymous \(Countries Name\)” is intended to help the compulsive gambler worldwide who still suffers.](#)

We have come a long way from the very early days of Gamblers Anonymous. The progression of the fellowship to this point has produced many items in our G.A. Guidance Code that have left some of these countries on the outside of our International fellowship because they still use AA literature. We realize that some meetings differ because of other reasons such as endorsement of self-help centers etc. We are only addressing the countries that still use the AA literature in conjunction with GA literature in their meetings.

We are trying to meet these areas half way and co-exist. We all focus on helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers. What is wrong with “other” groups or organizations of people helping the compulsive gambler any way they want as long as they do not call themselves Gamblers Anonymous?

To quote our literature, [A New Beginning](#) page 1 and the inside cover of the [Gamblers Anonymous Group Handbook](#),

[“As time passes, we will need to continue to share our experiences, strengths, and hope with each other as we work toward making our fellowship more effective in carrying the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.](#)

New techniques need to be explored, old ones enlarged upon, or even abandoned. It will be the willingness to consider change that will keep our Fellowship growing with vigor and strength. Utilizing the principle of unlimited objectives and goals, we can be assured of continued progress.”

We on the IRC strive to unite the worldwide fellowship as much as we can. We recognize there are very sensitive areas such as these that exist and provide a lot of tension in some of our older long time Trustees vs. the newer Trustees who may or may not know about any of this.

What we are asking is for some opinions on our suggestion from this Board of Trustees. We are asking for suggestions in how we can proceed through this matter. Fresh ideas can only help give the IRC better direction of how this Board of Trustees feels on this matter.

In closing these are our brothers and sisters in recovery out there all over the world. We are all striving to help our fellow compulsive gamblers find recovery and a better way of life. If we remain rigid to a point, how can we ever achieve true international unity in our fellowship?

Again this is not an agenda item merely a topic we hope you will all take the time to think about. We fully realize that for this to ever come about there would have to be some Guidance Code changes. Not necessarily changes excepting the use of AA literature but recognizing that there are other organizations worldwide that are also helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

We sincerely hope you will all take some time to think this over and then comment. The time has come to realize this is an International Fellowship and taking that in mind move into the present time. With your help and Guidance we can.

Steve R. - Area 2B, Sacramento, California
Chairman, Gamblers Anonymous International Relations Committee

4/15/10 - 3:00 PM
Hi International Relations Committee,

I guess you would call me an "Older Long Time Trustee". I don't know if I'm called that due to the years I have been a Trustee or because I believe in our Guidance Code. We have made a lot of changes in our GC, some of which I believed were correct and also some I didn't. That however does not allow me as a Trustee not to see that it is followed.

This request has me thinking if we start to bend the rules for others countries, and place a Disclaimer, do we also start to place other groups such as Bettors Anonymous in the listing, and then maybe some more listings for meetings that chose to use other literature, like Stoneham, Mass., which was removed from the GA listing for not adhering to the Guidance Code and using non-GA literature.

Maybe allowing people to read outside media stuff in the meeting because they read a disclaimer first. Don't think it may not happen.

We have a Guidance Code, and I'm glad we do. It has and will help me from doing things my way. It has given me structure in my life.

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

4/19/10 - 5:56 PM
Steve,

I'm glad you have brought this entire issue up before Louisville, as there is never enough time to deal with controversial items in a Trustee meeting. Unfortunately, I am not going to posture myself as a supporter of what you have written. Part of what bothers me about the committee is how the mission statement has changed over the years and now stands for actions that are very different and has set up the background for this matter.

The original mission statement from Boston '06 was to facilitate communication with ISO, coordinate conferences, coordinate literature distribution and to maintain unity.

The first revision came in Kansas City '09 when it changed to being committed to assisting the ISO and the Chairman of the BOT in communicating with groups, meetings and compulsive gamblers worldwide as well as to assist the translation of our literature and setting up meetings if needed. We strive to promote unity in Gamblers Anonymous.

The most recent change came in Montreal '09 to what we have now. Assist the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous with International matters and help create a worldwide united GA Fellowship.

Along with that came commentary from the Committee Chair that the latter part of the statement was to give the IRC the latitude needed to not only help other countries joining our great fellowship but also to make suggestions to the BOT about ways to grow in a timely fashion.

The motion to change the mission statement was obviously approved, but the transition has evidently given the IRC an indication that adding more countries is a moral imperative, at any cost. To me, what you are covering in the content of your Trustee Line submission is a direct assault on our Guidance Code and the Steps. The basic premise I see is that the committee is willing to sidestep the fact that ANY outside literature is being used by these countries and that culturally or because of previous experience, they are unwilling to conform to the Guidance Code.

Let me point out some very significant decisions by the BOT. Item #1 - This one was done in Cleveland '79, Miami '81 and Orlando '88. Approval is given for the removal of the Stoneham, Massachusetts Group for not adhering to the Guidance Code pertaining to the use of non-G.A. literature.

Item 2 - This one was done in Orlando '88. Three (3) Groups that read A.A. literature at their meetings are suspended from G.A. They are: Stoneham, Methuen and Fall River, Massachusetts.

These groups are the basis for the formation of Bettors Anonymous.

GA is never going to be all things to all people. It is very clear that compulsive gamblers are being handled in many countries outside our sphere of influence. We should respect other programs and be content that if they want to deal with the compulsive gamblers in different ways than we do, then it is okay to just let it go. We should never force our ways on another country; however, if another country wants to join us, then they have to be in compliance with how we do things. It is their choice.

I am sensing that the IRC is treating this like the Spanish and Portuguese explorers of the 1400s. On each sailing of their ships, they claimed other countries as their own. We are not saddled with the purpose of being an international Fellowship. That is not what we are about and I am disturbed that such an urgency is in place with the IRC that it is content with compromising both the Guidance Code and the Steps in the pursuit of this goal.

This brings up a new problem that seems to have escaped many, including myself until just now. Why do we have links on the ISO website to countries that we know are not part of our Fellowship? Most directly, I am aware of the United Kingdom and Germany. No doubt there are others. Have we abandoned Unity Step 6? I would ask that everyone who is in favor of having disclaimers on the website, to actually read the Red Book under that Step. It will be more than apparent that such a decision would undermine the Fellowship. We can help the compulsive gambler, but doing so within our universe, not someone else's where AA and who knows what other literature is used.

I take exception to the appeal you make to the newer Trustees who might NOT know about any of this, versus the older long time Trustees, who obviously DO know about this, as per your statement. This sounds to me that those older Trustees who follow the Guidance Code should be ignored so that the thinking of the IRC will prevail with the newer Trustees. The Guidance Code is what it is and I am certainly not in favor of trying to divide the BOT in any manner, especially when the IRC is looking to use the GC as a road map to find a way around what we are about. I used to do that when I was gambling.

This is not about those who don't agree with the IRC being rigid. It's about not trying to be all things to all people and not modifying the core fundamentals for a new idea that has not been agreed upon by the Trustees in the manner that the IRC is currently looking to carry them out.

I think your summary of the situation should really be emphasized. "Recognizing that there are other organizations worldwide that are also helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers." That is what should be remembered in this effort. Other organizations are helping those people. We should not try to elbow in and take over that job and in the process, make accommodations that will only serve to tear away at the very fiber that holds us together.

It may just be the realization for your committee that it will better be able to do its job if it reverts back to the original mission statement: "To facilitate

communication with ISO, coordinate conferences, coordinate literature distribution and to maintain unity."

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

Agenda Item #113

4/16/10 - 11:51 AM

To my Fellow Trustee Larry D:

I am VERY concerned about your agenda item - to Change Unity Step 6 - to "include Gam-Anon." We are all well aware that this has to be another of those controversial issues we, as Trusted Servants, have to deal with. I have agonized over this for some time - ever since the subject matter came up for very heated discussions in Montreal.

My basic problem with your item is this: I joined Gamblers Anonymous in a strong attempt to stop gambling. At no time was my "intent" to support Gam-Anon. There was no one in my life who was a potential Gam-Anon member.

Our founding fathers created Step 6 (or adopted it from another program - I hear different rumors), which very clearly states, "*Gamblers Anonymous ought never endorse, finance, or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*" My personal interpretation of that step is that no one - and that includes Gam-Anon - should be endorsed by G.A. I think that was what they meant at that time. If they wanted to include Gam-Anon, I think that would have been included.

It was pointed out to me last night, that Step 10 continues to state, "*Gamblers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Gamblers Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*" Here again, I personally feel that the dealings, goals, and objectives of Gam-Anon are an outside issue. Yes, they exist to help the gambler - but to endorse them should not be a consideration.

ISO has added a "link" on their website to reach Gam-Anon. I have been told it was because they were tired of answering Gam-Anon questions. I don't know if this is correct or not; but I'm beginning to feel this may have set a difficult, if not dangerous, precedent. Other pieces of our literature also address Gam-Anon issues, and that too may have set a precedent.

Please do not misunderstand my feelings, nor my concern for Gam-Anon. Many, many of their members have done some wonderful things for G.A. members; many, many of them have helped friends, family members, and others who were trying to help gamblers. Many, many of them I consider friends and hope to be able to continue to call my friends. But I do not feel that this good will entitles them to inclusion in our program. They are an adjunct - just like Alanon.

Nowhere in our Combo Book is there one word about Gam-Anon. When we first enter the Gamblers Anonymous program, our desire is to stop gambling. The only require for membership is a desire to stop gambling.

I am anxious to hear and be a part of the outcome of this subject at our conference in Louisville. But I felt I had to share my concerns and why I have chosen not to support Agenda Item #113.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

Agenda Item #105

4/16/10 - 12:15 PM

To my fellow Trustee, David M:

I just wanted to go on the record that I fully support your agenda item - #105 - for a variety of reasons.

1. I have for a long time questioned why that decision was made, originally.
2. Having been to many conferences over the years - not as many as some others - while I have been aware of some Gam-Anon participation, i.e. workshops, literature sales, volunteers in the Hospitality Rooms - it never "appeared" to me that they had participated to the tune of 45%.
3. I am well aware that they need funding, but my question is, does that have to come from Gamblers Anonymous? Is it a requirement that we support them at the 45% level?

4. I have never known Gam-Anon to financially contribute 45% of the "seed" money to initiate a conference. Some areas may have a 45% ratio to help prepare a conference - but then the hosting committee and hosting intergroup was unable to receive any remuneration from a conference.

5. Since many G.A. members participate in the preparation of a conference for two years (and consider it giving back or being of service), it would certainly be a treat and a sign of thank you and good will to "reward" the hosting intergroup/committee. According to Unity Step 7, "We are self-supporting declining outside contributions," and yet our own conferences do not support our hosting committees.

6. It was and is my understanding that Gam-Anon steps are very similar to ours - and yet, as such, they appear to be able to receive "outside contributions" from Gamblers Anonymous. I don't believe Gamblers Anonymous would accept a donation or contribution from Gam-Anon, or would we?

These are some of my own personal feelings regarding this agenda item. I am attempting to collect other opinions, thoughts and suggestions from San Diego area Gamblers Anonymous members - since I represent the entire community, not just my own personal feelings. And I shall vote that way at the Louisville Trustee meeting - as my community wants - not as I want. So far, the comments I have received are enthusiastic regarding this agenda item.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,
Linda S. - Trustee Area 3A, San Diego
