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Trustee Line for August 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.

7/23/07 - 3:21 PM

After reading the July issue of the Trustee Line, I feel a lot of the Trustees missed the point on a Trustee giving out information that is labeled CONFIDENTIAL. Its wonderful that you gave your OPINIONS that you don't mind that your phone number can be given out from CONFIDENTIAL TRUSTEE LISTING, it is currently listed that way. It can be only changed by placing an item to change it on the agenda, until that is done it still labeled CONFIDENTIAL. Nobody has the right to give out someone's information without their permission. To me its just like the 39 meetings in the prior 12 months, I don't like that, but as a Trustee I have to protect it, I don't have the right to allow any room not to abide by it. So since the listing is labeled CONFIDENTIAL I do not have the right to give out its contents unless I get permission and that Trustee did not get permission, and that was WRONG, no ifs ands or buts. Its when I started to do things the GA way and not my way that my RECOVERY started. If people don't want to accept the responsibility of the Trustee position and stop doing things their way and do them the GA way then can but give up the Trustee position.

Joe B. - Area 6C

8/16/07 - 6:21 PM

Hello All,

I placed this on the agenda, any feedback is greatly appreciated.

How does your area handle pressure relief meetings when there are numerous credit cards/debts, since the new laws came into effect and credit card companies are now legally allowed to charge interest rates as high as 30%.

See you in L.A.
Mike A. - Area 14

8/16/07 - 8:34 PM

I was wondering how Trustees attempt to get "coverage" of the meetings in your area. Do you attend every meeting in your area? How often? Do you divide up your area amongst all Trustees? How?

I am one of 6 Trustees and our Intergroup has over 80 meetings covering an almost 300 mile radius. So, I am interested in your input especially if your area has three or more Trustees. But, do feel free to comment regardless of how many Trustees you have in your Intergroup or area.

Respectfully,
Ed K. - Area 1

P.S. I am so looking forward to the October '07 Conference. See you all there.

8/16/07 - 11:07 PM

Dear Fellow Trustees,

It won't be long now before we are all together again in LA. I am looking forward to a great conference, but more importantly to a productive trustee meeting.

I am not responding to any past trustee submissions, but writing in regards to something I feel is a problem. Maybe I am the one with the boring life and too much time on my hands and that is why at a local and international level I am able to dedicate so much time to this fellowship. However, the last time I stopped to reflect on my life...I was a

single mother of three (young children 7, 8, & 13), a school teacher, a daughter helping to take care of her mother dying of lung cancer, and so much more. THANK YOU GA for allowing me to be all those things. I did not mention all of those things for anyone to feel sorry for me, I write that thanking this fellowship for giving me the opportunity to be those things.

Once again, my frustrations... why do people volunteer to be on committees that they have no intention of doing the work??? In my experiences of this program GA is teaching me how to live. Part of that is all those things I mentioned above. Yes, we all have busy lives and GA is teaching me that sometimes I can committ myself to doing work or other things and sometimes (and this is ok for me too) I just have to say NO and not committ to doing certain things. It is important for me today in my recovery to have balance in my life. I don't write to all of you today and claim to have perfected that, but I continue to work on that and it is much better today than it was yesterday.

In this program (which has truly given me a life) if I volunteer to do something I committ to it and try my best to complete the task. If I can't do it, I simply don't volunteer for it. To me volunteering is not about trying to look good because I'm on this committee or that committee. It is about hopefully being able to help another compulsive gambler who is still suffering. Bottom line is if I volunteer to be on a committee that I can't committ too, then my belief is that I am doing a diservice to the program. Because I know that if I am not committed to the work, then work gets left undone.

Before we get to this next trustee meeting and we start asking Tom to form new committees...stop and take a moment to ask yourself before volunteering, "Do I really have the necessary time to devote to the work that may lie ahead of me?" Remember a committee is not made of one person, it is made of a group of people working together to achieve a common goal.

I love this program and if it weren't for this program I would not be able to raise my three beautiful children, hold my mothers hand when in pain, teach young children about life, or care for another person who might be struggling with an addiction...and not for one moment do I feel guilty to say to my brothers and sisters in this program, "sorry, I just can't committ to that at this time." However, if I have the opportunity (and time to do it right) to get involved and be of service, you better believe I'm putting my name out there to help.

Looking forward to seeing you all in LA.

Love to all,
Dina P. - Area 6B

8/17/07 - 5:08 PM

I wish to make a brief submission to the trustee line. Recently I drove from Philadelphia to Edison, New Jersey to attend the 25th anniversary of a good friend . I drove up with Tony D, my dear friend who has more than 44 years without a bet. We met some people for dinner, 15 of us dined included the sons of the honoree. The meeting was sensational, people from Florida, San Francisco, Philadelphia and all over Jersey were there. There was great warmth and love in the room. It was a wonderful night, unforgettable for anyone in attendance. These types of events happen to me all the time in Gamblers Anonymous. The conferences, trustees meetings, picnics, mini-conferences and just the everyday joy of recovery all remind me of the miracle of our fellowship. And so I wanted to write this letter that is totally devoid of controversy. I'm not upset with anyone or anything, my phone number hasn't been misused, I think Denis was great and I know the new officers will be great as well and if some of the things that go on at the Trustees Meetings are imperfect....well so am I. I hope there's a place for this letter in the Trustee Line....or is beefing mandatory?

Peace and Fellowship,
Dave S. - Area 13

8/19/07 - 9:38 PM

Hi All,

There are 45 days left until the Los Angeles conference and my adrenalin is starting to pump. I am truly looking forward to the upcoming trustee meeting with excitement and a little bit of nervousness.

We still have lots of time for all of us to read and understand all the agenda items being presented for the agenda and I hope all of us will do so. This will save an enormous amount of time that is usually taken by points of information and questions that can easily be answerd by the authors of the agenda items well in advance.

We hope that by having access to our trustee website we would take advantage of the opportunity to be well prepared for the agenda.

Tom has advised me that all the time necessary will be given to each item and I hope

that calmness and common sense will prevail for us to do so.

There will be interesting committee reports for us to review and hopefully they will be posted 2 weeks in advance of the trustee meeting as requested by the chairman. I hope this mention will prompt the committee chairs to make sure their reports are on time to be posted on the website. I am looking forward to meeting old friends and making new ones. According to the conference committee reports it is shaping up to be a full and great conference. See you all very shortly,

Herb B. - 2nd Co-Chair, BOT
Area 5

8/20/07 - 12:25 AM

My Dear Brother's and Sister's,

Well in just a few short weeks we will be gathering in Los Angeles California where this great fellowship was started 50 years ago. We will not only be holding our Trustee meeting we will also be meeting with our brother's and sister's from all over the world who will be there to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of Gamblers Anonymous. The agenda has been readied and we will hopefully move forward in a very business like manner taking care of the duties we have been charged with. Richie, Herb and I are committed to making this meeting both interesting and efficient.

As for the conference I can assure you that the Western Groups have worked hard to make this a conference you will not soon forget. So come ready to work and relax as we move forward into the next 50 years of this fellowship. I want to end by thanking all those who are of service as trustees and all those who have worked diligently on this conference.

Have a safe trip to glorious Los Angeles.

Tom M. - Chairman BOT
Area 2

8/20/07 - 9:42 AM

Greetings to all my Fellow Trustees,

As I write this months article for the Trustee Line, I hope I am being misled by just plain old non-participation.

The National Walk-A-Thon has only 4 intergroups posted on the Walk-A-Thon Schedule page of the trustee web site.

Am I to believe that only 4 areas have scheduled a walk? Or have the other areas scheduled a walk and just have not posted it on the trustee web site?

Well if your area has a walk planned in Sept. Please post it on the appropriate page, so we can all see and share in the joy that this once a year fundraiser will provide.

If your area has not planned a walk yet, lets get one going.

On another note the 50th Anniversary is just around the corner, and I am looking so forward to this special event.

See you all in L.A.
Richie S. - 1st Co-Chair
Area 6

8/20/07 - 3:16 PM

After many days and months of thought and discussing with many other trustees and members- this will be my last letter to the TRUSTEELINE. I am embarrassed to say that the TRUSTEELINE has become a WASHWOMENLINE to hang out other people's problems and dirty laundry. It seems like our fellow trustees can write anything they want and be able to post it. Whatever happen to the basic concept of giving comments by phone. Where is our unity - this so called TRUSTEELINE is breaking down unity. This forum chooses to do public execution and humiliation. It has been more of a debate forum going tick for tack. We should be ashamed.

Before everyone jumps to answer this letter let me say that I have been through a lot of discussions on the BOT floor good and brutal sometimes and I can handle my own weight and stand strong. THIS IS NOT ABOUT ME. I do what I believe is the very best I can do for our program and no one has to pat me on the back, it is what I get back out of my efforts that give me the biggest serenity and enjoyment that our program gives. BUT, we don't need fellow trustees stabbing each other when our backs are turned.

I had several people call me about some of the letters written about them over the past several months all with; Can you believe this SOB--- or WHY CAN'T THAT SOB CALL ME

AND TELL ME. Some of my local room members call and tell me the same thing. It has done a lot more harm than good. There are editorials in every month that constantly tells us what we are doing wrong with our program, members and fellow trustees. Where is the positive that program has taught us? Where is H.O.W?? Where is UNITY? The WASHWOMENLINE would rather talk about the brothers and sister that want to do well and try to air their dirty laundry on the line. I feel like I am reading the NATIONAL EQUIRER.

This is not a healthy forum for my recovery and I chose not be put of this anymore. I have more respect for all of my fellow trustees than to fall trap to this negative endeavor.

So with that said - I hope I have given some of the washwomen more stuff to write about in the next WASHWOMENLINE.

With respect ALWAYS,
Gary S. - Area 12

8/20/07 - 11:59 PM

Like all other things in life, the more things change, the more they remain the same. The Trustee Line was snatched from the jaws of death in the Boston Conference when Denis M. said that he was getting no interest from Trustees, both current and past, to put submissions into each issue. I always disagreed with his style of posting a message in the current issue he was mailing out about when the deadline for the next issue was. My feeling was that everyone is so involved with so many other things in their lives that few would remember those deadlines without reminders. It seemed to me at the time that if we did this via the website and used reminders, we could get a greater level of participation. Remember my comments in Chicago about the Trustee Line? I said that support was dwindling and I was close to saying 'What is the point of continuing this charade?'

So here it is once again...What is the point of continuing this charade?

This Trustee Line is supposed to be about an exchange of ideas in between conferences, either good or bad. It can be used to motivate people, float some thoughts about someone's upcoming agenda item, complain about a process or procedure, say something that has really been a help regarding Trustee issues, or ask for other Trustees' opinions and help. My take on its effectiveness is that we have squandered an incredible asset. Participation is pitiful. There are Trustees who have never put an item in the Trustee Line. Where does that fit in the grand scheme of what the Trustee Line is about? For any Trustee to adopt a 'la-de-dah' approach to this fellowship by saying everything is wonderful is, at least to me, inexcusable. Where are the thinkers? Where are the innovators? Where is the collective consciousness of the group that should be working to improve the program at every possible chance? Why can't we get people to volunteer for committees? Better still, why can't those volunteers to actually do something other than not return phone calls and emails about committee work?

You see, there are numerous things that are wrong with the fellowship, starting with the BOT. We pass things and then look for reasons not to enforce them. We put in a crazy amount of time at these Trustee meetings in the hope of improving things in a substantive way, and we get ... 'make the 3rd word of the 4th sentence of the 5th paragraph on some page in the combo book bold.' I know that sounds harsh, but do we really need to debate such things? These are items that can be done with a mail meeting, or I supposed an email meeting. The thought behind this is to focus our attentions on what will make some positive changes and stop the hemorrhage of structure that allows people to feel they can do what they want in a GA room under the guise of everything being 'self-governing'.

People who don't do their jobs should be called out, plain and simple. If they can't do it or don't want to do it, they should have the sense to step aside. If that doesn't work, they should be told to step aside to let someone else get the job done. We have no accountability to ourselves at these meetings. It is so contradictory that we pass rules when we can't or don't even follow them. Where is that ability to enforce the Guidance Code? Why don't we use that? Why don't Trustees stand up when the Guidance Code is being violated? I have personally done that in the past and have gotten no support because it either wasn't popular, wasn't perceived as important, or because it was just too much trouble to uphold and try to implement the Guidance Code and all the decisions of the BOT, as the Trustee Guidelines state. Did I mention that there are those that say the Guidance Code is just a guide and GA is just a suggested program? How about the ultimate filter of 'Who is it really hurting?' The list goes on.

Sure some people who write to the Trustee Line are pissed off and they have every right to say what is on their mind. We have guidelines for content and as long as there are no derogatory remarks about a member or a room, the submission stands as sent. Is everything that comes out of our mouths supposed to be positive? That's not the way I grew up in this program. If you can't be honest with yourself and tell people how you feel, then where is the validity of the 4th step? I don't sweep things under the rug since

coming into the program. If I think something or someone is wrong, I get it off my chest. If that person wants to take it personally, then it becomes their issue not mine. If that person continues to do the wrong thing then there are other platforms to use, the Trustee Line being one of them. There should be no confusion as to how anyone feels, and hopefully, there should also be less politics. I am often criticized because people don't like my style or delivery. We are not one big happy family, contrary to popular opinion. I do to meetings to continue to refrain from gambling and work on my recovery, not to party it up with everyone before or after a meeting. We are brothers and sisters in a fellowship and we all don't do the right things. One day at a time is cornerstone of the fellowship, but it can derail us from looking ahead in the world of GA business and planning for better things. Some decisions may be uncomfortable for many of the GA members and Trustees, but they will have come from the group conscience and we are duty bound to follow them, irrespective of how popular they may be.

However, this is not how we operate as a generalization. The Trustee Line is the perfect platform for getting rid of the frustration, or for that matter the assumption of hope that something good will come out of a submission. Instead, we hear the deafening silence of a non-responsive group of current and past Trustees. Over 170 people are on the monthly email list for notification of the Trustee Line deadline each month. Our worst month for participation was 10 items in the April '07 edition. We equaled that abysmal performance this month. Our best was the first one we did on the Trustee website with 28 items because it included a brief statement from the committee chairs. I don't think it can be any clearer than what we have here for a great example of apathy; it's called the Trustee Line.

Ask yourself when the last time was that you contacted someone about an agenda item that was posted that you just didn't like. The idea is to let the author know about your problems with the item and to start a dialogue to make a stronger item by modifying it. This feature has been available for the past 9 conferences. In that time, I find it hard to remember when an author of an item tried to change it before the 60 day cutoff because someone chimed in with a suggestion on how to strengthen the item. But, see how many people are quick to rip an item apart when it comes to the floor. One misused word or any small objection can make the item dissolve in an instant and cause to go into banishment for 2 years. Where was the concern and phone call to the author prior to the agenda closing to help modify the item and better insure its passage? Most likely it was in the same place as the Trustee Line submissions from all the Trustees - missing. I have written to people about agenda items that I thought were not comprehensive enough, missing important parts or just the wrong item at the wrong time. Most of the time my emails get ignored because people take it personally. But I took the time to voice my opinion and those people owe me the courtesy of a response, good, bad or indifferent.

We have a lot of issues we ALL need to deal with as Trustee and of course as GA members. I have my demons just like everyone else. One of them is speaking my mind and complaining about others who run through their 2-year Trustee terms like they are on heavy doses of Valium. Too many times we talk about how the Trustees work on tradition rather than clinging to some kind of structure. I believe the Rules and Procedures committee's final report in Portland will be a milestone for the BOT. We need to get used to acting together as Trustees and act uniformly during the Trustee meetings, in addition to the other 361 days of the year when we are not all together. Maybe if we can pick ourselves up by the bootstraps we can pull this fellowship together and not act like independent representatives of the program. I give up 3 days of work twice a year to try and make a difference. The problem is that after leaving the Trustee meeting, it feels like we are in a world of attention deficit disorder; very few of us stay focused on the tasks at hand.

It is my feeling that this is the next to last issue of the Trustee Line. I will send out my usual request next month for submissions for the September 20th issue and do the usual begging for content. In Los Angeles, I will request to discontinue the Trustee Line because of this thing we love so much called apathy. It comes in many other forms, including those who will read the agenda for the 1st time when the Trustee meeting starts on October 4th along with those who will not have downloaded any of the attachments for the agenda.

So whose toes did I just step on with this submission? If only I were a betting man....as the expression goes. I stopped handicapping 19 years ago this coming September 4th.

David M. - Trustee Website Admin
Area 12
