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Trustee Line for May 2013

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 5/31/13.

Thoughts From The Trustees - Current and Past

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

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Thoughts About Vancouver

5/1/13 - 12:01 AM

Just a short note to thank the Vancouver Conference Host Committee on a job well done! Between the amenities, hospitality, and fellowship a fine time was had by all.

On a personal note, my sincerest gratitude to my fellow Trustees for all their hard work on a grueling agenda, as well as to those Brothers and Sisters I had a chance to meet and share fellowship with.

Looking forward to Orlando.

Your GA Brother,
Steve T. - Area 14, Long Island

5/1/13 - 12:01 AM

Motion on the floor to give the Vancouver Conference Committee a standing ovation...Do I hear a second? The motion was passed by acclamation.

An anecdotal to the conference is how Steve W. took care of me with a personal request I made before the conference. I'm a pacific northwest oyster maniac and asked Steve for the best place downtown for such oysters. A month later he returned an email, without any prodding from me, with not only the name of the restaurant, but the manager's name, telephone number and his

email. Steve had contacted him about my request and when a few of us went there on Friday night, we were met with a great staff, great attitudes, lots of extras and of course an experience for us that was to be remembered.

Steve is certainly the man who just can't say no to any request or situation. He and his committee members definitely deserve the standing O.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

5/20/13 - 5:52 PM

Vancouver's Conference Committee Members

I wish you to extend my gratitude to each of you members of the Vancouver Conference, thanks for all your hard work. BRAVO, all the details were exceptional care by the Committee, a wonderful Conference, and a very special one for me. As we say in Mexico "Hats off"

Your Sister in Recovery,
Martha G. - Trustee Area 28, Mexico

Why Can't The BOT Do The Right Thing?
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5/1/13 – 12:01 AM

I was very comforted by the passion that was exhibited in Vancouver. We had a grueling schedule and much progress was made, in spite of the items that failed along with those that passed. There seemed to be a lesson in every item.

For me a particularly harsh lesson was during the elections. No, it's not what you may be thinking. Congrats to Denis, Andy and Herb, but the lesson I speak of is the election for IES. Many tried to hammer home the point of the Rotation Principle, but why did no one bring that up for Karen?

I first became a Trustee in 2000 and have only missed 1 Trustee meeting in New Orleans 2004. Every 2 years we go through the election process and one part of it always seemed to be a waste of time, the election for IES. Karen has been the winner of all the elections I have witnessed, which now amounts to 7. It was something that happened and Karen was the only clear and sensible choice. With the exception of 1 previous cycle where someone from Los Angeles ran against her and lost, it never really was an issue.

This election was very different. I was able to put a face to another name, the wife of a current Trustee. My posting is not about this person, but the fact remained that this person was a potential threat to Karen's re-election. Suddenly everything became very clear to me. We all know that the IES is a paid position. Whomever it is that has the job, has made this part of their life, retirement funding and the ability to pay living expenses. Who are we at the BOT to put such a person's entire life at risk because of the requirement of voting for someone?

It's time that we face some realities. The position of IES has to be taken out of the hands of the BOT every 2 years. Article 13, Section 5 of the Guidance Code states: "The sole purpose of the Board of Regents is to supervise the operations of the International Service Office (I.S.O.) and see that it is operated effectively and efficiently."

The BOR is comprised of 9 members who are the Directors and Officers of the corporation of Gamblers Anonymous. It's time the BOT gave the responsibility of hiring and firing the IES to the BOR. We need to give the IES some sense of stability that the job is secure if the work is done adequately and efficiently. If not, there should be a written process for discharge.

Although the issue of the Fellowship is foremost in many people's eyes, the ISO is about managing the corporation of the Fellowship. If the IES should happen to resign or seek a job somewhere else because of a better compensation package, then it would be the job of the BOR to replace such a person. That involves all the procedures any corporation would have to follow to attract a new person. If the BOT feels it would still be necessary to approve such events, then so be it, but the key point is to stop this bi-annual financial hostage game we play with the IES through the BOT elections.

If this other person had won, do we then fire Karen immediately? After all, didn't the Chair explain the points of Article XX in the Guidance Code that

changes take place immediately? Actually no, because the IES has a term that would have ended at the end of June. That's a terrific prospect. The IES gets uprooted and has to work for another 2+ months? I don't imagine that would be a smooth transition.

No disrespect intended to the opponent, but anyone can get up to make a compelling speech and get elected as the new IES. What do we know about any such a person? Has this person ever been on the BOR? Has this person even been to the ISO? We don't run background checks, and that should be an operational imperative. Sure everyone is in recovery, but if we vote for a new unknown person, how do we know that the person hasn't embezzled in the past? Don't you think that's important? I know my vote would be a solid no if that were the case because there is no reason to expose the Fellowship to someone in such a position with that kind of threat potential. I'm not saying that everyone who has embezzled is going to steal again, yet we put our votes in for people without the slightest shred of knowledge about who or what they are. I can see it now from a liability aspect. Putting someone with that kind of a criminal record into the IES position and having the person do it again. In other words, we have procedures in place that just don't make any sense, which is so typical of how the Fellowship has operated in so many cases over the past 55 years.

There is so much to review and change within the Guidance Code and By-Laws to make this happen in a sensible way. Like much of what we do at the BOT level, we used to just be reactive. We did what we had to do with little inspiration and when a problem came up, we dealt with it. We should be pre-emptive and clear up potential problems that are imbedded in our many procedures and processes. There are those who complain we do too many unnecessary things these days. My suggestion is that those people step away from the group conscience that clearly wants to plug these holes. They should remain on their hamster wheels and allow the rest of us to help this Fellowship grow in a healthy way. The 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' days are gone. This BOT has demonstrated that it is willing to take the bold steps necessary for growth.

I will be spearheading a series of agenda items in Orlando to stop this election insanity and allow the IES to lead a normal business life without the nerve-shredding fear of elections. We once banded together to show our support for Karen and her staff when they was told that their bonuses would not be forthcoming for one year. Over 70 people wrote into the Trustee Line in support of reinstating the bonuses. The BOR listened and we were able to make the BOR pay attention and make the change. We need to do this again with this subject of the elections for the IES. Write your thoughts about what this issue means to you. If you want to be on an unofficial committee to put our heads together to come up with the proper language and propose how to make the change in our election process for the next round in 2015, let me know.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/10/13 - 6:15 PM
David,

In my opinion, you have made a very valid point; the position of the International Executive Secretary should be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents and not elected by the BOT.

One reinforcing point is to read Article VII – Directors, Powers, and Meetings of our By-Laws.

Section 1: The International Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the operation of the International Service Office (I.S.O.). He/she shall be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents who shall have complete charge, management and control of the International Service Office (I.S.O.) and property of this Corporation subject to the terms and conditions of the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. The International Executive Secretary may employ an office secretary and any other needed office employee providing written approval is first obtained from the Board of Regents. UPDATED 4/12

Because this position falls “under the jurisdiction” of the BOR, they should have the ability to hire and fire the IES. They currently review all employees' compensation once a year (Article VII, Section 5); shouldn't they have full control over this position as well as the positions they already oversee?

Furthermore, the duties and responsibilities of the IES (responsible for the operation of the ISO) are in the same section of the By-Laws as the officers of the BOR, not the BOT. The IES position is quite important to our fellowship. I believe this is one of the most demanding positions of any within GA. It is one of a few full-time jobs and should be treated as that; not as an elected position. The elected positions in our organization are all volunteer and unpaid.

This change is not as simple as “okay, let’s do it.” Not only do the by-laws need to be addressed, but does GA have any “fair hiring practices” in place? Do we have a “hiring policy” of any type? Do we have legal, standardized application forms? Reference check forms? Background check forms? These checks and procedures need to be in place. Not only for the IES position, but the positions of all the people working in the ISO.

I agree with your position to form a committee to explore the necessary steps before the election in 2015. This means, we need to start now.

Paulette T. – Area 6B, West Coast Florida

Pending Funeral Services For The Proxy

5/1/13 - 12:01 AM

When I was a kid, I thought it was so cool to take this 4 inch straw woven tube called a Chinese finger lock and tell my friends to put a finger from each hand into each side of the tube. Of course you know what’s next, I asked them to take their fingers out and they couldn’t. They were stuck, for the moment. That’s how I felt after leaving Vancouver thinking about the proxy situation. I have no one to blame but myself, because I didn’t think everything through carefully enough.

The BOT was eager to finally get rid of proxies and did what we all thought was exactly that. I will say one thing, the word ‘proxy’ is no longer to be found in the Guidance Code because 3 items were modified to just allow absentee ballots by eliminating the word proxy. The 3 votes to do that ended up 93-32, 102-8 and 109-11. That is a very substantial margin of victory.

Then reality kicked in. There are still 2 provisions in the Rules and Procedures that cover proxies. I can’t believe I missed putting them on Vancouver agenda for removal. Worse yet was the Chair’s assertion that we had not fully removed proxies. Huh?? If you look at it issue, what we needed was a statement that proxies are not allowed.

So we thought we were rid of proxies and we are not. Let’s finish the job right away. I have put a 3-part item on the agenda to seal that deal. Hopefully it will get unanimous approval.

Rules and Procedures - Section 26 – Proxies

Delete section on Eligible Proxy Voter

Current trustees who cannot attend physical Trustee meetings, can assign a proxy to another current Trustee to vote on their behalf. Only the Trustee can assign his/her proxy. If no Trustee is assigned, the proxy will be null and void. Current Trustees may only have 1 proxy.

Delete section on Reassigning Proxies

If a Trustee leaves before the end of the BOT meeting, they are able to give their proxy to another Trustee who is present and does not already have a proxy, by notifying the Chairman of the BOT.

Insert new item

Proxies will not be allowed for any aspect of any Trustee meetings, physical or otherwise.

So we have everything set for Orlando, but there are complications if we wait until then to deal with proxies once and for all. Waiting would allow Trustees to still submit a proxy for Orlando if they couldn’t attend. Since proxies no longer count for attendance for overseas Trustees, there is no incentive to do that versus an absentee ballot. But for North American Trustees, it has not counted for attendance. Basically, it has never done anything other than to give another Trustee a vote.

The problem we face is that many of those Trustees could submit a proxy and then completely lose their representation right after the passage of the above item. To me, that is not in the spirit of what we are about. It is my belief that we should have a Quick Response Meeting (QRM) relatively soon on this agenda item, to eliminate it from the Orlando agenda and deal with it well in advance of Orlando. Passage of this item would serve to fully shutdown the proxies for good and also make it abundantly clear that if any Trustee sends in a proxy, it will not be accepted and the Trustee will most certainly be told by the BOT Chair that he/she is only allowed to use an absentee ballot.

The only difficulty to accomplishing this QRM is that the BOT Chair has stated he feels it should be heard in Orlando and only the Chair can call a QRM. Upon returning home after Vancouver, I sent personal emails to as many people as I could remember who attended the Trustee meeting. The email was to explain what I have written above and ask each of them to login to the Trustee site and vote in the Trustee Poll in order that we can show our Chair that group conscience wants this item heard prior to the Orlando meeting as a QRM. For those who did not get the email I sent, and those who did but didn't vote yet, please go to the link just above the red Trustee Poll link and login to vote. If you have forgotten your access codes, there are instructions on how to retrieve them. It's important for us to have the QRM so as not to disadvantage everyone who may try to use a proxy for Orlando that could suddenly disappear. Let's close this chapter on proxies and move on to other things.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/6/13 - 5:59 PM

I have read the reference to –getting rid of the proxy-and it seems to me we are now turning to Committees in order to change our Guidance Code etc Quoting “rules & Procedures”does not seem the right approach to changing a Trustee”right”

I am not saying that proxies are something we should have-just the opposite-I am against the PROXY BUT it is wrong to attempt to change something that is not HOW to run a meeting.We are using the wrong tool.

Committees should not legislate and what we will be doing if we let the R & P – meeting procedure form to change our Trustees ability to vote Would be wrong .

We now have the IRC picking up about 15 votes via proxies and that does not benefit Gamblers Anonymous.

Before getting ourselves into another hole how about the use of the absentee ballot ?? lets say we have 100 items on the agenda how many will the trustee have to answer in order that the ballot be counted-50% or just TWO items ? Will we allow the entire BOT to cast absentee ballots ? I do not mean to avoid a quorum-

Lets read the guidance Code where it refers to voting of trustees.Art XIX Section 6 states –in writing & to be opened at the Meeting-we have'nt Been following this at any recent meeting.

Also please check Art VII I Section 6 seems to mention Proxies do we just ignore that or do we make a PROPER change-

Yes Proxies are wrong for Gamblers Anonymous-but lets make the change according to our Guidance Code.

Many things that went into the GC & the By-Laws are outdated but lets not do the changes in a haphazard,inconsistent manner-

I seem to remember that we put a rather definite statement in the BY-Laws concerning proxies-I think we should do the same for Trustees in the Guidance Code.

Bill B. - Area 15, New York

Old & tried not tired

P.S.See Art VII I -Sec 13C & Sec 21

5/6/13 - 7:33 PM

The debate on the proxy has come and gone. A quick response meeting is what should be the next move. At the last two BOT meetings the items removing proxies as they relate to the BOT have been heard. The debates centered around whether or not we keep having proxies at the BOT meetings. Granted, this may have been shortsighted considering all we, as the BOT did, was eliminate proxies as they pertain to attendance of our overseas Trustees. But, the debates centered around eliminating proxies all together. At the time of this entry, proxies no longer appear in the Guidance Code as they pertain to the BOT. Bill's statement about Article VIII, Section 6 needs to be dismissed for the simple fact that it was changed by the second vote in Vancouver. The

proxy mentioned in that section of the Guidance Code no longer exists. The only place still associated with the proxy, in relation to the BOT, is in the Rules and Procedures Manual. Given the fact that the debate has already taken place, with one of the arguments for keeping the proxy being that our overseas Trustees wouldn't have a voice, what better way to give them a voice than by holding a QRM? This way they can vote on one issue which many feel directly affects the overseas Trustees. If we vote on this in Orlando, those that have sent in a proxy risk not having any voice whatsoever. Let's give the overseas areas the opportunity to vote on this issue. As for whether the Rules and Procedures is the correct place for this, my assertion is that it is absolutely the place, simply because the proxy is no longer associated with the BOT in the Guidance Code. How can we "change" something that doesn't exist? The only place it still exists is in the Rules and Procedures. Let's do the right thing and get this done, as everyone thought we did in Vancouver.

Bill also made mention of Article XIX, Section 6 and the fact we haven't been handling absentee ballots correctly. My interpretation, and mind you, this is just my interpretation, is that section of the Guidance Code is based on whether a question is sent out to each "group" to cast a vote on items that affect Gambler's Anonymous as a whole. I feel that having the absentee ballots already counted is the correct way of handling them.

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

5/14/13 - 9:53 AM

Okay People,

Tell me where in the GC does it say- no Proxy

All of the items were how to handle-who could get etc etc

If there were so many Trustees voting by proxy & there were several times mentioned don't you think it might be a good idea To EXCLUDE Proxy votes from the GC. ?

Now as to Art XIX sec 6—"opened at a place of BOT and/or BOR MEETING" just what does PLACE of meeting mean ?

Also remember it does not take even 1 meeting to change a Rule & Procedure.-we do it before anything except roll call.

Another little bit –many Trustees have complained about how long the meeting lasts.

About 25% of the last meeting dealt with Rules & Procedure

About 15% comm. reports

About 15% By-laws items

As far as a QRM to vote on any matter-remember we should give an opportunity to all trustees to hear a discussion and about 50 trustees did NOT hear anything that was discussed at the last meeting. Remember several items that were passed by a large margin were defeated on the 2nd vote.

I also raised a question as to what constituted a valid Absentee Vote-will it be okay for ONE response to a 100 item agenda be okay ??.

Remember- sometimes we make the right decision and then we have to make the decision right.

Bill B. - Area 15, New York

Vancouver Item #112

5/1/13 - 12:01 AM

Dear Fellow Trustees,

It was great to see so many of you in Vancouver.

Item #112 on the Vancouver agenda was a literature item entitled "The Promises" which passed the Merit Vote for approved literature. This is a reminder that all Trustees have sixty days to make comments and/or recommend revisions (to be made through the Literature Committee in conjunction with the author of the item). June 18, 2013 will be the final date to submit any recommendations.

The item is available as attachment #112 on the Vancouver agenda section of the Download Center on the Trustee website.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Chuck R. – Area 15 Chair, Literature Committee

Orlando

5/1/13 - 12:01 AM
Hello All

First a hearty thank you to Steve W and the entire Vancouver Committee for a job well done!!! Terrific conference and Unity and a genuine sense of fellowship. Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

On to Orlando...

Please keep checking the trustee website as it will have a link to the supershuttle soon.

Also we are putting together the golf outing for Wed, afternoon and will need a minimum of 20. So please watch for the flyer and respond one way or the other.

Next is the reminder to call the Hotel for rooms and to register with the Conf. Committee for meals and registration. You MUST do BOTH!!..

Also on your Hotel receipt it might mention a daily resort fee. Our conference is EXEMPT from this fee and it is spelled out in our contract so you can disregard.

Most conferences need every member to register early, and Orlando is no different. Some try to create a need of urgency. This is not the case in Orlando. Rooms are going fast, and the committee is very pleased, But please register with conf.as early as possible so we can accommodate everyone and be prepared for everyones arrival

We look forward to seeing everyone and if there is any questions or special needs please contact me by any means.

Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

Do We Really Understand Our Primary Purpose?

5/1/13 - 10:32 AM

I love Gamblers Anonymous! I think my passion during my tenure as trustee made that apparent. However I think it is time for us as a fellowship to take inventory. I have been thinking about this issue for quite some time now. It seems to me that a lot of energy is spend away from our primary purpose! I have included that here so if you're not familiar with it you don't have to look it up.

Unity step five...

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

Article III section I of the guidance code...

The specific and primary purposes for which this Fellowship is formed are as follows: To contact compulsive gamblers no matter where they may be and help them overcome a gambling problem.

To carry the message of Gamblers Anonymous to the compulsive gambler who still suffers, through the medium of personal contact, telephone, mail, newspapers, films, radio, television, houses of worship, charitable organizations, service clubs, and by whatever dignified method that is approved by the Board of Trustees within the framework of the Unity Program. To distribute Gamblers Anonymous literature to compulsive gamblers and to any person, organization or institution which desires some.

To encourage interest and knowledge of the activities and program of Gamblers Anonymous with the peace officers, educational institutions, penal

institutions, judges, probation officers, parole officers, doctors, newspapers, motion picture companies, radio broadcasting companies, television broadcasting companies, houses of worship, charitable organizations and service clubs of the world.

I believe in order for us to be able to carry that message, the message, we need to be certain what the message is. As well, have it presented in a manner that can be conveyed easily. After all I believe our chief responsibility to those we serve is an adequate presentation of the steps and a meaningful and helpful way to recover from our fatal illness. Unfortunately for our membership, or worse yet the sick and suffering compulsive gambler, a lot of Gamblers Anonymous literature has very little worth to someone trying to overcome a mental obsession, a physical addiction or a spiritual malady.

First off Our "big book" has taken a message from a program and book which states that the purpose of said book is to show precisely how they had recovered! Show me that same hope in our current literature.

I'm not sure why the "Howie and Abner" story made it into print! How did a group of trustees decide to have a fictitious story put in our main piece of literature? It blows my mind! Especially when we have a vast wealth of experience, strength and hope which we should have tapped. I'm sure it would have been gladly shared by an overwhelming number of our membership just for the asking.

If we look beyond "Howie and Abner" we can find even less help in the appendixes II through IV sections of the same book! Has anyone of us really found any meaning or hope for recovery in the statistical portion? Furthermore placing Jim W's story in the back of the book and cutting it down seems like a travesty! Really? We need to be drawing people in with a vision of what can become of their lives. I have an unbelievable account of Jim's story from a 25th anniversary international conference booklet, which, in its full glory really gives a sense of where we came from and what the answer is.

Finally, our blatant disregard for Unity step 6 is appalling in dedicating a whole chapter to Gam-Anon and Gam-a-Teen. Both wonderful programs in their own right, but, unity step six reads like this.... 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. Ought never!!!! That to me means NEVER. I think I've been in trustee meetings where a proposed change to a step comes to the floor and is voted down immediately because we are so passionate about them. Yet here we are as a fellowship endorsing related enterprises. I know people who have changed their lives because of Gam-Anon I'm not bashing either fellowship I'm just saying we are diverting from our soul primary purpose. I have in my mind a half a dozen men that will get their feathers ruffled when they read these statements, and that's ok it's your opinion because of your experiences with your significant other in said fellowship. However it's not about that its about the principles which guide us. As trustees (former trustees in my case) one of our charges in that roll is to be guardians of the Guidance Code & the Recovery and Unity Steps.

These principles are in place for a reason and we can't bend them when we see fit. Did we not do that enough during our gambling careers?

We seem to be getting farther and farther away from the truth! That truth being what the twelve steps were originally designed to do. That is, (You ready for it?), getting connected to a higher power of our own understanding and letting Him run the show! The whole purpose of the steps and truly the only way out of the this hopeless, relentless disease is having that vital spiritual experience!

The ab&c of it is.

- a) That we are compulsive gamblers and we could not manage our lives.
- b) That probably no human power could relieve this.
- c) God could and would if he were sought!

Yet several times in our literature we suggest that the individual should think the bet through. Are we serious? We are asking a compulsive gambler with a mental obsession to then use that same sick mind to think the bet through! Come on!

You may be asking yourself; why all this? Why now? Where is this coming from? Well, from my personal experience. Jim W. tried other ways and found

the twelve steps as the only way out! I came to GA and stopped gambling for eight years now, however, my addiction reared its head in other areas of my life. Why? Lack of a vital spiritual experiences! I went through the steps on a non spiritual bases. My first sponsor didn't have that in him, not his fault! Now being in AA with a look at everything through a book that walks me through the steps in a manner that has helped thousands if not millions to Recover from a seemingly hopeless state, me being one of them, I really think we are missing the mark. Not just by a inch, perhaps by a football field.

“A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.”

Excerpt From: W, Bill. “12 Steps and 12 Traditions.” iBooks
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If you have been able to stop gambling on a non-spiritual basis, maybe, just maybe you are not a compulsive gambler. We can't kid ourselves and believe that everyone who comes to our fellowship is necessarily one of us. Some people are court mandated to come cause of a theft and it's found out they gamble so they are forced to come. Maybe they are lonely and they feel a sense of community amongst our fellowship so they stay and don't gamble. They are welcome to stay cause they have a desire not to gamble. That's all fine and good until that person goes and sponsors a real compulsive gambler. He shares his experience and of course it's a non spiritual one. This is where we are killing people by the thousands!

I remember hearing when I was trustee that we a have a 2% success rate! I understand that this is probably an educated guess, but let's all take a look at the #'s we see coming into our rooms versus the # of one year or better yet five year pinnings we attend. Maybe I'm wrong please correct me if I am! However, does anyone of you really think this book helps anyone?

I understand we are not AA! However if it isn't broke don't fix it! Q: Why are we constantly changing the combo book? A: Because we can't get it right! Q: How has AA kept the continuity of their program? A: By leaving it alone!

I've tried through David M to get ahold of the trustee heading up the big book committee with no success. David has sent off emails and even called his phone and left a message that he has a former trustee with a burning passion to help in the process, yet there has been no response! If we take a position to say "I have a position!" We are helping no one. We have a serious problem. We need a remedy. People are out there suffering and dying! We've had a big book committee since I was a trustee 6 years ago. How's that for procrastination?

If you'd like to visit with me on this issue get my # from Karen or David I'd love to chat.

Coming next month... A discussion about the endless open discussion meeting and how we think they can possible help anyone.

Thanks for your time,

Matthew H. - Former trustee, area 16, Upstate New York

5/4/13 - 3:00 AM
Mathew H.,

I read your posting at least 5 times. First and foremost I just want to say that I am a straight gambler and not a spokesperson for AA. I was a little disappointed at the BOT when we ran out of time on the discussion on why the big book of AA is banned from GA meetings. It was very clear to me there was some prejudice toward AA literature for whatever reason. It seemed like the ones who had a negative opinion on it never actually read the entire book or worked the steps. That's kind of like saying pressure relief isn't beneficial when I never had one. I didn't exactly hear anyone say yea I read the book..yea I worked the steps...and it doesn't work. Anyways why I started by saying I'm a straight gambler and not a spokesperson for AA is because the book makes sense to me. The spiritual malady described..that's me. But I've come to the conclusion that its not for everybody..I've showed this to other compulsive gamblers and they can't see the parallels. You can't shove this down people's throat. I've showed members step four how it's laid out in the big book and they couldn't understand it..anyways GA has been around or 55 years...I think

we do need to take an honest inventory of ourselves as a whole...should we try to engage more in the 12 steps? Should we try to incorporate how the steps were intended to be worked in AA into our own literature? Have we been focusing on the problem (war stories) for the past 55 years and not the solution and should we try to change this trend? Are these questions people are afraid to ask? Because I don't hear many people asking them.... Anyways mathew just want to say thanks and it took a lot of guts to post what you posted.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California

5/6/13 - 8:06 PM

Hats off to Matthew and Joe for time and effort in opening two posts. I hope to post a topic on related issues so only have a few comments here.

Matt, I don't get connection between leaving combo book alone while needing to improve our offering. I don't agree that AA had no literature, step or profound outlook and procedural changes, of course they didn't leave their first or second offering alone. Their literature acknowledges that. I also feel its harsh to criticize past boards and committees, we don't know how horrendous it may have been to oversee consideration of stories. Recent requests to resubmit with more emphasis on recovery hints at that. We can change by due process what we don't agree with. I would unhesitatingly affirm suggestions to recovering members to think through the consequences of a bet. Your 'abc' appears logical but its not actually supported by the influences you quote.

Joe, I really think a read of six or seven chapters may help you see a little differently, I may be wrong but why not try.

Odie. B. - Area 36, S.E. Ireland

5/7/13 - 2:19 AM

Odie B,

Were you suggesting I read a few chapters of the big book? If yes what exactly would you like for me to think differently about? What chapter? Paragraph? Page ?

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California

5/7/13 - 9:20 AM

Joe T,

My post was short and a re-read is easy and may help you see differently, lol. I'm throwing in rule 62 here in deference to our brothers and sisters who may engage with us in this repartee. Joe, I didn't use the word think and it would not be my job to suggest you think differently, that's your job and prerogative. I merely suggested that reading six or seven chapters may lead to you seeing differently as it would any of us. Is that not exactly what you yourself suggested for the entire fellowship regarding seeing things the way you do at this point as a result of your experiences or awakenings ?

You have five questions for me and again, rule 62 Joe, I have twenty questions for you. Moving forward and presuming, as the topic is effectively about primary purpose, we are engaging in that, I will, nonetheless, clarify my position roughly speaking.

Moving on I would say this,

I would not misuse my membership and access to members by imposing outside literature on them, that is their free choice, what others do is mainly between them and the fellowship. Members in my own area are quite clear on my position and that is why some of them elected me.

If anybody reads six or seven chapters of any approved or appropriate literature I believe they will soon be re-focussed on the primary purpose.

The various editions of chapter five and the surrounding changes of the literature you suggest come to mind based on a conversation frequently occurring with cross addicted members.

I used to think we shouldn't talk about these things as it just gave wings to some who think they have a superior spirituality and program, however, it is

accepted that we do and should, I don't like it but, as I said before, that's what the fellowship has decided and rather than sit back and listen to the non stop self defeating Denial, Distraction, Distortion and Dis-unity from the self appointed saviours of the world I will just join in. The purpose ? Facts over factoids.

Keep an eye out for a topic on DDDD, (rule 62, no cups involved) LOL. Its the ultimate in the way out theories, you may be surprised how close it is to your area. Coming soon.

Odie. B. - Area 36, S.E. Ireland

5/7/13 - 10:28 AM

Interesting topic and dialogue, one that I am going to leave to better people than me. However, I do have an observation.

Had we more time in the Vancouver Trustee meeting, we would have dealt with questions about AA and why we don't allow AA literature into our rooms. Such discussions should be self-evident, but this managed to make it on the agenda. Having such discussions always puts me on edge, irrespective of where our origins lie and how similar some of our literature is with AA. When we get to such a point in the BOT meetings, the interest level evaporates. I fear that much of that same behavior happens on the Trustee Line, when other Fellowships become the backbone of topics and counterpoints.

I'd just like to say that the Trustee Line is for GA matters that involve the Trustees and everyone should try to have these kinds of intellectual debates about the influences of other programs on GA with people offline. I'm not suggesting any kind of restrictions on this subject, but where does it end? Is Bettors Anonymous part of this equation? Are the myriad other self-help groups part of what we are supposed to be doing on this site?

The tone and content of the Trustee Line is always set by those who contribute. I just want to ask those who bring in other Fellowships in to this arena... Is this really something we need to be airing?

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey Trustee Website Admin

5/10/13 - 3:28 PM

Dear Matt,

Karen E. (Area 8A Trustee) is the new Blue Book Committee Chair.

The committee met in Vancouver to discuss how to approach the task of revising/reworking the Blue Book. It was decided that the first thing that should be done is for Trustees and Committee members to go to their fellowships and ask what they want from the Blue Book. After the committee gathers this information, it can get to work on putting the book together.

Some would like to see the Blue Book become a user's manual; some would like to see it as a book of stories and anecdotes; others really love the statistics and want to make sure they are included and updated. The task of putting all of these various desires together in some form of cohesion will certainly require thoughtfulness and discussion, as well as input/submissions from our GA fellowship.

If you (or anyone else reading this) would like to serve on the Blue Book committee, please contact either Karen or me.

I am your Grateful Sister in Recovery,
Jeannie B. - Past Trustee, Area 8A, Minnesota

My Resignation

5/6/13 - 3:51 PM

My dear Brothers and sisters:

I have given this a lot of thought, life itself is complicated and at the moment, I cannot give 100% of myself to the Trustee position as I usually do. The events of the last few weeks have taken its toll on me. There are things I do not understand and probably never will, but the Body spoke and we listen. We

have to be on the lookout for people that have their own agenda, our agenda should always be the good of the Program, to help the Compulsive gambler who still gambles and to support NEW and EXISTING areas with their growing pains, not to pass judgement as to whether an area is big or small enough to become a separate area.

Ga saved my life and I will continue to assist OUR area in the growing process that is always painful but very fulfilling. It has been an honor to serve, maybe in the future I'll try again, but as of today, I'm resigning as Trustee for area 6b

I love you all and thank you for your service, hope to make it to Orlando
Special thanks to Dina P and Dennis for all their support through the years!

Peace and Happy 24 Juan A. - Current Trustee, Area 6B, Puerto Rico

5/6/13 - 6:53 PM

My dear brother Juan,

It is with great sadness that I received your letter of resignation. I know very well how hard you have worked over the years for yourself, for Puerto Rico and for the fellowship at large. Your sincerity, humility and your understanding of the principles of fellowship and recovery will be missed by all those who have Gamblers Anonymous first in their heart.

I believe the defeat of your request was politically motivated and I can only hope that the brothers and sisters you serve will not allow this single act to discourage them or to feel separated from those of us who embrace them.

Little of what takes place at the BOT surprises me anymore. That said, I cannot understand why so many, including your fellow trustees from 6B, chose to vote against your request. Time and time again we have seen many of these same people approve new areas without the blink of an eye even though some did not even come close to meeting the requirements of the Guidance Code and some of which have never been heard from once their area was approved.

I have had my fair share of attacks and underhanded dealings from those wishing to impose their will while insisting they stand on spiritual principles. I know how disheartening it can be but I am confident that your recovery and your love of the fellowship will not allow you to abandon the true principles which are the essence of GA.

Despite my wish that you had not redesigned I certainly understand your reasons for doing so. Please know that I am but a phone call away and if ever I can be of help to you personally or be of service to Puerto Rico I would be more than happy to do so.

I sincerely appreciate our friendship and I look forward to seeing you in Orlando.

All my best.
Brother Denis M. - BOT Chair
Area 12, New Jersey

5/8/13 - 7:55 AM

Hello To All Trustees

Juan,

I am also saddened by your resignation as a Trustee from Puerto Rico, I also know of your deep passion for this Fellowship and your Area. I want to also wish you continued success on your journey of recovery, and hope you continue to stay involved on whatever level you wish.

But not to be controversial nor contradict anyone, I would like to state the FACTS.

Your agenda item was NOT defeated. It was ruled Out Of Order. Thats all.

The Board did not vote to turn down the request of Puerto Rico to become a NEW Area. The item never came up for a vote.

I am sure the BOT will grant that request when it comes on an agenda at the proper time in accordance with the Guidance Code. It is the interpretation of the Guidance Code that was upheld. Not the defeat of your agenda item.

I do not believe this was a politically motivated defeat. Just a group conscience decision of procedure outlined in the Guidance Code.

I do not believe this had anything to do with attacks or underhanded dealings. Just a procedural issue.

I also hope to see you in Orlando as we continue our friendship. Let me know when you are coming in so we can spend some time together pal.

Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

5/9/13 - 11:51 AM

Dear Brother Richie S:

Thanks for your explanation as to what you think took place in Vancouver. Yes, you are right, I was not in Vancouver and I Thank my higher power that I was not there!

I never said, you can read my resignation letter again if you would like, that the approval of a new area was voted down, dont know where you heard that. What pains me and my fellow brothers and sisters, is that the item was not even allowed to be voted upon!! I'm not going to go into specifics but I know you remember the many times we approved new areas in odd years, they went to a vote and the "body" decided it was the right thing to do. The push to have the item declared "out of order" is at the heart of my resignation, for it troubles me that for some of my fellow Trustees would feel so strongly as to block Puerto Ricos attempt to separate from Florida and to use the Guidance Code as a means to that purpose. Trust me Richie that I too read the Guidance Code and nowhere I saw an impediment for our request. More so I sent an email to my fellow area 6b Trustee at the beginning of April asking them for their support on item 113 and NEVER heard back, it would have been nice if we where forewarned, at least from the same people that had been pushing for us to do so 3 years ago.

Puerto Rico GA is turning 20 years in June and that was one of the main reasons for our request and the fact that we have reached a moment in our history that being part of area 6b just does not make sense.

I'm hurt, we are hurt, I'm sure it will pass and I'm sure Puerto Rico will be assigned its own area, It is just too bad that some of our fellow Trustees USE the Guidance Code only when it suits their needs or wants!

Big Hug my Brother and see you in Orlando!
Juan A. - Former Trustee, Area 6B, Puerto Rico

5/9/13 - 10:16 PM

Brother Juan,

As I read these submissions to the Trustee Line I am very saddened by your resignation as Trustee of Area 6B. In the time that I have come to know you through your commitment to the International Relations Committee I have appreciated you're your commitment to both your area as well as the committee work. You have willingly accepted all responsibility for the correspondence requests that have come through the I.S.O. and our committee from your area.

I was in Vancouver when your item and the Arizona Spanish meeting's agenda items were brought to the BOT floor. Both items were challenged and ruled "Out of Order" when the BOT Chairman ruled that they were "In Order". Richie S. is correct that these items were not "defeated" as stated by our BOT Chairman. They can be resubmitted during the normal re-alignment BOT meeting in the even year as the Guidance Code states in Article XVII AREA LOCATION OF TRUSTEES, Section I.

My interpretation of this situation and how it has been handled in the past is this.

When an "existing area" wishes to divide its meetings and form a new area that should be handled at the normal re-alignment BOT Meeting as stated in our Guidance Code.

In regards to "New" geographical areas that have not been listed as a part of any other, Article XVII, Section 2A of the Guidance Code sets a procedure to

follow for that new area. They are required to submit four pieces of information to the BOT Chairman prior to the agenda closing of the BOT meeting that the request is being made.

Puerto Rico has been a part of Area 6B for quite some time now, apparently twenty years by the information you provided in your letter. That speaks to an "existing area" and by then Guidance Code should be handled at the Re-Alignment BOT Meeting.

It is true that there have been a number of countries granted new areas and trustees in the recent past. These areas such as Sweden and South Africa to name a couple were not part of an existing geographical area on our Confidential Trustee Listing of areas and their trustees. I remember at the time the reasoning was that it would not be right to require a new area to wait as much as two years before they could be granted a new area and trustee(s). This being said, during some of these submitted requests the required information has not always been presented correctly. In some cases the BOT voted to approve the area despite that. Those decisions were the responsibility of "those particular Boards". There was certainly the opportunity at those times for any trustee to challenge whether those actions were in order or not. I specifically remember presenting the country of Mexico for approval and the agenda item having to wait another six months to the next conference because they did not have an intergroup.

I personally believe as Richie S. has stated that there was no "political motivation" to delay these agenda items as the BOT Chairman has suggested in his submission to the Trustee Line. I further believe that our Chairman's statements regarding this issue are inappropriate to say the least. What happened in these two agenda items, was that the Guidance Code was upheld which is the responsibility of all of us. Whether or not anyone was appalled by what happened is not the issue, certainly no trustee in their right mind wanted to delay these two requests. Once again these items were not defeated, they were ruled out of order. They can be resubmitted at the proper time.

Just an observation, but I find it strange that some of our trustees can look at other issues and defend the Guidance Code very strictly. Yet those same trustees on completely different issues are willing to bend the interpretation of the Guidance Code. To me it's quite simple if the way we are doing something doesn't seem right we as trustees need to change the procedures by the proper means, new agenda items.

Again just my two cents Juan and what I have observed in the past.

Looking forward to seeing you in Orlando it has been quite a while. Peace my friend.

Your Brother in Recovery
Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee, Sacramento, IRC member

Cry About Retention, But Do Nothing About It

5/8/13 - 11:25 AM

No doubt those who know me would classify me as a 'GA Hardliner'. That is fine with me, because I am not one to look for a wiggle around items in the Guidance Code or any other issues that involve procedures or guidelines about this program.

Somewhere in the past, the statement that GA only retains 3% of its members surfaced to where I become aware of it. Whatever that number is in reality, the fact remains that our retention rate is nothing less than abysmal. This submission is going to be my take on one of the many reasons I believe this is happening.

In too many rooms, members are encouraged to talk about anything that is on their mind. Really? Is this why I come to GA? My understanding is the first paragraph on page 2 of the Combo Book... "Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem."

I don't have an issue with people talking about problems with their job, but tie it into gambling. Speaking about personal relationship issues are not a problem,

but tie it into gambling. Any subject is okay, as long as you tie it into gambling. For me to sit there and listen to someone give therapy about a concert they went to, or something their spouse said to them, or tell everyone that they have been tired because they are working too many hours, etc, etc, etc. I'm NOT interested if you don't impart the lessons you have learned in GA that relate to these items or issues you are struggling with as it relates to program and these events.

All this other 'noise' is something for you and your sponsor. I have no problem sitting on the phone with people I sponsor trying to help them through with anything they feel is a problem with work, or friendships, or any one of dozens of other items. I just don't want to hear any of it in the room, unless it is tied into GA. I'm there because I am a compulsive gambler and I want to stay as crisp as possible in dealing with my illness (not disease, but that's for another posting). If something is bothering any of the members of that room that has nothing to do with gambling, I and many others will stay for as long as possible after the meeting to talk about ways to get the member through whatever issues are on their mind. Just keep it out of the meeting, unless you tie it into gambling, sharing your experience, strength and hope.

Many will say that what happens in our lives can act as triggers for us to gamble and therefore we should not prevent anyone for saying whatever they want. Really? Page 17, use the telephone list. Talk to your sponsor about such issues. Ok, if you want to use that as a premise, then say that when this situation happens, it makes me think about gambling. Is that so hard? Or what about saying that situations like that used to make me want to gamble, but now I deal with it better and hear is how I have learned to deal with that issue. Is that so hard?

I want everyone reading this submission to think about this situation. A new member comes into your room. He/she is devastated. Let me use he instead of he/she. He is sitting there not knowing what to think but is going to be a solid 'yes' on #20 when he is asked the 20 questions. Strangers are all around him, applauding when people make their admissions, people are smiling, maybe talking about some of the good things happening to them. He is sitting there wondering what these people can do for him, as the room as yet to make the connection complete. Before he is called, he as to listen to this babble from members about a sale that someone missed a major department store, or my doctor kept me waiting for almost 2 hours before taking me.

In my room when a new member comes into the room, the Secretary or the Chair make a point of asking the room to go back in time and try to focus their therapies on situations that would be relevant to the new member. Without such guidance, the new member is let guessing what he is really doing there listening to things that don't belong in a room of compulsive gamblers.

I'm really interested in hearing from those who disagree and would try to rationalize and justify therapy that has nothing to do with gambling and material that belongs OUTSIDE the room between members and the sponsors. I hear too many times over Guidance Code violations from room..."Who is it really hurting?" This posting is not about Guidance Code violations, but those we hurt are those who ramble on about non-GA related issues.

You want to put a plug in that kind of behavior in your room(s)? Call a business meeting and vote to make the meeting Chair come up with a topic. Keep everyone focused on that and you will see an increase in your membership over time.

Ok all you GA liberals...fire away. I'm braced for it.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/13/13 - 6:06 PM

To David M,

Regarding your entry on THERAPY, and Sharing Our Experience Strength and Hope with others who have a gambling or compulsive gambling problem.

David I am fully in agreement with your proposition that what is said in a meeting, and often, is not Therapy. In fact it should not be referred to as such.

Therapy is for the office of a therapist. We are not therapists, doctors, lawyers, or other practitioners, but even if we are trained in one of these areas, we should leave that practice for rooms outside of the GA room. I have never

been comfortable with some offering to give their THERAPY, only with those who SHARE.

We are encouraged to share our EXPERIENCE (because we can not give away what we do not have), our STRENGTH (because we get stronger as we work the program) and HOPE (because we have come to believe that the future will take care of itself if we can proceed one day at a time without gambling).

I was also thinking of having a TOPIC before I got to that part of your statement toward the end. Identifying a topic may not in and of itself assist the speaker as it has often been said that a person may share whatever is on his mind, but an effort should be urged to tie it in with the topic as well.

Roger L - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

5/14/13 - 10:55 AM

I was looking forward (in a selfish way) to reading the responses to this topic. Selfish as in self care, as it was explained to me at one stage in the rooms. I think the O.P. (opening post) touches on not only the vital core tenet of Retention but also the equally vital core principle of Unity. Bottom line is we all know the Name on the Door and we all have equal responsibility to ensure that that is what is available to all of us, the program, for new, current, returning and future members alike. I think it is a great suggestion to highlight the difference between the meeting itself and the after gathering and, indeed, the myriad other tools available to us.

In my own experience in my area one of the most damaging and dis-unifying periods involved a significant amount of misuse of meeting time to further purposes which do not belong in the rooms. Personality and outside issues, primarily.

The fact is that when the meeting starts there is in effect a captive audience, many times vulnerable to the misuse of the time by some members, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes purposely.

By the way, by accepting the help of the fellowship in reviewing our use and understanding of the program and how it could be applied, One meeting became five and retention has risen substantially, through the program as it exists, not through any brilliant eureka findings. Mind you, that is retention of people who genuinely want the program, as in our literature, that's the way it works out.

It is easy to say sure anyone can say anything they want, who are we to stop them. Not so easy is taking the stance that, if pages 2 and 3 of the combo book are read, any deviation from the proper use of the room has short, medium and long term damage implications for members, particularly those in vulnerable periods, and by association for us all.

To those who would say " Who are we to stop anyone saying anything they like about anything they like " I would ask this question; " Who are we to change the stated purpose of the meeting " I would strongly support any efforts to focus the minds of those attending a meeting on why they are there.

A member attends expecting to be informed, educated, assisted in understanding and dealing with the most serious of problems they will ever encounter, their illness. Who are we to decide that the meeting should resemble a coffee room, where cliques with other agendas can hold to ransom a captive audience, under the guise of being supported by the fellowship.

Apologies to the O.P. but I can't disagree fundamentally with your diagnosis of a serious problem, it is serious.

I would suggest asking ourselves, do we really think that by holding a captive audience to ransom we are helping anybody.

By the way, I have an item on the agenda which suggests adding the fact that it is through the program of this fellowship that we gather together to carry out our purpose, I expect it will fail because of personality issues, it will succeed only in having been tried.

In the meantime I would say all comments gratefully accepted in advance, maybe I'm so far off the mark I should just give up now, or maybe someone agrees with some of it. More important than any of that is an input from as many people as possible on these issues of Retention and Unity.

I remain looking forward, Great topic, O.P.

Odie. B. - Area 36, Ireland SEast

Why Should Being Of Service Be A Thankless Job?
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5/8/13 - 11:25 AM

Structure is a key component to leading a normal life. It seems that it is beginning to become common practice that the one piece of literature that provides such structure is no longer being used. I refer to the Guidance Code. Anyone who knows me knows I feel strongly that as a Trustee it's paramount that we uphold the Guidance Code at every opportunity. Unfortunately, there are those, current and past Trustees, that feel it's not necessary or too much of a burden to do so. To those people I simply say look at number 3 of "Responsibilities for International Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous accessible through the Main Menu here on the Trustee Website, where it specifically states "Uphold the Guidance Code, and all decisions made by the Board of Trustees (not fulfilling this affects G.A. as a whole)."

The most recognizable piece of literature we have is the Combo Book. To many members this is the only piece of literature that matters. It is up to the Trustees, both current and past, to educate our members about the other pieces of literature. While it is easy to look the other way when something goes wrong in our area or when rooms decide to do something that goes against the Guidance Code, it's not right. Trustees have an obligation to inform our membership about the Guidance Code and what it stands for. Some may not want the controversy that surrounds this. Others may feel they are not the "GA police". But this is shortsighted. As time goes by and newer members become more involved and ultimately Trustees, how will they know about upholding the Guidance Code if they're not shown the way now? By looking the other way, we're on a slippery slope down a path that will become worse. When I first became a Trustee, a former Trustee from my area congratulated me and said that this is the most thankless job in the Fellowship. He said this because we sometimes have to make tough decisions and approach rooms and members to explain to them how things need to be done a certain way. The way prescribed by the document that gives us structure. For me, as a Trustee, I've attended meetings in my area where there were violations of the Guidance Code. I simply explained to the room how things need to conform with the Guidance Code. I didn't go in guns blazing, but simply as a person who spoke calmly and explained why certain things could and could not be done. You know what? Each time I was well received with the feedback being they didn't know any differently. That's the best example I can give on why it's our responsibility to educate our membership.

I've heard at BOT meetings and just in general conversation of Trustees that allow violations of the Guidance Code. This saddens me. Some feel they aren't they GA police so it's not their responsibility, as long as whatever may be going on isn't hurting anyone. Well, as was pointed out, not upholding the Guidance Code affects GA as a whole. So, this does hurt. It hurts the entire Fellowship. Even at the BOT meetings when votes were taken that disregarded the Guidance Code had a negative impact on the Fellowship. There may be parts of the Guidance Code I disagree with, but it's not my place to go against it just because I don't agree with it. As a Trustee, and member of GA, I have to abide my group conscience, even if I don't agree.

Some would say we have too many rules in place. That we aren't fulfilling our primary purpose because of the Guidance Code and Rules and Procedures. To these people I say the Rules and Procedures are in place for how the BOT meetings are run. They have no impact on the general membership. As for the Guidance Code, well, it provided structure that I know was missing from my life. And not upholding it affects GA as a whole. So, my question is this. If any Trustee has an issue with upholding the Guidance Code, why did you become a Trustee?

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

Amends

5/22/13 - 2:39 PM

I would like to speak to each and every Trustee in person, but I know that task

would be daunting to say the least. Therefore, I chose this forum to make a formal amend to the head table, the members of the Blue Book Committee, and all of my brother and sister Trustees. I was not at the Vancouver conference, and I know this is unacceptable as a current Trustee. One of the duties of a Trustee is to attend the BOT meetings, and I failed to do so. The reasons I was not there would just sound like excuses, so let me just say that I was unable to fulfill my Trustee duties. I was also a committee chair, and to those on the Blue Book Committee, I am so sorry I was not the leader you needed. Karen E. will do a terrific job, and I am happy someone stepped up to chair this important committee. I have resigned as a Trustee, effective a few weeks ago, but I will always be involved in my local area. Perhaps someday I will run again for Trustee, but for now, I will support all my Brothers and Sisters on the BOT any way I can. And thank you all for allowing me to share the Trustee position with you.

Levi B. - Former Trustee, Area 2, Northern California

5/24/13 - 4:09 PM

Levi,

Clearly you have no obligation to explain why you resigned as Trustee, nor am I asking you to. I just hope it had nothing to do with the fact that you missed a conference (whether the reasons for missing the conference were acceptable in your mind or not).

You may have had Trustee responsibilities you couldn't honor but the second part of an amend is forgiveness. I hope, if not now at some point you are able to reconsider and serve as a Trustee with the passion and joy I got to see in San Diego.

Best wishes,

Steve T. - Area 14, Long Island
