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Trustee Line for May 2011

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Thoughts From The Trustees - Current and Past

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

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A Moment to Look Inward Before Cherry Hill

5/1/11 – 12:01 AM

Can I get everyone who intends on being at the Cherry Hill Trustee meeting this week to focus for a few minutes?

Without question, this Cherry Hill agenda is bursting at the seams with items that are going to invoke high levels of passion, as we deal with very sensitive areas. Passion holds a very transitory position with people who employ it in their arguments to further their points and win the influence of those who are in attendance who can vote on the item(s) in question. Of the numerous items, the most persistent is this obsessive need by some to either continue our already problematic relationship with Gam-Anon or to change our Unity Steps so that we don't continue to violate them.

Just so there is no doubt about my personal stance regarding Gam-Anon, let me say that I have no problem with Gam-Anon existing as a Fellowship. I have no problem cooperating with Gam-Anon. But I do have a problem with affiliating with Gam-Anon, and our Fellowship does far worse than affiliating with Gam-Anon.

The problem is what has happened as a result of me being vocal about this position. Here are some of the characterizations that I have heard from Gam-Anon supporters in the GA Fellowship and from Gam-Anon members themselves:

- I am a Gam-Anon hater
- I am looking to put Gam-Anon out of business
- I am doing everything I can to destroy all the good Gam-Anon has done for GA
- The list goes on...

It is clear that I maintain that when we begin tackle the Gam-Anon issue, that those who don't want to modify our Unity Steps to accommodate Gam-Anon will be putting forth their points in the form of facts and principles. Unfortunately, those GA members who are Gam-Anon sympathizers will resort to guilt, emotions, diluted attempts to reword the intentions of the Unity Steps, examples of what we are doing now, and some other ploys to win the favor of the Trustees. Hopefully, the voting Trustees will see this issue clearly and maintain the integrity of the Unity Steps versus succumbing to what will no doubt be a lot of angry people at the microphone.

This is what I would like all of us in Cherry Hill to deal with. The very controversy that has arisen as a result of, as I said earlier, this obsessive small group of Gam-Anon devotees, goes directly against what we are about. GA 'does not wish to engage in any controversy'. Controversy of this magnitude is going to make the entire discussion about Gam-Anon a very sordid affair. If the people who are behind this attempt to change our Unity Steps to include Gam-Anon lose, I fear that the disappointment and bitterness from such a defeat will bring about a cloud of discontent in the Trustee room, which will turn into punitive actions, regarding items that are brought to the floor by those who voiced opinions AGAINST passing these Gam-Anon changes.

Let me be very clear about this. What I am saying is that 'should' the Gam-Anon issues, to more deeply incorporate them into our Fellowship, all be defeated, we must be aware that there will be those Trustees who will carry a big chip on their shoulders and retaliate by voting against any items that come from members who have different opinions on the issues.

To those people, in advance, go outside and take a deep breath, collect your thoughts and remember you are in a Fellowship where principles come before personalities. Each of you are a Trustee representing your area and the members who elected you. You are there to exercise H. O. W. The Trustees are exercising Group Conscience for the 2 days of the Trustee meeting. If your position is in the minority, your item will not pass – period, the end. Don't let it destroy your objectivity.

This agenda is too important to start voting against the people you suddenly dislike because they didn't support your impassioned stance on Gam-Anon or the other important issue(s) that will come up to possibly divide the Trustees. When the individual items hit the floor, jump in with both feet. When it is decided, let it go and move on. The Fellowship needs all of the Trustees to be clear thinking. The words Trusted Servant embody the confidence of those who elected you to protect the Fellowship. They have put GA in your safekeeping. Do your area proud.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/4/11 - 10:00 AM
David,

Thank you for calling to mind that we have the tendency to put "Personalities before Principles". It is so true when it comes to any Gam Anon issues. In my opinion, we as trusted servants are nothing more than a bunch of political Lobbyists when it comes to debating any agenda item and trying to "win votes". We all need to remember that these agenda items often come from members in this program whose lives were saved! We need to treat them all with respect! I feel as if sometimes we as trustees "slide" over some very important items, because we spend too much "extending time" on other issues that have been debated over and over again, meeting after meeting. We have a wonderful life saving program and we need to do what is best for GA. Gam-anon has a wonderful life saving program and THEY need to do what is best for their program.

I also see a head on collision coming when we get to the issues of the Hot Line!!! What about the item that wants to limit the number of committees that a Trustee can serve on?

I hope every one has read the agenda and studied it with heart! We have decisions to make on good items and not so good items! Whatever we do has to be good for the welfare of GA as a whole.

Let's please remember it is :PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES!!!!!!!

See you in Cherry Hill

Debbie W. - Trustee Area 2C, Montana

A Personal Note From Kathy H. - Area 8

5/9/11 – 10:42 AM

I would like to thank everyone who attended the close session of the Board of Trustees on Thursday. I want to thank each of you for all the support you showed me through your vote, and also the all the love and support you showed me after the vote was taken.

Thank you Denis for your patience.

Kathy H. - Area 8

A Moment to Look Back After Cherry Hill

5/9/11 – 11:45 AM

Heartfelt thanks to all my fellow members on the Board of Trustees for the effort and persistence put forth to finish our Agenda. In retrospect, a few less "Points of Order" and "Points of Information" may have hastened our progress in completing our objectives. Decisions were made, and arrived at without the heated discussion, and passion which may have occurred. We should all be proud in reporting back to our areas on a job well done. This was a truly wonderful Conference that will be remembered for all that was accomplished thanks to a hardworking and organized Conference Committee.

With respect and thanks to all,
Bob W. - Area 12, New Jersey

5/18/11 - 4:00 PM

Thanks to everyone on the Committee for a wonderful conference with unparalleled hospitality. You created a great environment—kudos!

Sadly, my feelings about the BOT meeting are not nearly as warm. Here are a few thoughts that have arisen as I've worked to process what went on at the meeting:

An excessive amount of time was wasted at this BOT meeting. Contributing to this were excessive uses of Points of Information and Points of Order. Perhaps a mandatory session on Robert's Rule of Order is necessary prior to each BOT meeting.

Over the last few years, I've been greatly heartened by the fact that grandstanding and microphone-hogging has greatly abated since I first started to serve my area as a trustee. The last two BOT meetings, however, have seen an increase of these behaviors and, in my opinion, it reflects poorly on our fellowship. I find it frustrating to listen to my brothers and sisters, who are supposed to representing the views and opinions of their area, stand at the microphone and muse about the agenda item at hand. We should arrive at the conference conversant with the agenda items. The time for mulling the point should be the weeks prior to the meeting.

Karen and I have been complimented on the fact that we are sincere about representing our Area and have done our homework in terms of communicating with our Area brothers and sisters about the agenda. I don't think this should be unusual. In the course of discussing the agenda with groups and individuals in our Area, we become very familiar with the items and also discover questions about the items prior to the conference. This is part of the responsibility of representing our Area.

One item that was very close to the hearts of many in our Area was the inclusion of the AA Promises in the new Blue Book. I was appalled by the number of my brother and sister trustees who:

- a) were not familiar with the Promises, wasting a good amount of time trying to figure out what they were—even going so far as to have them read aloud!
- b) had not bothered to read the Blue Book report, which clearly outlined the steps taken to contact AA and AA's response.

The discussion devolved into a rehash of information that was clearly available and accessible prior to the meeting. This is what happens when Trustees come to the meeting unprepared—a waste of time. As I stated above: appalling. What

do I report to my Area? That this item, so important to so many of you, wasn't important enough to the body of the BOT to do a little homework prior to the meeting?

This is just one example of the trustees' approach to many, many agenda items.

While there are always items on an agenda that I might disagree with or think unnecessary, I still ask opinions of those in my Area and then do some research, so that I can reasonably discuss the issue.

Seeing the long list of speakers on any item having to stand and wait while a brother or sister waxed eloquent (?) for more than a minute—or two—or three—at the microphone was demoralizing. We would all do well to practice a little more succinctness. It is only good manners to make one's point and then yield the floor to others wishing to be heard.

I found this BOT meeting very disheartening. I'm not certain that we did much to help our still-suffering brothers and sisters, nor to further the recovery of those in our fellowship.

Your Sister in Recovery,
Jeannie B. - Area 8A, Minnesota

Congratulations to Cherry Hill

5/9/11 – 8:24 PM

To my fellow Trustees and Friends:

Hearty congratulations to Andy R and the overall Cherry Hill Conference Committee for a fabulous conference. From soup to nuts (and we had them all), I enjoyed every minute. Thanks for making my stay and participation so enjoyable. I'm sorry we had to miss Friday night's entertainment, but as someone said, 'we had a job to do,' and we did it. My only regret - it had to end. I wanted to stay and talk with everyone - but there just wasn't enough time.

Again - hats off to all - great job

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

5/15/11 - 8:54 PM

I would like to thank the Cherry Hill Conference Committee for the 2011 Spring International Conference.

I appreciate all the effort from all the volunteers who worked hard to make it a success, thank you for your warm hospitality and all the details carefully selected to make it a unique and unforgettable experience.

To all my brothers and sisters, thank you for the opportunity to share with you, I am very grateful to have sought help through Gamblers Anonymous and be part of this great international family.

Special thanks for Andy and Marcela R. love you both.

With love and respect,

Martha G. - Trustee Area 28, Mexico

5/18/11 - 12:08

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to take a moment to thank the Cherry Hill Conference Committee for a job well done. Each and every person I had contact with from that committee was working hard to make it the great conference that I feel it was. Good workshops, good food and good company is all we can ask for.

As for the Trustee meeting it was unfortunate that the agenda was so long and the trustees had to return after dinner on Friday but it did remind me the purpose of being a trustee is to do the work of the fellowship and the fun things come after the work is done.

Lastly I would hope all the trustees will take a moment and reflect on what can be done to allow the meeting to move ahead without so much distraction. Points of information, points of order and challenges are all necessary but should be done in the proper context. Until you have been in the position of chairing one of those meetings you will never understand what it is like to have

people constantly yelling things up at you.

With that being said I know some might not like my sense of humor but I can assure you if the trustees were made to make a donation for their points of whatever and for their discussions the meeting would be done much quicker. Okay I know that is not going to be a reality but maybe if you thought before you jumped you might decide not to say anything. I applaud the people who when they are called upon say, "Already been said" and I cringe when someone says, "Well it has been said but..."

I have to remember that with this disease brings many people who have differing opinions but I have always felt people basically are trying to do what is best for the fellowship.

Last issue is the trustee line. I also feel that the trustee line is not a place for one or two people to comment on everything another person says. Everyone is entitled to their opinion as right or wrong as it might be. I have however found a way that works for me. I scroll down see who wrote the response, look at the length and then move on to an item that interests me more.

Many thanks again to each of you who chose to be of service to this fellowship. Who are giving back with your time and your money. I often wonder how many people would be at the trustee meetings if they were not funded. I hope all of you because what this program has given me is far more than the money it costs to go to the trustee meetings and conferences.

My best to you all.

Tom M. - Area 2, Northern California
Past Trustee, Past Chair of the BOT and BOR

Wish List for Los Angeles

5/9/11 – 8:46 PM

Although Cherry Hill ended up being the longest Trustee meeting in our 44 years of Trustee meetings, I think there is a lot that we should have learned about how the meetings are run. There needs to be a re-examination of what we have in the Rules and Procedures, before we start instinctively putting items on the next agenda. Here are some items that we are not paying attention to that are already in our Rules and Procedures:

- Challenges must receive a second.
- No person may speak more than once on the challenge
- The chair will accept alternating opinions to be heard starting with those in favor of the item. If a motion is on the floor and only one opinion is available for that item, the chair will only hear a maximum of 5 qualified speakers before calling for the vote. Items without a motion do not need alternating opinions and will run the full allotted time or until there are no further speakers.
- All qualified members who wish to speak on an item must do so before anyone can speak again on the same item.
- A person may speak on an item for a second time only after everyone who has not spoken once has spoken.
- A person may speak a maximum of 2 times on an item.
- Procedural issues such as the full process of amendments and roll call votes, points of information, points of order, and challenges, will not count toward the 15 minute limit on agenda items.
- Any agenda item that requires an interpreter shall be allotted 25 minutes per item.
- Any proposed amendment to a motion will be granted up to 10 minutes extra time for subsequent discussion.
- A Trustee must have the floor to make a motion to table and it is not subject to discussion or an amendment. A motion to table requires a second and a two-thirds majority vote to pass, which automatically places the item on the agenda for the next Trustee meeting and will be the first order of business before any new business items are heard. A motion to table has no priority.
- The person calling for the point of information can only ask the question to the Chair and does not constitute being in control of the floor, nor does it allow for information to be given or to present debate.
- The order of business and parliamentary procedures of all GA Trustee meetings, unless otherwise prescribed by the Guidance Code or the decisions of the Board of Trustees, shall be governed by Roberts Rules.

I understand that there are a lot of Trustees who are irritated at how bogged down we got during this past Trustee meeting. If we had followed the existing Rules and Procedures that I outlined above, the meeting would have been less

...and... meetings... are meeting... have been...
tiring and more productive.

No doubt there will be an overabundance of agenda items in the Rules and Procedures section of the Los Angeles agenda. I hope that everyone will re-evaluate everything regarding how we can tighten up controls on how the meetings are run, without restricting the ability of the Trustees to function in an environment that will be positive to cultivating the creativeness that exists among its members.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

Is This The Message We Want To Carry?
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5/12/11 – 1:37 PM

Much that I would like to think that I have a handle on my recovery after 22+ years, I came face to face with the cold reality of question 18 in Cherry Hill. “Do arguments, frustrations or disappointment create within you an urge to gamble?” No, I did not see one of our brothers or sisters go back to the bet, but I did see an AA member go back to the drink. It was something frightening to witness and rocked me to the core. It was also a stark reminder about how fragile our recoveries are, even though we all think we have a handle on our recoveries, as I said in my opening sentence.

Unity Step 1 clearly is essential in the program. “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon group unity.” We all need to support one another and provide an environment that allows each one of us to use the strength of others when we begin to weaken at any time. Each of us is always vulnerable to more weaknesses other than question 18. Being ever vigilant is essential to staying ahead of all the thing that might bring us back to the bet. Sharing our experience, strength and hope also creates the foundation for this support. These are the ties that bind us together.

Having said that, can anyone tell me what purpose is served by coming to a Trustee meeting and GA conference wearing clothing from professional sports teams? This has always been a source of irritation for me at the total insensitivity of such people to the rest of our brothers and sisters who might be struggling with their abstinence. And please don't even start with the “I have been a fan of that sports team since I was a kid” routine. Well I've been a fan of the casinos since I first got into one. I wouldn't even think if wearing a shirt with a pair of dice on it, or one from a casino.

To those who wear this kind of clothing, I just want to know why you would put this kind of pressure on those who destroyed their lives over sports betting? With so many forms of gambling that exist today, why must those people who insist on wearing clothing suggestive of gambling venues, teams or individuals that might trigger one of our brothers and sisters into going back to the bet? For as long as I can remember, there is always one member at the Fall conferences who insists on letting everyone know who is winning, if the World Series is being played during the Trustee meeting. How inappropriate. I know that we can't escape all the promotion of sporting events, but can we at least have a gambling free environment in our rooms and conferences?

This sports clothing situation is a problem that is rampant in all our rooms and people who continue to wear such clothing in GA meeting or events are being completely insensitive to the others in the meetings who might be 'white-knuckling' their recoveries. We don't come into this program and suddenly get cured. It is a day at a time, or even an hour at a time for some. Why can't we all support our brothers and sisters instead of sticking additional stimuli in their faces about gambling situations? How many times have we heard advice in the rooms given to lottery players to buy their coffee and donuts where they don't have lottery ticket machines? We try to help those who struggle with that form of gambling with that advice so they don't get tempted or reminded of their primary addiction. The message is to take away the reminders that subtly wear some of us down to the point where we can have a relapse.

If that is the advice, then why would we have members reinforcing the professional (or even college) sports teams right in our rooms? The hypocrisy of this is staggering. In my home room, we have this phrase written into our opening announcements:

Please be respectful of other members by not wearing clothing suggestive of gambling events, places in which gambling takes place, teams or individuals that might be the subject of gambling. Maybe we should be doing something like that in all our rooms.

It's time for our sports fanatics to think less about themselves and more about others and the message we send to them. Save your devotion for your sports teams and sports people for times other than the 1 1/2 hours you spend in a

teams and sports people for times shorter than the 1.5-2 hours you spend in a GA room. While you are at it, re-read the last sentence of the 2nd paragraph of page 2 in the Combo Book: "Our primary purpose is to stop gambling and to help other compulsive gamblers do the same." Add Unity Step 5: "GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS HAS BUT ONE PRIMARY PURPOSE - TO CARRY ITS MESSAGE TO THE COMPULSIVE GAMBLER WHO STILL SUFFERS." Grab the Red Book and re-read the last sentence of the 1st paragraph: **"It should be noted that the suffering compulsive gambler can be sitting next to you at your meeting as well as those who have never heard of Gamblers Anonymous."**

So why don't we all use our heads for something more important than a place to wear a hat from a sporting venue. Let's refocus and not be so anxious to take our will back, in defiance of Recovery Step 3.

I would like to have some responses, even if you agree.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/12/11 - 2:17 PM

While sports was not my gamble of choice, I can totally relate to how sporting paraphernalia, information, scores, lines, etc. could cause anxiety/triggers/discomfort for people within the fellowship. I'm a firm believer in group conscience - every year in Toronto (and the rest of Canada) a large coffee chain has a promotion whereby every coffee cup purchased has a chance at winning (coffee-cup version of a scratch ticket in my opinion) - invariably, I'm contacted by members inquiring about whether or not members should be allowed to have such cups in the rooms, and whether or not they should be allowed to roll-up-the-rim in the rooms. My response is that each room is free to come up with whatever rules they wish to enforce within their rooms, based on the group conscience of the membership of the group - no different then asking members to shut off or silence their cell phones at the beginning of the meeting.

I don't judge those who choose to wear clothing from a sports team in a GA room or a BOT meeting - as I wasn't a sports gambler, I don't intuitively know that this could cause anxiety for others - it's not something that crosses my mind. I own such shirts, and sometimes wear them around the house (I don't wear them to meetings, but that's simply a fashion decision and not anything to do with GA).

In a perfect world, we would all be aware of what might potentially trigger others, and would refrain from such things - I know my world is far from perfect, and never will be. That said, perhaps it makes sense to put an agenda item in for Los Angeles to suggest a rule that would prohibit such clothing from the BOT meetings (and perhaps the entire conference). This way we can get the group conscience and move forward together, no matter what the outcome.

Richard F. - Area 4, Toronto

5/13/11 - 2:25 PM

A few years ago when I was new to the program I approached my sponsor about some crazy thoughts that I was having and the confusion these thoughts created in my mind. The last thing that he said to me was "As a compulsive gambler I could justify anything to get the results that I was looking for."

A piece of clothing with a team logo can only be a trigger for me if I choose to let it. If I am feeling an urge to gamble or disrespected I cannot place the blame for these emotions on one of my brothers or sisters in the program, I must take this on myself. It is my responsibility not anyone else's.

Does my Mickey Mouse shirt create anxiety for the person who has a fear of rodents, how about the designer blouse for a shopaholic and heaven forbid my favorite t-shirt with my alma mater to the person, degreeless, laden with failure?????????

I must say David, you almost had me. I found myself starting to feel bad for wearing my Oregon Ducks shirt at the conference. If there was anyone at the conference suffering from the style that I chose to wear I can only hope they will look into the mirror, use the program and take the steps needed to find peace.

Debb W. - Past Trustee Area 2-G

5/14/11 - 10:34 AM

Hi, to Richard F, Area 4, just to let you know, we did have a Group Conscience Vote on this issue in New Orleans, 2004, I have copied it from the

minutes of that Trustee Meeting, see below:

New Orleans, 2004

53. Is the wearing of any sports-related clothing appropriate at a G.A. meeting, Intergroup or a G.A. Conference?

Bob O. – Area 8

A straw vote was taken and it is the consensus of this Board that wearing sports-related clothing is appropriate at a G.A. meeting, Intergroup or a G.A. Conference.

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

5/15/11 - 7:57 AM

In all the discussion on this subject, I have only heard from people "carrying the torch" for those who may be tempted to bet because someone is wearing a team logo on their clothes. Is there anyone out there who went out and bet because they saw a shirt or hat with a sport team logo on it at a GA meeting or function? Please, I want to hear YOUR experience. How many of you are there? Was it really the shirt or hat that caused you to bet? Or was it the lack of meetings, not getting a sponsor, or not working the steps? Please be honest. For me, if someone came up and said my shirt or hat was making them uncomfortable I would remove it immediately. It has just never happened.

One of early sponsors told me, "The worst meeting in the world won't cause someone to bet who has surrendered to their disease, and the best meeting will not keep someone from betting if they still have a reservation."

Respectfully submitted,

Paul S. - Area 17 Trustee, Connecticut

5/15/11 - 12:03 PM

Thanks Joe B. for reminding us of the straw vote taken in New Orleans in 2004. In addition, although the consensus was that wearing sports-related clothing was appropriate, it was also stated that apparel from casinos and racetracks or those showing gambling paraphernalia was not appropriate, and I have never had a problem when asking members to not wear such apparel when coming to any kind of GA meeting. They understand, and do not wear the apparel to meetings again. In my experience this is something that should be handled as the need arises, rather than becoming something that has to be mentioned at every meeting as part of a meeting format.

Bob W. - Area 12, New Jersey

5/15/11 - 3:19 PM

I was saddened to see Trustees wearing Sports Apparel at a Trustee Conference. I was not a sports better and I do not own sports apparel but I am a compulsive gambler. In Cherry Hill, I was sitting in a room with over 100 compulsive gamblers in recovery, many who bet on sporting events. Why is it necessary for me or anybody to wear sports apparel at a Trustee Conference?

In Area 14, group conscience seems to be no sports apparel in the rooms. Although its not written, we just all follow this unofficially. We do this out of respect for the person who gambled on sports. In my humble opinion, I also believe we do this out of respect for our disease as well.

Our disease is so insidious, it comes dressed in "fun and games". Well, I speak for myself on where those "fun and games" took me and it wasnt pretty.

In closing, you will not see me wear sports apparel at a Gamblers Anonymous Trustee Conference.

Tom Z. - Area 14, Long Island, NY

Retention Committee Seeks Input
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5/13/11 – 12:15 PM

Please review the mission statement of this committee at our BOT website opening page. Input is sought to help address the problem of retention throughout our fellowship. Please contact members of this committee listed below and/or submit helpful suggestions at this Trustee Line. Your cooperation and participation at the Intergroup and meeting room level will ensure success by our committee.

[Link to the Member Retention Committee page](#)

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.
Vinny B. - Area 12, New Jersey
Retention Committee Chair

5/20/11 - 6:20 PM
Retention, Recovery, Relapse.

RETENTION

1-The definition of Retention: Retaining or being retained

2-The definition of Recovery: Recuperation, Revival, Restoration, Redemption

This posting is in response to the chairman of the Retention Committee request for ways to improve the retention of our fellow members. This would include new members attempting to navigate the first 90 days of their recovery effort and members beyond 90 days and members with many years of abstinence. The issue of retention requires better understanding of the illness we call compulsive gambling and the indisputable reality that the illness can be arrested— not cured. No GA member, past or present, is immune from the possibility of turning away from the Program which eventually leads to a relapse. (The illness never sleeps.) This can occur when a member becomes complacent, is not practicing the Steps of Recovery and Unity in their daily affairs to the best of their abilities, misses meetings and justifies that lax attitude toward recovery with excuses and alibis, and then begins questioning the importance of making meetings as regularly as they once attended in the past. This complacency is insidious and starts with a type of stinking thinking for missing meetings such as “I’m tired tonight, ”or “I haven’t gambled for many weeks, months, years,” or “The meetings are boring hearing the same old stories,” or the killer of all stinking thinking, “Maybe I’m not a compulsive gambler.” That type of insidious thinking is a bright red light warning signal and should not be ignored but exposed and spoken about with a sponsor and shared with the group the member attends. Never ignore the machinations of the illness we all possess which only seeks to lessen our resolve for recovery and patiently awaits our return to the devastation it desires for our lives and everyone close to us. The battle for recovery requires courage and a continued desire for recovery “One Day at a Time.”

A startling analysis done by AA, The father of all 12 Step Recovery Programs was that 50% of all those who try AA leave the program within 90 days which they describe as cause for ‘concern.’ Their own data shows that finding is actually optimistic. In the 12- year period shown, 19% remain after 30 days, 10% remain after 90 days, and 5% remain after a year. The retention rate of AA is 5% after one year. To my knowledge GA has never gathered information on these statistics relating to retention. A number that has seemed to be realistic and talked about by members over many years is that retention over any period of involvement- and that includes weeks, months, and years- the percentage loss of members is between 85 to 90%. These numbers are an indication of the power the illness of compulsive gambling possesses and more importantly the reality that recovery cannot be mandated, enforced, or accomplished by rule or regulation.

I personally attribute the problem of retention to the emotional problems (Our program literature states that compulsive gambling is an emotional problem, not a financial problem.) of anger, fear, frustration, resentment, self-pity, super ego, greed, hatred, and worry. Left unattended, not modified, not looked at for correction, or thinking that emotional problems are unimportant to the process of recovery can lead many members to abandon the GA Program by following their feelings rather than following the principles of the Program. Ignoring emotional problems could be the root reason for the lack of retention and eventful relapse to the insanity of active compulsive gambling. Relapse is defined as “backsliding” or “a return to evil ways.”

RECOVERY AND RETENTION

Recovery is the discovery of a new way of thinking and living. Recovery is the choice GA freely offers to all compulsive gamblers who enter the program for help. Recovery begins by admittance and acceptance that we are compulsive gamblers. Recovery begins with the desire to stop gambling. Recovery progresses “One day at a time” with diligent effort in faithfully attending meetings, and making the effort to practice to the best of our ability the 12 Steps of Recovery and the 12 Steps of Unity in our daily affairs. Recovery is surrender to the GA way of life as we strive with diligent effort to abandon alibis, excuses, evasions, rationalizations, and unwillingness to not surrender. Recovery is simple—compulsive gamblers are complicated. The insane strength we used to destroy our lives by gambling can become the type of principled strength we need to rebuild and restore our lives. This means parting way with old ideas, false dreams, wild fantasies of gambling being the answer to our problems. The reality is GAMBLING IS NOT THE ANSWER. GAMBLING IS

problems. The reality is, GAMBLING IS NOT THE ANSWER-GAMBLING IS THE PROBLEM! Recovery progresses as we embrace the GA Spiritual Principles of kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility. GA literature assures us that adherence to these Spiritual Principles seem to solve our problems.

This life-saving Program of Recovery which always works when members work the Program is evidence those members experiencing retention are working the program. Recovery is not a sprint. Recovery is a marathon. To make it simple this marathon only lasts for 24 hours as we honor the GA philosophy of working the program "One Day at a Time."

A Spiritual Awakening is not a mandatory requirement for any GA member to build a recovery, but when a GA member experiences freedom from gambling and rediscovers the beauty in life, is not blind to the goodness of life, we are blessed to regain our eyesight and can build a new attitude of gratitude, appreciation, and love for this new found freedom from gambling. These new values GA freely gifts to all GA members may be seen as the birth of a Spiritual Awakening.

Building a strong foundation for recovery and building daily sound progress for recovery encourages retention and requires the most basic principles be honored within every GA recovery group. First, to understand from our own experience the reality that new members come to Gamblers Anonymous fearful of stopping gambling, confused, bitter, with many problems caused by gambling, not knowing which end is up or which way is up, and as very sick people. A major early problem is denial of the gambling problem itself and the ability they possess to wear many masks and disguises. Our mission as new members come to Gamblers Anonymous should be to put them at ease and assure them they have come to the right place for help and hopefully they will come to identify that they are compulsive gamblers and veteran members have a responsibility to share our experience, strength, and hope with them. The GA philosophy that the new and newer members are the most important people in the meeting has to be given more than "lip service" or "talking the talk." The sharing and caring we express for these new members is where we "WALK THE TALK!"

Retention is accomplished for new members as well longer- term members with honest, sincere, principled communication and the following suggestions:

- (1) We, new or old members are all equal in our quest for recovery.
- (2) New member's should be embraced as important to the mission of every GA Group.
- (3) Each new member should be encouraged in their critical first 90 days of attendance to make as many other area recovery meetings as possible.
- (4) We encourage a new member to use the telephone list to call other members even when there are no immediate problems and to consider the telephone call as a meeting between meetings.
- (5) Provide a short- term sponsor for a new member who can assist them and calm their early doubts and fears and a sponsor willing and capable of escorting them to additional recovery meetings,
- (6) Avail new members of all available GA literature to maintain the desire to not gamble- most importantly the GA Combo Book, Towards 90 days, the GA blue book "Sharing Recovery with Gamblers Anonymous, the "In the Beginning" Red Book, and The Daily Reflections Book, "One Day at a Time. "
- (7)After a suitable period of time, encourage the new member to have a pressure group meeting to relieve and stabilize their financial affairs and ease their emotional anxieties.
- (8) Suggest the new member get involved in the Program and be of service.
- (9) Never give up on recovery. Fight for recovery as if your life depends upon it. IT DOES!

It is my opinion that when a new GA member or long-term GA member practices the GA spiritual principles of kindness, generosity, honesty, humility, openmindedness, and willingness to address whatever life issues they face on a daily basis, they not only rebuild self-respect, self- confidence, and self-esteem, but in concert with those vital new discoveries of self-worth will continue to build an ongoing stronger foundation for recovery and retention.

RELAPSE

Some members view their relapse as part of their process of recovery. For those who have suffered a relapse and hopefully have returned to the program

for a new beginning, a new start, I say God Bless us all for the courage it takes to fight this baffling, insidious, compulsive addiction.

Yours in Recovery, Unity, and a Spiritual Awakening to life, freedom, and sanity.

George W. – Area 16, Upstate New York
Past trustee, Area 12.

Frequent Flyer Miles/Points - An Item For Intergroup Awareness

5/13/11 – 12:15 PM
Hello All

First I would like to express my heartfelt THANKS to all the members of the Cherry Hill Committee for putting on a terrific conference. I know of the hard work and the many hours and the dedication it takes to put on a National Conference and you ought to be proud of the Conference you provided us.

As I prepare my Trustee Report for my inter-group I think I owe it to them to report on the agenda item that was added, dealing with the issue of airline miles or points. Area 6 does not have any guidelines to deal with this issue and I think every inter-group needs to address it in advance so the matter does not come before the Board again. I will not discuss the individual item or outcome to my inter-group, just the concept that needs to be addressed. I will also not let my opinion on the outcome interfere with the group conscience on how the inter group wants to go forward in making its guidelines on this issue. But I certainly think each and every inter group that funds Trustees ought to be aware of the item.

I also think we as Trustees should continue to find ways to get though our agenda with more efficiency. I do not have the answers, but ALL ideas should be welcome and discussed on the Trustee Line or maybe on a committee basis to deal with amendments, committee reports, future elections, excessive points of order, and excessive points of information, so we can continue to do the work of Gamblers Anonymous, in a more efficient manner. Speed is Not the issue here in my opinion just efficiency and order.

Well that's enough out of me for now.

Peace and serenity to all,
Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

5/14/11 - 3:45 PM
Richie,

Thank you for 'breaking the seal' on the issue of redemption of credit card and frequent flyer miles and payments to the person submitting reimbursement for those miles. I will take a moment to voice my displeasure at the decision of the Board of Trustees in Cherry Hill to handle the agenda item to remove a member as a Trustee for acts considered to be detrimental to GA as a whole, as closed session. The session should have been open to anyone, just as every Trustee meeting is. It shouldn't matter who the person was who was the subject of this request for removal. We don't keep secrets in this Fellowship.

Having said that, I was even more dismayed to hear from a number of the Trustees who were in that meeting that only 2% of the time devoted to this issue dealt with the facts of the matter, more specifically the principles of GA. The rest was about character and personalities. The vote needed to be a 2/3 majority to remove the Trustee and the tally was 30-83. To those who voted as part of the 83, I suppose you have your validation and vindication for the person charged, as not having done anything wrong. What is sad about this is now others in the program can repeat this behavior and take advantage of their area's Intergroup by doing the same thing. Afterall, the Board of Trustees didn't think it was wrong enough to remove a Trustee for doing this. Either the Trustees are now going to be thought upon as being better than everyone else, with a double standard, or it's not worth complaining about it, so why not do it yourself?

Here is the situation. Every Intergroup should be instituting written procedures about fund reimbursement for travel, if it's not already in place. Interesting enough is the fact that the area that this Trustee is from, has very specific written guidelines about this very matter. So what was the excuse or justification for this action? The Trustee didn't know about it? The Trustee forgot? Or was it that others have done it from the same area and if it was good for them, why not this Trustee?

Every area should have their Trustees sign an acknowledgement of those terms and all the Treasurers should be a bit more vigilant on this matter. It's simple... if you have a paid receipt for your travel, then you get reimbursed for that expense. If you redeem miles from a frequent flyer program, then you get paid for whatever your redemption costs are...from a receipt.

I spoke with one person who said that a Trustee in their area firmly believes that if a travel allowance is given to that Trustee for airfare of \$1,000 and the Trustee can get there by train for \$300, then that Trustee is 'entitled' to keep the difference. Are you kidding me? First of all, shame on that area for allowing this to happen. Then it's time for that Trustee to take a good hard look at that \$700 and how that attitude of entitlement is actually a violation of the Guidance Code, Article X, Section 5, Number 13. "No trusted servant of the Intergroup shall receive compensation for service rendered as a trusted servant of the Intergroup." I can hear it now...it's not compensation, it's reimbursement. I have a different take on it. It's dishonest and not worthy of any GA member acting as a Trusted Servant, especially a Trustee whose funding comes from all the members in that area.

What really stinks is that more people than we might expect have done this and continue to do this. The argument of being paid for redeemed miles is not applicable when it comes to a reimbursed expense in GA. There can be no gain for any person, without exception. Yes, the miles have a value, but no area is going to force a Trustee to use them. It's a choice the Trustee makes, and if so, then the reimbursement should be for whatever the redemption costs are, not the full fare, which was never paid.

In the spirit of principles before personalities, I will relay this discussion, without mentioning names, of a member who received an allocation for travel, redeemed miles, took the allocation and then contributed it back to the GA source. That would seem fine on the surface, but why bother going through that to begin with? The reason is because that person then took a tax deduction for the contribution. Are you kidding me? Yes, the tax laws recognize that as a valid deductible expense, but who is this person, or any other member, to take money for a reimbursable expense and then benefit personally from this money chicanery? Forget the tax laws, it's about taking advantage of GA – period the end.

We all talk about 'doing the right thing'. Doing this redemption of mileage for next to no cost and charging an area or any extension of this Fellowship the full amount of such a ticket is nothing less than stealing. There is no other way for me to characterize it. I'm on the committee for establishing procedures for removing a Trustee for acts considered to be detrimental to GA as a whole. It's ironic that this event happened to this Trustee in Cherry Hill right around the time of this committee's work. We hope to have a proposal completed for Los Angeles that will certainly have enough safety zones to allow for resolution of such an item, well in advance of the item actually making it to the floor of the Board of Trustees.

Trustees are held in much higher regard than other members. They are the Guardians of the Recovery and Unity Steps, as it says in the Guidance Code, Article VIII, Section 8. If you breach the trust of your area or the Fellowship, you should not be allowed to continue being a Trustee. No one is kicking anyone out of GA. The only thing is that the person should not be in the position of a Trustee for some stated period of time. Robbing a bank and returning the money after the fact when someone found out you did it, doesn't invalidate the crime. 73.4% of the Trustees in Cherry Hill looked the other way on this item because of personalities. This action has left a stain on this Fellowship starting with the actions of the Trustee in question, to the stubbornness to not work it out prior to the Trustee meeting, to the item actually having to be heard on the BOT floor, to the decision of not taking action to remove the Trustee.

I hope to never have to even discuss the removal of a Trustee for acts considered to be detrimental to GA as a whole, for the rest of my days in GA. Maybe if all areas tighten up their supervision of expenses and travel practices, we won't have to deal with the embarrassment of such a situation and what it says about who the Trustees are.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

Combined Thoughts

5/17/11 – 4:25 PM
David,

In sharing my thoughts with fellow Trustees and past Trustees (the group you and I belong to), I speak of the Spiritual Principles that guide our Fellowship. I am not on a “soapbox” as you indicated in one of your many postings. I was—and am—defending those Spiritual Principles. It has been my intention to not react or respond to any further messages of yours, but I cannot help but feel a deep responsibility to do so to your most recent one. First, a few of the items before I get to my real purpose for writing this:

1. Wearing sports apparel at meetings and conferences: Paul S. asked some very good questions that point out that each member is to speak from their own experience, strength, and hope. Then Bob W. and Tom Z. bring out reasons for NOT making yet another rule and offered reasonable ways to handle the sports apparel issue. Aren't you “getting it” that in a Fellowship, there are no rules that can punish an individual or, God forbid, throw them out of G.A.? I have been the target more than once of your “invitation” to leave G.A. I got the feeling that if you could, you would throw me out of the Fellowship. That will never be up to you, and I hope that no one in the Program ever believes that you or any other group of people have that power. I find it interesting that you say you are on a committee that is “establishing procedures for removing a Trustee for acts considered detrimental to G.A. as a whole.” You seem to be very interested in removing members from G.A., including Trustees, whom you and your committee deem “detrimental.” What if someone believes the personal attacks you have directed toward the opinions expressed by other members quite often are “detrimental” to unity? Would you like to be invited to leave G.A.? Would you like a committee to judge you? Which brings me to another issue.....

2. Frequent Flyer Usage by Trustee/Reimbursement: Perhaps more details were known by the BOT, but, for me to have a definite response, these questions would have to be answered: Did the Trustee in question donate his/her frequent flyer miles to his Intergroup for the purpose of going to the conference? If so, then, of course, he/she should not be reimbursed and could rightfully claim it under Donations on his/her taxes. Did the Trustee in question instead plan to use the frequent flyer miles to cover the cost of the ticket, openly tell this to his/her Intergroup, and then ask for reimbursement for the least expensive fee he/she could find? Was the Trustee in question dishonest in any way? In the case you brought up where a Trustee took the difference between a \$300 train ticket and a \$1,000 plane ticket, you are absolutely right that the Trustee is not “entitled” to the \$700. He or she should be considered a good steward of his/her Intergroup's money by finding a less expensive way to travel if he/she saved the \$700. You are absolutely correct that no one of us should make a profit. You, in my opinion, do not have the right, however, to judge not only the Trustee in question but all of the Trustees who did not vote as you thought they should and that you said did so “because of personalities.” What happened to all of your previous statements regarding abiding by the group decisions? Could I be so bold as to suggest “letting go and letting God?”

3. Now to the real reason I felt compelled to write this message: I cannot begin to tell you how dismayed I was to see you put in print that “Trustees are held in much higher regard than other members.” My first question is: By whom? Certainly not by anyone remotely familiar with Unity Steps 2 and 9; Article IV, Section 1 of the Guidance Code, or Article VI, Section 1 of the Guidance Code. Unity Step 2 very clearly says our leaders (in this case, our Trustees) are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Our leaders are “entrusted to carry out the will and conscience of the Group”....and “they are not elected to command, order, demand, change, alter, but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by ALL members of that group.” All positions in our Fellowship are servant positions. Our leaders—whether at the meeting level, at Intergroup level, at the BOT level, and on the Board of Regents—are to serve. I am aware that there is a move to change this wording, but it is wording that has served the founders of 12-Step programs well for over 70 years; and I suggest that we will cease being a Fellowship if G.A. Trustees at any time deem it wise to change or alter any of the original intent of any of the Recovery or Unity Steps. I have long fought against changing any of the intent of the Steps. I see it as akin to trying to re-word the Ten Commandments so that we can find loopholes to go through to make them “fit” our behaviors. Unity Step 2 also mentions losing pride and ego when one listens to and acts upon the group conscience. I see only pride and ego in statements such as the one you made. And, I cannot say strongly enough that Article VI, Section 1, which says that “No one is more important in this Fellowship than the individual member. He or she has no ruler or superior.....” and Unity Step 9, which says, “Gamblers Anonymous is run by the spirit of service and not by force of vested authority.” Should be the principles to guide all of us. (The rest of Unity Step 9 is well worth reading and re-reading at every Trustee meeting—as are all the Unity Steps. It also points out that at “every level we assume responsibility—no authority.....”)

Much more could be said, but I have taken enough space for now and hope that what I have written will be accepted in the spirit of fellowship which I feel as I write. I love this life-saving fellowship and pray that we can begin, sooner rather than later, to put life-saving items on the agenda—issues such as attracting more people TO the Program and retaining those who DO come to the Program. Each of us has only a certain amount of time and energy to spend, and if we squander that time and energy on judging, stoking our egos, and thinking we are somehow better than others or have authority over others in the Program, thinking the Program is anything other than suggested, etc., someone's life may depend on it, and the life may very well be ours.

George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee, Area 12 New Jersey

5/17/11 - 10:57 PM

George,

Although I gain no solace in sparring with you on the Trustee Line, when you respond, you continue in the vein of misdirecting the discussion items to areas that suit you best.

If anyone is even the slightest bit anxious about sports apparel being worn in meetings, why would the person wear it, other than to take back their will? It becomes all about them not the concerns of the members in the room. The discussions regarding members having to bear the responsibilities for their own actions are valid, but with people that have begun to understand our program and themselves. Why don't I come into the next Trustee meeting with a PokerStars.net hat and shirt? Using your rationale, that shouldn't make a difference to anyone. The reality is quite different, and that is where you get caught with your representations and how Spirituality is the elixir of life. Just be spiritual and all your problems in life will be solved. That's a great textbook answer, but the reality of life is somewhat different in actual practice.

I never mentioned punishing anyone for wearing sporting attire or throwing them out of the Fellowship. I was asking those who read the piece I posted on sporting attire worn in the rooms to pull their heads out of their butts and think about others who might not be so secure with their abstinence in gambling. We must all lead by example and more important, continue to provide a safe environment for all compulsive gamblers, not a reason to fall off the horse and obsess over gambling venues or team from an insensitive reminder of that, which many people might not want to think about right now.

If you wish to quote me, then make sure you put it in its proper context. My statement about you thinking about leaving the Fellowship was in response to a different subject where you refused to follow the Guidance Code and said that as long as you were in GA you would bring in to the rooms and use anything that you felt was good for people with a gambling problem. It was about you making your own program, and to this day I maintain, that if you can't change it and still violate the Guidance Code, then maybe GA is not the right program for you. Call it whatever you want.

If you continue to behave in that way of intentionally violating the Guidance Code, then yes, I would be in favor of your removal from the Program, and hopefully so would many others. But that's for the Trustees to do, not me. You conveniently pick and choose what you want to follow in the Guidance Code. It doesn't work that way. The BOT has that ability and has exercised it once before in Omaha 1989 by removing a member from GA. The BOT also has the ability to remove rooms for not adhering to the Guidance Code, as outlined in Cleveland 1979. Your defiance of the Guidance Code puts you and your rooms at a similar risk. But make sure you run the Spirituality defense flag up the pole to justify why you don't follow the Guidance Code. That will make everyone feel warm and fuzzy.

Yes, I am on the Trustee Removal Procedure Committee, because of Article 8, Section 4, which states that a Trustee "may be removed for other acts on his or her part, which are detrimental to GA as a whole..." If you hadn't noticed, there is no procedure in place to accomplish this. My point with requesting a committee for this purpose was for the BOT to either remove that provision or to keep it and articulate a plan to do that which would not involve personalities. If you had the slightest bit of interest in how this process is progressing, you would know that the committee, not me, has put into place many safety valves into the process in its unfinished version that would give all parties many opportunities to alleviate the problems and not bring an embarrassment to the Fellowship like we saw in Cherry Hill.

If you or anyone else feels my responses are detrimental to GA as a whole, then why not give it your best shot? The agenda is open for another 3 months for Los Angeles. What bothers you is that I don't drink your version of GA Kool Aid. If the program would be to have no program, you would completely

KOOI-AIA. If the vote would be to have me removed, yes, I would comply. It wouldn't be as a result of a committee's decision, which again underscores your continued propensity to quote chapter and verse regarding facts and reality on items you have no knowledge about. You don't like when people don't subscribe to your Pollyanna view of program. You talk out of 2 sides of your mouth about the Guidance Code. You do what you want when it suits you and then quote the Guidance Code as you Spiritual panacea. You need to make a decision – one way or the other.

Now, onto your rant about the frequent flyer mileage situation. The Trustee did not 'donate' the miles to the Intergroup, but tried to get paid for the miles by submitting a reimbursement request for the full cost of the fare. This has nothing to do with a tax provision. The mileage was used without disclosure of that information. The Treasurer picked up on it.

I suppose it is just too bad if you don't agree with my opinion that the 83 people who voted to not remove created a bigger problem by doing so and letting the rest of the Fellowship see that the Trustees don't have a problem with people who personally gain from being a Trustee at the expense of their Intergroups and the very members who pay for the expenses for Trustees to go to these conferences. Why wouldn't anyone copy what was done? Who could complain that it's a problem if the Trustees didn't see it that way? The BOT made a decision, but the decision was based on personalities not principles. Why don't you address that? What remedy is "letting go and letting God" in this situation? The group chose to ignore our Unity Step 12, but that doesn't seem to be too high on your list of priorities if you can defend those actions after you say that no one should make a profit. The Trustee in question should have been removed because of the breach of trust. The person may be a good GA member, but needed to be removed as a Trustee.

Last section, your number 3, yes, Trustees should be held in a much higher regard than other members. Maybe it should be rephrased. Trustees are more accountable than other members. If everyone is equal George, then why don't we elect people to be Trustees right after they have stolen everything from their Intergroup treasuries? The answer is that we are all compulsive gamblers, but we all can't be trusted. Although not expressed, it is implied that the Trustees are held in a much higher regard by those who elect them than other members. They have greater levels of responsibilities than trusted servants at the local levels. Whether the Trustees are given carte blanche to vote whichever way they see fit, or given instructions by the areas, this is a privilege and honor far in excess of other positions. You can continue with your chapter and verse quotes, but the fact remains, that the Trustee in question, violated the Trust of the area. As such, the Trustee should have thought less about their own situation and more about what was best for the area. Stepping down is what should have happened and in the process to replace the Trustee, if the area thought the problem wasn't as severe as originally thought, then the Trustee could have been re-elected. But no, this episode was about a singular focus of vindication.

Yes, we are all equal in the Fellowship, but responsibilities for the Trustees are not responsibilities for the remaining members. We elect our Trustees as individuals who we think are up to the task of implementing those additional responsibilities. That makes the Trustees different. I was not re-elected at a Trustee and believe the Trustees must and should be held to a higher standard than someone just coasting in the program. It has nothing to do with authority, and everything to do with responsibility. Why not inform yourself about those responsibilities. You can view them on this site.

Your closing once again spits in the face of the actions that the BOT undertakes. It's not about squandering time and energy on judging, the Trustees put in more time into these Trustee meetings than we ever did as Trustees, many years ago. There are no egos being stroked, just 100+ people trying to make GA a better Fellowship. It's not about being better than others, just having more responsibilities than others. Someone's life often times depends on what the BOT decides at the BOT meetings. It's about structure and guidance, where you would rather everyone just follow their own pathways. Your complacency breeds disunity as everyone will just do what they think is right. Maybe that is your plan, to create disunity so that when trouble rears its ugly head, then everyone can come back to the GA Pied Piper, George W. who will take all the lost souls and put them under his wing. Better yet, maybe you should submit an item to discard the Guidance Code in favor of a new version compiled by your own hand, entitled: the Spirituality Code.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/17/11 - 11:23 PM

I just finished reading George W.'s submission to the trustee line dated 5/17/11 4:25pm. I would like to thank George for his thoughts many of which I share.

His submission was not one that aimed to attack an individual or decision, but provide information and his opinion.

On the subject of wearing sports apparel and where it amazes me how anyone can think they have the right to tell others what they can wear. What's at issue here? If this is true where could this lead us, maybe our wardrobe's would be pretty depleted once every person had their personal list of things that "they" judge inappropriate to wear for whatever reason. My personal opinion is that wearing gambling related clothing is insensitive to others in our fellowship no matter where you are or what your doing within the fellowship. However, I don't have the right to judge others about what they wear. I do have the right to make a conscious decision for myself to respect others in this situation. On the wearing of sports apparel my opinion is different. I wear sports apparel to support the teams I enjoy watching and rooting for. I don't wear the apparel to entice others to gamble. As Debb W. has said, that is their choice and a decision they make if they gamble or not.

The situation involving frequent flyer mileage should have been kept at the local level of that area. Dragging that onto the floor of the Board of Trustees was embarrassing to everyone involved..period.

Let me say I have a great deal of respect for the Website Administrator for all the work he does up front and "behind the scenes" for the fellowship. It has to be a very tiring commitment day in and day out. Here comes the "but"..... I also believe that it doesn't allow him the right to use the Trustee Line as his own personal forum to "diatribe" (a bitter,abusive denunciation or criticism) others thoughts and opinions. I have felt this way a long time and that is why I do not choose to use the Trustee Line often. Do we need to comment or criticize every item that is posted on this forum? I don't think so, again though that is only my opinion and I need to remember that I shouldn't push that on anyone else's plate, rather let them make their own decision on it.

I support whole heartily George's last paragraph that we spend too much time judging everything and not enough time "helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers". Isn't that the focus that should be foremost in our minds? I for one am happy that items such as combo book changes will not dominate an agenda as much and we can leave room to hopefully introduce new literature and ideas to help our fellowship recover.

Thank you all for giving me the chance to serve on the Executive Board these last two years, it was a learning experience viewing things from the front as opposed to looking up from the floor. Service keeps me focused on my recovery.

Steve R. - Area 2B, Sacramento, California
Past trustee and BOT 2nd Co-Chairman