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## Trustee Line for May 2012

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A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 6/30/12.

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### 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

| Item | Subject                             | Last Entry         | Entries |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| 1.   | <a href="#">Unity Step 6</a>        | 6/1/12<br>12:01 AM | 1       |
| 2.   | <a href="#">A Reality Gut Check</a> | 6/25/12<br>8:45 AM | 2       |

#### Unity Step 6

6/1/12 - 12:01 AM

Unity Step 6 - 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.

I don't really have any direct experience with this unity step, so I am hoping some of you will step up and share yours this month. Since joining GA and going to the Trustees Meeting, I really haven't heard much where GA attempted to endorse and outside enterprise – has it ever happened? If so, please give those of us who are fairly new the details to help us be better informed Trustees.

My experience has been more with situations where outside enterprises have used the GA name without our permission. In Connecticut, public phone listings for Gamblers Anonymous do not have our hotline phone number; they have the number for a council on problem gambling. We are taking steps to correct this situation, but I am also interested in how it happened. Did the council make the conscious choice to use our name, or did a member of the council who is also a GA member come up with the idea? I will let you know what we find out.

I don't want to start getting into Unity Step 8 here, so I will keep it short this month and ask for your help to inform me and others of the GA experience with this unity step. Thank you in advance.

Paul S. - Area 17 Trustee, CT and Western MA

#### The Task Ahead

6/2/12 - 9:49 PM

Since coming back from Boston, I have heard numerous Trustees qualify the Trustee meeting from both ends of the spectrum of great, to a waste of time. Just so you're clear on my view, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best, I rate it as a 3. This negative bias comes from what I believe with a total lack of continuity in how the BOT operates relative to the overseas countries. I am particularly irritated at how the issues brought up by Argentina and Spain, were not clearly understood by the body, as evidenced by the tsunami-like reversal of sentiment and defeat of items up for the second vote being deleted

from either the By-Laws or the Guidance Code to remove redundancy and thereby improve clarity of function for both the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents.

At the end of the meeting Herb gave a very heartfelt apology to the body, as Chair of the BOR/BOT Procedural Review Committee, for misleading and misdirecting the Trustees regarding these changes that took up a substantial part of the agendas for the last few years. I am on this committee with other very competent members of GA. However, the committee relied on 1 person to review the duplicate provisions in both the By-Laws and the Guidance Code. When the committee was told by this person that we could remove X or Y because it was the 'SAME' as A or B, the committee approved it, without double-checking. What we later found out in Boston, was that the 'SAME' was not identical, but it was the SAME in concept. We trusted this person and that was the committee's mistake and as a committee member, my mistake. So Herb was taking the heat for the entire remaining committee members, who were also responsible.

However, my issue in this submission is about the distortions that came out about this removal process of items from the Guidance Code and their insertion in the By-Laws. The overwhelming point that was being made was that both Spain and Argentina, and I imagine all of the other overseas areas, don't recognize the By-Laws, because they are for the California Corporation of Gamblers Anonymous. If you haven't read the By-Laws lately, check it out. It is clearly about how things run from the corporate side.

The pleas from our Trustees from Spain and Argentina was not to remove the items from the Guidance Code because since they don't use the By-Laws in their respective countries, that those remove items would be forever lost. When that was thrown out on the floor, it hit like a nuclear bomb. The entire room was shocked that the Board of Trustees could even think of stripping away this information from the overseas areas. The voting rolled completely over. Items that were approved 100-6 on the first vote, for example, failed on the second by the opposite margins similar to 6-100. Item after item failed in the same way like dominoes falling in a row.

Here's my problem with this. Although the By-Laws might not be a legal document in foreign countries, it is still a part of our literature and available to all who are in GA. Nothing disappears and foreign countries can still reference it for their information on how GA works. To represent that these proposed Guidance Code items that would be removed and transferred to the By-Laws would be lost forever is dishonest.

The BOT has gone overboard with any issue that involves overseas areas. It is raw emotion that makes the Trustees not think things through when it comes to these issues. Case in point is how the BOT voted to override the Guidance Code when it came to accepting Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay as new areas. Of course, why should the BOT pay attention to the Guidance Code, because this was an issue about overseas areas?

The bottom line is that any area that wants to be part of Gamblers Anonymous has to abide by all procedures and literature that we have in place. That means that because Argentina and Spain say they can't use the By-Laws because it doesn't apply in their respective countries, it doesn't make them disappear, which was the reason we heard for voting against the changes to the Guidance Code and By-Laws.

As Trustees, decisions have to be made from an informed basis and free from emotions about what makes us feel good. Granted, many of the items from the BOR/BOT Procedural Review Committee were improperly submitted and their arguments for approval were flawed. Yes, they should have been rejected, but for those reasons, not for their potential loss because overseas areas, choose not to reference the By-Laws.

I know that the committee will work more diligently in the future, but it is incumbent on the Trustees to also do their homework and understand the basis on which items are evaluated. Hopefully, this entire situation that presented itself in Boston with the misdirection of the By-Laws and the improper description of the net effect of moving items from the Guidance Code

will be just a memory, as we move forward.

For my part in the committee's errors, I apologize to all those who had to endure the protracted problems in Boston. Now I would like to hear from Argentina and Spain about how their positions were not the reality of what would happen to those items removed from the Guidance Code and placed in the By-Laws.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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6/25/12 - 8:45 PM

David:

I cannot speak for Argentina and Spain, but I'm confident that the request was made out of honesty, and not dishonesty. The request they made, and that the body accepted, was not to remove items related to the business of GA from the Guidance Code. It was a simple request, and if we want to be an International Brotherhood and Sisterhood, as we call ourselves in every "International Conference", we should behave as such.

We can choose to see the reaction of the Body as a reversal, I see it as an awakening, a realization that this is bigger than all of us, that as our program states, we are merely servants, we do not govern.

Hopefully Argentina and Spain will chime in, this is my humble reply to your post.

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

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