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Trustee Line for April 2012

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 4/30/12.

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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Unity Step 4

4/1/12 - 12:01 AM
Unity Step 4

Each group should be self-governing except in matters affecting other groups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

I don't remember where I picked up the statement "Every group has the right to be wrong", but it has always remained with me. One benefit GA had when it was first formed was that a set of principles and steps had already been developed to adopt for the purpose of arresting our gambling problem. But those principles came about through a trial and error process where some pretty big mistakes were made.

Can you imagine a GA center where there are three floors: the first is a social club for GA members, the second a hospital and financial counseling center and the third an educational institution for GA members. All run by GA members. Something similar was attempted in another fellowship; unity was lost, and the center failed completely. The members learned from their mistakes and moved on. But no one told them they couldn't try, it was just pointed out that such efforts had failed in the past.

So how do we determine what affects other groups or GA as a whole? Does one group that is using a meditation book that is not GA approved affect GA as a whole or other groups? Or a group that has an open or speaker format, does that impact others? I see attempts to enforce the Guidance Code on groups doing things like this, even efforts to remove them from the "approved" meeting directory.

At a Trustee, I am more concerned as to why these groups feel the need to use outside literature or doing things that go against the Guidance Code. I ask myself a few questions: What is the motivation? Is the Guidance Code in conflict with any of the Unity Steps? Are their actions REALLY harming other groups or GA as a whole? Is it one person who forced the change or true group conscious that made the change? In the end, I may go make some suggestions to the group, but time will provide the best teaching.

My concern is that we push people and groups away by enforcing too many rules beyond the core values in the Steps. My experience is that groups following the Recovery and Unity Steps to the best of their ability seem to survive and grow and those who violate those principles have no unity and struggle to survive. What are your experiences?

Paul S. - Area 17, Trustee, Connecticut

Revisiting the Trustee Removal Procedures

4/1/12 - 12:01 AM

Last October, at the BOT meeting in L.A., the trustees voted on new Trustee Removal Procedures pertaining to the removal of a sitting trustee. As you know, the new procedures were passed as appropriate GA literature. In addition, a change to the related section of the GA Guidance Code (adding in the phrase “per the Trustee Removal Procedures”) was also approved, by a vote of 98- 6.

Because any change to the Guidance Code requires two separate votes at two consecutive Board of Trustees meetings, the question of adding the phrase “per the Trustee Removal Procedures” will come up again for a vote in Boston (Agenda Item #18).

I'm hopeful that the necessary second vote will succeed without controversy or delay, given the overwhelming favorable vote in October for this modification, and bearing in mind why the new Trustee Removal Procedures were adopted. They were formulated and approved in order to have in place a clear, unambiguous step-by-step process for the (hopefully rare) event that a trustee might need to be removed from service. In the past, in the absence of such procedures, some confusion arose when a crisis involving a sitting trustee did occur.

Prior to the Boston BOT meeting, I encourage the trustees to review the new Trustee Removal Procedures in order to reacquaint themselves with the newly adopted protocols and be reassured that they are simple, practical and necessary.

I trust that the vote to ratify the change to the Guidance Code, establishing the new procedures as effective, will proceed swiftly and virtually unopposed as it did in October.

Ed E. - Area 2 Past Trustee, Northern California
