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Trustee Line for July 20, 2007

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From The Trustees

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

6/21/07 - 2:38 PM
Greetings fellow Trustees.

I am writing in response to Gary S.'s submission about the Walk-A-Thon.

I was very disappointed to see that Gary has suggested that we publish in the ISO bulletin the amount of money raised by each area. For me, this turns a fundraising event into a contest. It is not important who raises the most money; what is important is that we make an effort to raise some money.

Gary also pointed out that more than 90% of the BOT voted in favor of the Walk-A-Thon. I was in minority. The problem I see with this is that we are going from a Fellowship that relies on voluntary contributions from its members to requiring members to support a Walk-A-Thon. Since we do not accept outside contributions, those involved in the walking can only go to GA members for donations. For me, it is like the pastor asking the congregation for more money.

In order to put on a Walk-A-Thon, it will require someone or group of people to invest time in setting up and organizing the event. I can't help but feel that their time could be better spent trying to help keep new members in the program.

If this were a business that needed more revenue, there would be two things to do - raise prices or sell more. By having this Walk-A-Thon we are, in affect, raising prices by "charging" more from our membership. If we were to take the "sell more" approach, it would equate to having more members available to donate to ISO. Just in our area here in Chicago, with about 60 meetings a week, if every meeting attracted and kept one additional new member each year, and if those new members gave \$1 a week to ISO, Chicago alone would increase its ISO donations by \$3000 a year. I realize that new members can't afford to give much when they are new, but if we focused our efforts on retaining the new member, rather than setting up a Walk-A-thon, then, eventually, those new members would be in a position to give back to the program.

Since the BOT overwhelmingly voted to have the Walk-A-Thon, I know most of you feel this is a good idea. I hope we have the foresight to not make this into a contest to see who raises the most money. I do not believe it would be in the best interest of our recovery.

Thanks for listening.

Tom D. - Area 8

6/21/07 - 3:04 PM
Response to Mike A letter

I do not know why we make it an issue about to secretly conceal the Trustee contact information. I think that it should be fine, if not encouraged, that if a member of our program would like to be able to contact a trustee from another area. If a member came up to me and asked for Mike A. number, I would give it to him or her. As long as I felt that they were in their right mind and had the right reasoning. I am not joking ? I am being logical and sensible.

In Mike's letter the comment from the other trustee is stating that we as trustees do not value or trust our fellow trustees. If we do not stand as a body for respect and trust for each other ? than what do we have. We can disagree on many items and feelings ? but I trust that my brothers and sister trust and logic will always have my and GA best interest.

We are all here to help each other grow in the program that gave us life.

Here is an inspiration quote that fits:

UNDERSTANDING

Nothing in life is to be feared,

it is only to be understood.
Now is the time to understand more,
so that we may fear less.

- Marie Curie

I hope all can rest in peace tonight knowing that our fellow trustee is watching over you for your best interest ? I know I can.

Gary S. - Area 12

6/21/07 - 9:02 PM

In response to Mike A's note in the June trustee line, I agree with him 100% on steps he took to find the member some help to find a meeting or just be able to talk to someone in a city they are visiting. Bobby B. left a message on my home phone and cell phone and I returned it as soon as I left work. I was able to pick him up and take him to a meeting which I believe he enjoyed. Another member took him back to his hotel and I checked up on him the next day, he was doing well. Any trustee that has a member coming to Vegas and will need a meeting or just needs talk to someone please give them my numbers. I will do my best to get them to a meeting or find someone in the program that can. If they need my address that's ok too!!!!

Thank You,
Ron S. - Area 3

6/22/07 - 2:01 PM

Hi Mike....Mike I also feel strongly that you were totally wrong on giving out information from the CONFIDENTIAL listing of Trustees. I'm almost scared to ask you what do you think ...CONFIDENTIAL means...what I have done and will continue to do, is always ask can I give the persons number out before I reach the Trustee and then after reaching the Trustee, usually by phone, its quicker than an e-mail,ask them if I can give out their number ...I have also when not getting an answer from one Trustee number call the next one. Again Mike I believe that the trustee listing so mark CONFIDENTIAL and since it is we should abide by that and not give out the information that is listed in it, as if its candy...tally-ho for now.

Joe B. - Area 6C

6/22/07 - 2:16 PM

I guess Carol K, Area 9, summed up how most of the Trustees feel about the Past Trustee Decisions. I have also spoke with other trustees on this, they also feel a need for them, or should I say the ones they like, but not all, but have no idea where they should be placed or how they should be used. They will always be part of the minutes from each Trustee meeting, but that's about all. If you would like to quote some of them you will have to carry around with you each trustee meeting minutes. The Trustees have helped me in my decision to ask for the PTD committee to be disbanded, as you as Trustees can not make up your minds what you would like to do with them. I hear to often ..well they mean nothing since they are not in the Guidance Code, but when the committee tried to place some of them there, your voice was overwhelming NO..ok, I hear you now. so if anyone places on the up coming agenda item for a Straw Vote or items just for Discussion they should be rules OUT OF ORDER. For no matter what we say on them, it will not have any meaning and no bite. So lets stop wasting time on items like..."A sponsor should not have sexual relations with their sponsee"..When that came up on the agenda I really wanted to ask the question...WHY NOT....tally-ho for now

Joe B. - Area 6C

6/24/07 - 9:06 PM

RESPONSE TO DEFINITION OF GAMBLING:

I can agree about calling into the radio station or buying a brand of coffee, yogurt, etc that I normally wouldn't just because they are offering a prize. To me that is gambling whether I win or not just buying it would be the gamble. The biggest problem I had with the motion was it was connected with winning. Winning or losing shouldn't matter whether or not it is gambling. It is gambling if you do it win or lose - the outcome isn't part of the definition. If I happen to walk into a store (with no advance advertising) and they say I am the millionth customer and win some prize - I didn't gamble I was just given a gift. I did nothing to make it happen. Yes it could be dangerous but it wasn't gambling. A bigger than expected tax return could be dangerous too. I will share this with people in my area and see what we come up with.

RESPONSE TO Mike and/or any Trustee looking for a connection in Michigan. Please feel free to give out my email, cell phone or home phone number. I have given others numbers and names and it has made a difference.

Carol K. - Area 9

6/27/07 - 11:52 AM

I want to invite Gam-anon representatives to our monthly Intergroup meetings for Area 2a, Northern Alberta. There are many points of mutual interest between our GA members and Gam-anon. We are currently planning a 25th anniversary of GA in our zone and have Gam-anon members assisting us. Are there any impediments in GA policy that may preclude Gam-anon from becoming involved with our Intergroup? I would like

to hear opinions of other Trustees on this matter.

Bob C. - Area 2

7/7/07 - 7:45 PM

Hello all current and former Trustees,

This submission is in response to both Ron S. and Mike A. who both made submissions last month.

Ron S. - with regard to the definition of gambling. I feel that the current definition is as adequate as it can be. With that, I mean in order for it to be more effective it would, in my opinion, need to be as long as the combo book is. My experience is that most people instinctively know what gambling is. If they are questioning if an event is gambling, hopefully they are doing it with their sponsor or someone else in the room who can help them talk it through.

I respect Marshall's desire to provide clarity to the definition of gambling and I salute all those who will try in the future to improve upon it's effectiveness. In the meantime, I know that for me, talking with members who ask the questions is the most effective thing I can do to help them make the right decision.

Mike A. - I too support the notion that confidential nature of the Trustee list is that of last name and address. I personally would never take offense to someone providing my number to any member in any area to be able to contact me while in the Los Angeles (and surrounding) area. As a Trustee, I am, in my opinion, on a 24/7 schedule with regard to receiving GA related calls.

Respectfully and with Serenity, Ed K. - Area 1

7/17/07 - 9:00 AM

Hello to all my fellow Trustees, I thought it was necessary to respond to Mike A's article in the last Trustee Line. But since I do not know the entire story, (not that I want to know the details).

Let me just say that for me:

1. - Any member can give MY number to any other member at any time. And any Trustee can give my number to any member at any time. That is just the way it is for me. You need not give me a 'heads up' it is not important, to me. If you would like to, fine but not necessary.
2. - I hope next time, when writing an article like that, we as a group, would leave off Places, Times, etc. It is the principle that is important, not the details of who, where, or when.

Thanks for listening
Richie S. - 1st Co-Chair, BOT

7/17/07 - 3:47 PM

Dear G.A. brothers and sisters,

I would again like to take the opportunity to express just how well the 90 Day Room works in our area. For the past three to four years we (the Fairlawn and Carlstadt area) have utilized the 90 Day room and found that it has helped tremendously in retaining our new members. It has also enriched the recovery of our older members who conduct the meeting.

At our next conference in California , we will be voting on making the 90 Day Room Pamphlet official G.A. literature. I can only tell you from my experience that it works and is a good and helpful tool to our program.

Thank You,
Andy D. - Area 12

7/17/07 - 11:24 PM

Hello fellow trustees,

I am writing about a new piece of literature I am submitting at the Los Angeles trustee meeting. This is a subject that has been very important in my recovery and I would love to have support and feedback from you at the meeting. It is new literature and it is on "pressure relief". The main pieces of literature we have (the green and blue packets, along with the computer based spreadsheet) are wonderful and I wanted to create a new piece that would compliment them.

This new piece could work as a pamphlet, that any new member could pick up and read, so they and others they wish to share it with can learn about one of the most tremendous tools of our program. When I look at page 17 of the combo book, and see number 6 about pressure relief, it makes me want to have something readily available for everyone to see what we mean about it being a valuable tool of this program. I am excited about the possibility of having literature that can work as a compliment to the green and blue packets, as well as the incredible excel spreadsheet forms.

With all of this coming together, the possibility of spreading hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers, is just getting even more possible. I have spent the past several months writing and rewriting the information (based on valuable feedback from other gamblers anonymous members), and feel like it is coming together nicely.

I hope you will support this piece of literature by doing two things. (1)Read the attachment to my agenda item (which gives the entire piece of literature that has been written), and give whatever feedback you feel is important to the process. (2)Vote to approve sending this literature to the literature committee in Los Angeles in October, so that we can make something special happen for all compulsive gamblers.

Thank you for considering this item and allowing me to contribute in this special way.

Your brother in recovery,

Tom S. - Area 7A

7/19/07 - 7:31 AM

Hello To All My Fellow Trustees,

Well we are now in the dog days of summer, and I am so looking forward to the 50th Anniversary Conference in L.A. It is certainly looking like a terrific event, and I am looking forward to seeing all my friends from around the globe and making new ones.

Thanks again Chicago for putting on a great Conference, and showing all of us the Unity that exists there.

The agenda will be closing in approx. 2 weeks. So please get your agenda items in quickly. In the Chicago Agenda we passed 2 items as it relates to rooms and feeling safe. As we can ask someone to leave if they are abusive to another member, or if they are being disruptive. I am glad that those items passed. Now might be the time to extend that concept to inter-groups, mini-conferences, and national oh excuse me Inter-National Conferences. Don't we have the right to feel safe in those environments too! Can we ask a member who is abusive in these settings to leave? So maybe someone would like to make these motions in the next agenda????

Next this trustee web site is a terrific forum! I like reading it and being kept informed. I know there are more uses and I am trying to familiarize myself with all the tools it offers. I hope you all do the same, and make it useful to yourself and others.

So thanks again to all for having the faith in me to take on the task at hand. Tom and Herb and I are busy putting things together for a smooth transition and a terrific meeting on Oct 4th.

Richie S. - 1st Co-Chair
Area 6

p.s. I was so glad to hear our brother Sal S. is free. And will be going to a half-way house in Buffalo. WAY TO GO SAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

7/19/07 - 1:23 PM

Dear Fellow Trustees both past and present,

I just finished reading the submissions in the last trustee line for June and am truly amazed and delighted with the clarity and passion that I read.

It is obvious to me that there are many trustees and past trustees with similar feeling to mine about the Gamblers Anonymous program and the importance of the Board of trustees.

We have the future of GA in our hands and we must make sure we do not fumble the ball.

I fully agree with David M regarding the importance and relevance of the way Denis M (our past chairman) conducted himself and the direction he helped guide us into. The importance of the committee work being done will have a great impact on Gamblers Anonymous and must continue and grow. I am confident that Tom will continue to guide us in this direction and Richie and I will support him to the best of our ability. (With your help and support).

We are entering an era of tremendous growth of Gamblers Anonymous worldwide and we must open our minds and our hearts to embrace our fellow members from all over the world. We must keep this in mind when we discuss and pass agenda items that impact Gamblers Anonymous as a whole. This 'whole' is now way beyond our geographic boundaries and cultural differences must be respected. Doing it our way is no longer enough. We must try to do it the best and proper way for all compulsive gamblers.

Having said this, I am anxiously awaiting the Trustee meeting at the upcoming 50th Anniversary Conference in Los Angeles. There are already some very important items on the agenda and I hope we will all study them with an open mind and heart. I am sure that we should read in next month's Trustee Line what our opinions are on the items on the agenda for October 4th. Tom is starting the meeting at 10:00 AM on Thursday the 4th to assure that we have enough time to 'properly' cover the whole agenda.

To set David's mind at ease and anyone else thinking on the same line, I am confident that the Board of Trustees will continue on the path started by Denis and Michelle and Chuck and that all the current Trustees will support this direction.

Until next time,
Herb B - 2nd Co-Chair
Area 5

7/20/07 - 5:17 PM

Dear Trustees,

Looking forward seeing everyone in Los Angeles. Hard to believe it is only 75 days away! My question for my fellow trustees is how you do handle the situation of members with less than 39 meetings wishing to celebrate their anniversary? I am referring to long standing members who may have health issues that prevented them from attending the 39 required meetings. Members who year in and year out have always been there every week, but this one year, due extenuating circumstances, do you show compassion for this member? I would appreciate responses to see how other rooms and areas handle this situation as I am sure it has come up before and will continue to in the future.

Alan J. - Area 15

7/20/07 - 11:59 PM

I have 2 issues that I think need to be aired with the Trustees. One is the procedures that we utilize at the BOT meetings, and the other is the election process of the 3 Chairs.

For the 7 years that I have been attending Trustee meetings and what has been one of the more irritating aspects of the meetings is the complete lack of uniformity of decisions rendered from the front table. Clearly there is a difference from meeting to meeting and even more distressing has been the difference between presiding Chairs in the same meeting. There cannot be a better example than what happened with my presentation as Chairman of the committee for the Online Pressure Relief Group Financial Forms. The question was raised during the presentation as to whether or not the forms had to be approved by the literature committee before the Trustees could vote on it. As committee chair, I explained that it was a product that was an outgrowth of a committee that was authorized by the BOT. That was the position of the presiding chair and the item went to what turned out to be a unanimous vote in favor if 77-0; an event that took my breath away.

Just 4 agenda items later, we heard Andy D, from area 12, look for a vote to approve his committee's work on a piece of literature for 90-day rooms. That item was ruled to go to the literature committee instead of taking the 1st of 2 votes. This was completely opposite of the decision rendered previously for the Pressure Relief application. This piece of literature was brought to the floor by a BOT authorized committee for the purpose of creating such literature.

The inconsistencies from the front table that we have all seen from the front table and the attendant points of information, points of order, challenges to the chair, serve to create disharmony. In addition to the wearing down of everyone's patience, it chews up time that could be better served hearing agenda items.

The point of this part of my submission is that there needs to be a set of rules and procedures for how the Trustee meetings are run. This way, we get on with the business of GA and not the business of 'BS'. I am pleased to be part of the Rules and Procedures committee that was charged with the responsibility of doing exactly what is mentioned in this paragraph. Herb B, our new 2nd Co-Chair of the BOT, was appointed as the Committee Chair and has skillfully guided the other 4 committee members in a process of delineating in excess of 100 aspects of what goes on during the Trustee meetings and in between them. The committee website page has seen its 5 committee members submitting ideas for all the members to work on and agree to. As time goes on, we are reaching committee consensus on more and more items.

Bringing this mammoth package to the floor for a vote of approval in Portland will be a very ambitious undertaking, considering how people love to nit-pick at the BOT meetings and can often times flush an item into defeat because of punctuation or grammar.

The website has a special segment for each individual item that allows all viewers the opportunity to 'chime in' with their thoughts, either pro or con. There is even a vote tally register to show how people are initially reacting to the items that represent a consensus from the committee. To date, not a single person has rendered a comment about any of the items. Are we all to assume that everyone finds every item 100% agreeable, or is it safer to say that most of the Trustees will look at this in Portland when they open the agenda and attachments for the 1st time?

My inclination, cruel though it may sound to many of you, is that most of you don't care and prefer to rip things apart at the Trustee meetings instead of trying to let committee members and authors of agenda items know what you don't like about an item in ADVANCE of the agenda closing date. I for one would like to think that there is a far greater level of pride in the responsibilities we have as Trustees, rather than to think I am just attending another Intergroup meeting with all the bickering and back-stabbing, but on a higher level of communication. As a committee member, I am hopeful that the Trustees in its entirety will become more involved in this and all the other committees and work for the good of passing agenda items that have been discussed and edited before the items are introduced to the floor.

The next item I want to mention is how disturbed I am about the election for the Chairs that happened in Chicago. I want to be crystal clear that I am not complaining about the results, but the process and the complete lack of professionalism by numerous people before, during and after.

Why is it that we take a closed vote for all the offices and the results are not announced, but the results are known to a group of people who can't seem to keep their

mouths shut? If you want the results, just ask and you will get the count of who lost or won by what margin. Are we children that can't keep the results to themselves? Why don't we just announce the results after each election. Why should we have to be worried about someone's feelings being hurt? If the candidate can't deal with knowing the actually tally, then he/she shouldn't be running. That is of course a subject for much debate, but it is inexcusable that the results are told to others when the trust of the fellowship is being betrayed. Let's make up our minds if we want to hold a closed ballot with not vote tally or take away the mystery and just announce the results. Either way, let the people who do the counting be trustworthy in deed and follow the intent of the elections.

I also think it is reprehensible to have any officer candidate to run through a list of eligible voters and handicap by Trustee who will vote for this person and that person, etc. and to have conversations with other Trustees about such matters. Maybe we should auction off votes if Trustees are undecided. We could setup our own version of eBay on the Trustee website.

We can't stop those who would do any electioneering, but hey everyone, where does this fit into Step 3 about giving up our will and our lives...? Another problem is that in the case of the Co- Chairs, we are all asked to vote for 2 people. In the case of Chicago's election and no doubt others, there were candidates that advocated improperly weighted the ballots by putting only 1 name down. That is not against any written procedures we have in place, which just causes more opportunity for opportunistic candidates. Single votes heavily advantage the name on the ballot and disadvantage the other candidates since a majority vote is necessary for an election.

If I had a dollar for each time I have heard the statement 'Do the right thing', I wouldn't have to work for the rest of my life. Is manipulating the voting process like that 'doing the right thing'? I think most of you would agree it isn't. Again it comes down to giving up our will and just letting things happen, not using the system to leverage ourselves in these elections. I would venture to say that if we had a separate election for the 1st Co-Chair with one vote per eligible Trustee, and then another vote for the 2nd Co-Chair, we might very well have had different results.

Finally, let me just say that what we do as Trustees is supposed to reflect the group conscience. We can surely have rules and procedures for everyone to abide by, with the understanding that this kind of uniformity allows the BOT to once again focus on what is important, helping to allow the fellowship to chart new waters for everyone's recovery. The front desk should be the centerboard to the ship, that keeps it stable in those new waters, not the rudder that can change the direction without the body's approval.

David M. - Area 12
