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Trustee Line for July 2014

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 7/31/14.

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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A Boost For Unity Step 5 - The GA Way, For A Change

7/2/14 - 11:56 AM

I'm very excited about the Board of Trustees approval of the merit vote for item 61 in Houston 2 months ago. This is potentially, the first strong advertising piece of literature that could be the most effective form of carrying out Unity Step 5...Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

So now it's time to look at what was passed, because this will no doubt start a controversy in and of itself. Click the link and then come back to this posting.

Click the following link - [Houston Agenda Item 61](#)

Before you go off on a rant how billboard advertising is promotion rather than attraction, in direct violation of Unity Step 11, let me give you another link. It is the explanation of Unity Step 11 from the New Beginnings Book, what we commonly refer to as the Red Book. The link is from the New Jersey Intergroup website, and yes, it is 100% compliant with the Board of Trustees website guidelines.

Click the following link - [Unity 11 Explanation](#)

So this ad, if approved, will permit a digital image for use by local areas in virtually any format required to print it. Bus shelters, billboards, magazines, etc, are just a few examples. It is simple and very hard-hitting. What's different about this is the 2 icons at the bottom. One is for the Apple App Store and the other is for Google Play. This means we would be putting an 'App' together for free downloading on those 2 platforms. Telephone hotline usage is down dramatically, as it is no longer the preferred platform for peoples' first entry into Gamblers Anonymous. Website usage is still growing, but App usage is exploding. We need to create a Gamblers Anonymous app.

The purpose of this posting is to get ideas from all those who read it for exactly what you would like to see as a feature on this potential app. Our ISO website does not translate into a very user- friendly experience on a smart phone. We need an App. We can have the ISO website design people do the app, but their first question will be...'What do you want it to do?'

Respond to this posting and list out what you would like to see. We have a lot of new Trustees coming in to Tampa. Let's get them involved with this process of making out a request list.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

7/9/14 - 1:13 PM

Greetings, Fellow Trustees:

In reference to David M's post about the GA Flier passed in Houston (Item 61), I agree it is a good thing. To me, anything that brings attention to the fact that we're here to help anyone with a gambling problem is good. That said, how often have I been at a BOT meeting where something potentially good was brought up, but since it would require some change, it failed? I remember one time when a fellow trustee stated that she would never vote in favor of any changes to the Combo Book. Never?

I understand that some of our members have been practicing their program a certain way for so long that they have a fear of changing something with which they have become quite comfortable. However, to me change is what my program is all about. In order to properly practice the program, I must at least be open to considering any changes suggested. Consequently, I also agree with Marcus G's post about the benefits of modern technology in carrying our message.

Although I believe that many of my fellow Trustees don't read or take advantage of our Trustee Line because of their unfamiliarity with (fear of) the internet, I truly wish that they would trust those of us who do understand the benefits of David's proposal to act in the best interests of everyone.

I, personally, will be proposing a change to our Guidance Code in Tampa. My area intergroup, Area 13, Delaware Valley Intergroup, elects our 3 Trustees and has always fully funded us to attend the International Conferences. I would like intergroup to have the option to set reasonable term limits for their Trustees. My proposal does not require an intergroup to set limits; it would only allow them to, if they desire. My submission for the agenda is as follows:

Guidance Code, Page 15, Article X, Section 5, New Item 16:

An intergroup has the right to impose term limitations on the Trustees it elects to the Board of Trustees from its respective area; however, the limits may not be for less than two (2) consecutive terms.

Let's not be afraid of this change.

See you in Tampa!

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

7/23/14 - 12:58 PM

I am very excited about the potential of a Gamblers Anonymous App.

Suggested features for an App are as follows:

12 Recovery Steps

12 Unity Steps

20 Questions

A Day At A Time – meditation for current day.

Suggestions for Coping with Urges

Towards 90 Days

Beyond 90 Days

Contacts –users can add the names, phone numbers, email addresses and clean dates of other G.A. fellows.

Calendar – reflecting upcoming National Conference dates, Area Mini-Conferences, milestones of those in our contact list, as well as other important dates entered by user – upcoming speakers meetings, local events, etc.

Daily Journal – users can record thoughts, feelings, experiences, strengths and hopes.

Meeting Locator

Local Intergroup Info

National Telephone Meeting Information

Upcoming Conferences - user contact information, registration forms for the upcoming conferences.

Technology

7/2/14 - 1:20 PM

I agree with Dave M. on the need to incorporate more technology in the GA Program to enable communication for members and new people in the program. The conference call for meetings is just one example of how technology can bring people together in this program.

The GA App is a great idea in my opinion on how we can attract new people to the program. Our main purpose is to bring the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. Technology can improve our "message bringing" to those gamblers who still suffers.

Ask the question, "Is it ok if someone texts you about their gambling problem?" Is this different than picking up the phone and calling a GA member? With new people in the program, their first step might be a text and this has happened to me on a few occasions. I do not care how we get them help for their gambling problems as long as they get help.

We need to change the way we look at things in our technological world. Opening up avenues for people to recover from compulsive gambling should be a foremost priority.

Peace and Serenity,
Marcus G. - Area 8C, Minnesota

Completing our 7th Recovery Step

7/4/14 - 6:05 PM

Last night, my homeroom went through a Step 7 meeting. We always do a review of the beige Step Meeting Pamphlet and take the first half of the meeting to discuss it before we start therapy. We do this on the first Thursday of each month coinciding with the month number. We read both pages for the Step and then ask that each person in the meeting take 2-3 minutes to give their thoughts about a word, a phrase, a sentence or a concept that strikes them. We always seem to have a spirited discussion of the Steps, but as always, we must all continually review the Steps.

When it was my turn to speak, I started by saying that I don't believe the Step is written correctly. 'Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.' This should be amended to add the words 'help us'. The Step should read, 'Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to help us remove our shortcomings.'

The last line for the 5th paragraph on the 1st page of Step 7 in the Step pamphlet, says that 'You must do the legwork so your Higher Power can finish the job as He sees fit.' That is the basis of this Step, but it is inconsistent with how the Step is currently written. If it were about asking God to remove our shortcomings, then why is so much of the Step dedicated to the process of change that is repeated in all the Steps? Only we can make that change. It's not about sitting back and waiting for God to flip a switch and our shortcomings are removed. Also, there is no set of conditions that we must have in place first, as a requirement before we can ask God to remove our shortcomings.

I clearly understand that there is much Step work done prior to this 7th Step to bring us to the point of asking for God's help for removal of the shortcomings, but all the Steps speak to continued work, review and improvement in order to lead normal happy lives. The current wording of the Step would suggest that we just ask and God will remove them. I believe that is a gross misrepresentation. It is a recovery imperative that we ask for God's help to help us remove our shortcomings, which is an ongoing, lifetime project.

For those who care to respond, please don't bring AA into this thread. I'm trying to keep this about GA and already there are too many infusions in our Fellowship of things that happen in AA that members believe they have carte blanche to make others think GA should be AA. In defense of that, I call attention to the veritable shutout of items added to the Board of Trustees agendas over decades, that GA members have tried to get approved as GA

material, all of which come from AA. Plain and simple, the GA Fellowship doesn't want them in our Fellowship.

My concern is that many of the Trustees may agree with this change, but putting an agenda item on for Cherry Hill, will butt right up against those who don't care how good the change might be for any Step, they will vote it down just because they don't believe the Steps should ever change.

Chime in with your thoughts. This is not change for the sake of change. This is about making more sense of what we have.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

7/4/14 - 10:09 PM

David,

Thank you for trying to stimulate conversation about recovery. I don't have as much of a comment as much as I have a few questions on step 7 as well as the GA steps in general. I'm hoping the old timers in GA can share their experience strength and hope regarding the GA recovery program (12 steps??). I must confess I do not know how to work the GA recovery program..I couldn't find anyone in my area to guide me through the GA recovery program. Ok so here are my questions...

1) We ask our higher power to remove our shortcomings. What shortcomings? And at what point in the GA recovery program do we uncover these shortcomings?

2) in recovery program #6 it states we're entirely ready to have these defects of character removed. Who is going to remove them? Me? My sponsor? Ga?

3) what character defects? How do I know what my character defects are. Are they discovered by using the GA guide to 4th step inventory?

4) In GA recovery item #8 in the GA red book it states that we made a list of people we harmed and became ready to make amends to them all in recovery item #4 (made a moral and financial inventory if ourselves). Again was this list accomplished using The GA guide to fourth step inventory? If so can someone explain to me how this is accomplished?

I'm sorry if the language I'm using is confusing. It was brought to my attention by a GA old timer that we don't have 12 traditions we have the unity steps and GA doesn't have 12 steps we have the recovery program. So if anyone understood my any if my questions please chime in. And thanks again David for bringing up something that pertains to recovery. I don't think the recovery program is talked about at GA meetings and on the trustee line enough.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California, former Trustee

Are the Guidance Code and the Unity Program Compatible?

7/20/14 - 1:47 AM

Hello fellowship,

I'm asking this question because someone at the last intergroup I attended made a statement that he felt they were not compatible. I thought about it and I had to agree with him. In the ten plus years I've been a member of GA I can count a handful of times where there was some disunity because of some guidance code violations. I have never seen disunity as a result of some unity step violations. I think most 12 step programs have survived as long as they have because of the 12 traditions/unity steps. The unity program uses words like we should and we ought. The only time I see the words DO NOT is in unity step 2. The unity steps are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. We follow them willingly because we want to and we feel we ought to, not because anyone makes us. I think this is where the guidance code differs. The guidance code has successfully allowed GA trusted servants to govern groups. Another question I want to ask is does one take precedence over the other? From what I witnessed at area 2's last intergroup, it absolutely does. Paul S. If you are reading this, you touch a lot on this issue in 2012 when you were writing about the unity steps. I hope you can chime in on this.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California - former trustee

