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Trustee Line for July 2010

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From The Trustees

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

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Tampa Rolling Agenda

7/4/10 - 3:43 PM

Greetings, Fellow Trustees,

It's been some time since I submitted anything to the Trustee Line, and for that I am remiss. However, today I was reading several submissions from May, June, and the Rolling Agenda, and I felt compelled to comment.

First, let me add to the kudos directed at our friends responsible for our wonderful conference in Louisville. One could only wish we had more time to truly enjoy all the area has to offer. Hats off to you all!

Next, item #1 Rolling Agenda, Rules and Procedures. I totally agree with Joe's proposal. Frankly, I've never really liked that there even is an option of 'abstaining'. When I am asked how I feel an agenda item might affect our fellowship, I believe I should either vote for or against the item. To me, abstaining is like saying "I don't care". My area expects me to represent them by making decisions, not being ambivalent. "Decisions are made by those who show up". If you don't care, don't come.

Item #2 Rolling Agenda, Rules and Procedures. When I first read about this item, I thought it was a joke, but, just to be sure, I checked the agenda. I truly believe this proposal could never pass. First, there are many members who might like to comment either for or against an item, and I'd like to hear their comments, but the \$1 per minute fee would stop them cold. (By the way,

who would time them, when would they pay, and what if they refuse? - Or do we get their money up front?) Also, "There are no dues or fees for Gamblers Anonymous membership" (unless you want to submit something or speak on an item at a conference?) As to the initial \$25 fee for even having a suggestion placed on the agenda, that alone would consequently allow us to start our Trustee Meetings on Friday afternoon, because there would be very few submissions. Combine that with the \$1 per minute fee and we could be done in no time at all.

I'd like to respond briefly to Gary S' submission to May's Trustee Line. Gary, it takes a man to apologize when he's done something wrong; however, please remember that although many, many members might have an opinion on something, very few are willing to 'stick their necks out' and risk offending someone. Whenever one criticizes ANYTHING, there are going to be ruffled feathers. There are 3 kinds of people: those who make things happen, those who watch what happens, and those who wonder what happened. From what I've observed you are among the ones who make things happen. And although I don't always agree with you, I respect your opinion. Don't ever be afraid to voice it.

Open Meetings: I don't particularly like them. By definition, if we're going to allow 'outsiders' to attend an "open" meeting, we can't expect them to leave if a member feels uncomfortable speaking with them in the room. Also, how many members would be reluctant to say they feel uncomfortable? Too many. Additionally, our Group Handbook limits the attendance to "spouses and friends". In an ideal world a member, especially a new member, would feel free to be totally open about his feelings with a spouse or friends in the room. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world, and that isn't going to happen. (How many times have we had a member say he's told his wife everything, then experienced the shock when she learns something new?)

Personally, I believe 'open' meetings should be restricted to when we're celebrating something, like an anniversary or pinning. Usually, no one talks about their problems at these 'feel good' meetings, but if someone has a problem, there are members who can speak to them outside of the room.

As to whether or not to allow children in a room during a meeting - absolutely not! The next time you're at any meeting and someone enters the room late, notice how many heads turn. We're so easily distracted by just about any thing, just imagine having a cute baby cooing and burping and, maybe, crying. Unfortunately, no matter what the speaker is saying, all I'm hearing is blah, blah, blah. And, Liz, I'm sorry if my feelings on this hurt your feelings or get you mad, but my impression has always been that my first thought in any room is to me.

Marilyn and I look forward to seeing you all in Tampa.

Your friend in recovery,
John B, Trustee - Area 13, Philadelphia

Same Bed - Different Sheets?

7/4/10 - 5:45 PM

I read the minutes of the June '10 Board of Regents meeting and thought what a fitting farewell they were to a year that I personally believe was full of turmoil and controversy. To say that I felt the now past BOR was highly inefficient with the resolution of items that came up this year would be a massive understatement.

So now it is my turn to once again make what will appear to be antagonistic statements regarding my expectations of the new board. Let me start with the head of the table. The BOR needed a new Chair and evidently the BOR members thought otherwise by re-electing Benni as Chair. Leadership and detailed communication was missing last year and I fear this will be the mantra for the current term. I would have liked to see Ara give it the ole college try as Chair, but that didn't happen, as he was elected as Vice Chair.

During the last fiscal year, I submitted many emails to the BOR with a heavy

message of how questions and answers were being circumvented. True to form, the BOR decided to ignore my issues and therein lies the problem. Evidently no one on the BOR understands that if the questions are answered, then those issues most probably go away. Ignoring the problems is what I used to do when I was gambling. Doing so didn't solve the problems, it only made them worse. In program, I learned early on to deal with my problems head-on. It would be nice to see that from the BOR, for a change.

Although I have little expectation that things are headed for a change, I am hopeful that the new BOR members will turn the rudder to the ship. Doing so puts some pressure on Ara, Bernie, John, Russ and Richard to shake the cobwebs off of the BOR machine, as they are the new members to this board. The July BOR meeting is just a few weeks away. Even with what appears to be a rather robust agenda, I am unconvinced, as of this posting, that we will see any substantive changes, starting with the minutes.

My hope is that under the BOR agenda for July, Old Business, item C refers to agenda item 29 that passed at the Board Trustees in Louisville on an overwhelmingly positive margin. It read as follows: 'All Board of Regents meetings will incorporate the use of a conference calling service to allow all interested GA members an opportunity to hear the meetings as they happen.'

This will be a litmus test for where the BOR sees itself in the structure of the Corporation of Gamblers Anonymous and the Board of Trustees. Article II, Section 2 of the By-Laws states the following: 'The Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is under the jurisdiction of a Board of Trustees and operates under the direction of a document call the 'Guidance Code'.

I am most interested in how the BOR is going to handle all the items that were approved by the BOT regarding the By-Laws. Will this be a recognition that the will of the BOT, a group of 100+ members, must be followed by the BOR, or will this be a battle of egos with the thinking that the BOT has no right to tell the BOR what to do? A challenge arose by a now former BOR member with that premise, which was not upheld. If we put it in those terms, yes the BOT actually does have that right, but the BOT has clearly indicated what it would like the BOR to do, and that is to approve the corresponding changes, as voiced by the BOT. The corresponding items from that Guidance Code that were the counterparts to the items approved for changes in the By-Laws passed by margins in excess of 92%.

Hopefully, the BOR will deal with all these issues and resolve their stances on them in the July BOR meeting or no later than the August BOR meeting. The BOT will take all the items and have a 2nd vote in Tampa. Wouldn't it be criminal to not have a mandatory decision by the BOR in place prior to Tampa? If there is any BOR procedural stalling that puts the items into a holding position by the time we get to Tampa, it could get bloody at the next Trustee meeting.

The BOR is under the collective microscope of the BOT, especially as it related to the BOR procedural review committee. It would be nice to see the acknowledgment of the BOR that these 92+% votes are a mandate from the Fellowship through the BOT. Let's see what tone the BOR is going set for this next fiscal year.

What about everyone else? Are you more optimistic of what lies ahead, or will it be more of the same with just some new faces on the BOR?

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

I was thinking...

7/23/10 - 5:22 PM

Hello Everybody,

I am truely puzzled

I've read and heard from trustees on the "removal" issue-

Please tell me why we should allow someone to be a trustee who does not

want to participate--

All it takes is to make a written response or if really lazy give a proxy

Why in the world should we accept a reelection of someone who missed TWO meetings in a row- --(maybe they didn't have \$.44) maybe they didn't like the agenda

If the BOR sets requirements for being a trustee then that's what the requirements are until they are changed.

84 trustees answered the QRM-was that a quorum ?-abt 60%

12 Trustees are now off the board because they missed two meetings in a row

Count the unfilled positions -Areas that just do NOT elect-for many reasons money the biggie (of course they can still say \$.44 is too much)

What if only 50 trustees had responded to the QRM ?

For those of you who do not know me I am an impatient procrastinator, and I'm not too happy when we spend so much time on changing a word.

I do not think One physical meeting per yr is enough-we don't have time to properly finish one. The last items on the agendas do not get a fair shake-lack of attendance-time running out- tiredness-boredom--etc etc.

I thought that the 20 questions were for every member not just the new folks.

Why do we have so many conferences on top of one another ?

When will we have a physical meeting somewhere besides Canada or USA ??

Why is it okay for local areas to comingle funds -Gamblers Anonymous & Gamanon-??

Just thought I would get some of my thoughts down-I've got more but a few at a time is easier for everyone.

Love to all

Bill B. - Area 15, New York
