

Main Menu

- [Home Page](#)
- [Trustee Guidelines](#)
- [GA Reference Material](#)
- [Keyword Search](#)
- [Download Center](#)
- [Contact Administrator](#)

**Quebec - Fall 2009
Trustee Agenda**

[Quebec Conference Info](#)

[Agenda Information](#)
[Conference Bids](#)

[Quebec Rolling Agenda](#)

[Submit an Agenda Item](#)

BOT Committees

- [Blue Book Revision](#)
- [International Relations](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Literature on CDs](#)
- [Pressure Relief](#)
- [Prison - Canada](#)
- [Prison - US](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Translator Assistance](#)
- [Trustee Allowance & Realignment](#)
- [Trustee Meeting Rules and Procedures](#)
- [Trustee Website](#)
- [Website Revisions](#)

Trustee Line & Other Features

- [Trustee Line Home Page](#)
- [Local Area Website Guidelines](#)
- [Trustee Travel Schedule](#)
- [Local Area Help Flyer](#)
- [Board of Regents News Page](#)
- [Intergroup Trustee Funding](#)
- [Public Relations Area Ideas](#)
- [Trustee Memorial Honor Roll](#)

Future Conferences

[Upcoming Conferences](#)

Trustee Line for September 2009

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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

Item	Subject	Last Entry	Entries
1.	Trustee Meetings in the Same Location	9/1/09 12:01 AM	1
2.	Religion vs. Spirituality	9/28/09 7:47 PM	7
3.	ISO/GA future business model to streamline to match finances/donations	9/10/09 4:53 PM	1

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

Trustee Meetings in the Same Location

9/1/09 - 12:01 AM

I have given a lot of thought to the topic presented last month in regard to the trustee meeting at the same location, standing alone without a conference. I understand and respect all the views presented. But must disagree with the idea, and here are the main reasons.

Having the Trustee meeting attached to an International Conference is so important to the individual member, of that particular area, or surrounding areas. This might be his/her only chance to observe how the Trustees interact and change or improve the program. The member then might want to get involved on that level.

When we rotate the conferences by region every 1/2 year we are giving our members in a specific region and surrounding areas opportunities that otherwise they would not have. Like to interact with other Trustees from around the world, for an entire weekend. If we just had a meeting we might be too busy to take the time and energy to share our experience, strengths and hope with the members.

Local members could then have an agenda item on the agenda and see first hand how it was handled, listen first-hand to the debate, see the instant result, and could even make their own presentation, with no additional cost to the member.

These items are extremely important to our members. This opportunity is available to them now. And taking it away from them for our own needs does not seem fair to the member.

In understanding the economics of our times, an area and all surrounding areas would benefit from making an International Conference. The savings an area and surrounding areas gets in hosting a conference is paramount. And then the difficulties in funding for future Trustees Meetings is lessened for that particular area. (I know this to be true because in hosting conferences in 2002 and 2006 the savings to our intergroup treasury was substantial, and so were the surrounding areas.)

The rotation principle we have in place is fair and adequate. If we need to add a region to this rotation to keep it balanced and fair. Okay.

Then there is a theory among many of our members that the Trustees are an elitest group. I do NOT share this opinion. And vehemently disagree with it.

But by having the member travel to the Trustee Meeting instead of the Trustees coming to the members areas certainly lends to their argument.

Thank you for your time and I would appreciate your input.

Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

Religion vs. Spirituality

9/1/09 - 12:01 AM

To my fellow Trustees:

We frequently have questions asked of us - "What is the difference between religion and spirituality?"

If any of you who read the Trustee Line have an answer, or a definition you have researched, we would be interested in knowing your results. Thank you.

With love, faith and respect in our Program
Linda S - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

9/3/09 - 2:01 PM

Disclaimer: This is a analytical response and not intended to reflect my specific views, nor to interpret the views of GA in part or as a whole.

Definition of spirituality: predominantly spiritual character as shown in thought, life, etc.; spiritual tendency or tone.

Definition of religion: a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, esp. when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Based on the above definitions (taken from www.dictionary.com) one could say that spirituality is the state of how someone acts towards their fellows and communities, whereas religion provides a proposed set of guidelines on how someone might achieve their spirituality.

Ed K. - Area 1 Trustee, Los Angeles

9/4/09 - 12:07 AM

Linda and fellow trustees,

I once asked the question and was told by an "oldtimer" "religion is for people who are afraid of hell, sprituallity is for those who have been there". I mean no offense by sharing this It just helped me get past some tough times.

Matt H. - Area 16, Upstate NY

9/11/09 - 9:57 AM

I would like to add something to Ed's definitions which are just my own perceptions. There are plenty of people who sit in a house of worship with no spirituality and plenty of atheists who lead a spiritual life.

Religion and spirituality really have nothing to do with one another and a person can have either, both or neither. There are those who pray to a god of their choice and are thieves in business and those who don't believe in a supreme being who are models of fair play and goodness.

I have sat in churches and synagogues and felt like I was sitting in a GA meeting. I have also sat in those same houses of worship and felt totally alienated.

I guess what I am really trying to say is that spiritually is something one feels intuitively while religion is something one is taught. Recognizing the difference requires deep thinking or not thinking at all.

Chuck R. - Area 15, New York City

9/21/09 - 12:50 PM

To my Trusted Fellow Trustees and Readers of the Trustee Line:

Thank you to all who posted their thoughts and suggestions. They were both helpful and insightful. Obviously, this is a subject that requires a personal thought process - emotionally charged, in some cases - but of importance to our Program and Fellowship - especially for those who have a hard time with the "difference." Thank you again for your time and energy to reply. It is appreciated.

With love, faith and respect in our Fellowship

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

9/26/09 - 11:06 PM

Response to Religion vs. Spirituality: To me the big difference is that spirituality is all things good and being the best person you can be. Religion on the other hand is a justification for telling other what to do, as well as lots of wars and crimes against others. Some of the things that come to mind are : 1) The Crusades which were a series of religiously-sanctioned military campaigns waged by much of Latin Christian Europe, particularly the Franks of France and the Holy Roman Empire. The specific crusades to restore Christian control of the Holy Land were fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291. Other campaigns in Spain and Eastern Europe continued into the 15th century. The Crusades were fought mainly against Muslims, although campaigns were also waged against pagan Slavs, Jews, Russian and Greek Orthodox Christians, Mongols, Cathars, Hussites, Waldensians, Old Prussians, and political enemies of the popes. Crusaders took vows and were granted penance for past sins, often called an indulgence. 2) conflict between the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland; 3) The conflict in the middle east; 4) the Holocaust and many more.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

9/28/09 - 7:47 PM

Simple.....

Religion is taught

Spirituality is believing

Debb W. - Area 2G, Oregon

ISO/GA future business model to streamline to match finances/donations

9/10/09 - 4:53 PM

aloha

I saw Marshall R's letter in the bulletin and felt a need to put my two cents in.

Firstly, I agree with Marshall that it is sad and a shame that Karen and staffers should not get raises. I hope their raises can be retored in near future. We greatly appreciate Marshall efforts over the years promoting Lifeliners. I'm sure that I became a Lifeliner due to listening to Marshall and Bob W (NJ) preach the Lifeliner cause.

Marshall's plea for \$30 check from all 5200 GA persons who celebrated 2 or more years(as noted in the bulletin) is quite intimidating to members in my area. We much prefer the great note that John (outgoing BOR chair person) wrote a month earlier suggesting each room give a dollar more per week. Now that's palatable.

Reality check. 14+ million people are unemployed/ underemployed in US. This Recession is severe. IN the our low cost of living city, we have few high paying jobs and approximately 40 attending ga members and only a handful have more than 4 years. Much of the high tech industry has moved out. Intel closed a plant and moved off shore and 850 are out of work. A world famous religious organization here has laid off 280 people in the paat year due to reduced contributions. Social security will not be giving cost of living raises for the second straight year (first time ever). Government workers are bring furloughed without pay due to budget shortfalls (in Colorado the first of four furlough days in next year was tues 9/9) GA has grown significantly here in the past 18 months. However, three of our members are unemployed (several long term), 3 lost their houses, 3 on fixed income, 3 paying restitution, two incarcerated, a handful are underemployed.

We need to remember the burden that our newer members have. Many have payoff plans that exceed 4 years. The average GA person may donate \$2 per week to one or more rooms. That's over \$100 per year. A small fraction of local doations get to the state intergroup level. One of our rooms with 15 attendees gives 10% of its weekly collection to intergroup. Of that amount 9% gets to ISO from intergroup. Not a lot. We do have ISO cans. Many of the rooms in the state with 5-10 people contribute \$0 to intergroup and rarely to ISO. 40% of our state intergroup's annual budget goes to providing funds of \$400 per trustee (2 for colorado) for one conference per year each.

Lifeliners, and consistent ISO can donations and generous one time donations (in name of) contributions are obviously a critical sources of funding and will continue to be so. Since the KC conference and the ISO plea message for funds heard by a newer member, Mitch F, and his sharing the message, all 4

rooms here have meet the need with increased contributons.

Well, as the ISO financial bleeding has not stopped, its time for the BOT and the BOR to do business world things to cut costs and manage the revenue GA has available. Although GA contributions are below the level needed for operating the ISO current business model, it does not mean GA attendees can afford to give more donations.

There are some great agenda items for the Montreal conference

1. discussion item on iso funding/spending
2. put bulletins on website (I assume this could greatly reduce future printing /mailing costs)
3. a proposal to go from two conferences per year to one in 2012. My two cents says that we should consider starting that in 2011. Too much money , some of which could go to ISO, is spent on trustee travel. Also, we should consider more moderate priced venues for the conferences. Grand Hyatt's are awesome but quite expensive;Also , we should consider reviewing BOT agendas, either via screening committee, email to reduce the agenda to one day rather than two thereby aiding the Trusutee in reducing spending. THERE were 18 Trustees missing in KC, could that have been due to costs?

Thoughts to be discussed at BOT mtg on item for ISO funding

- a. should we continue to pay \$2800 per month rent for LA office. Maybe another location could cut costs greatly?
- b. should GA continue to pay expenses for the BOT chair, BOR chair to two conference (\$3,000 for KC for three people) - certainly they deserve this but can ISO afford this !!
- d. I'm assuming that a large part of many intergroups funds go to paying part of travel expenses to two national conferences. Maybe some of that money would go to ISO rather than trustee travel if we have only one conference !!!
- e. maybe starter kits should be reduced in \$ cost.
- f. consider raising prices of some literature
- g. LITERATUE TO BE PLACED ON WEBSITE (or a MEMBERS ONLY ACCES TO WEBISTE SUCH AS nj INTERGROUP HAS) FREE OF CHARGE (such as pressure relief group phamplet, shoret term group sponsorship, sponsorship manual, coping with urges, first meeting,new step study workbook hopefully to be approved in Montreal, and other low volume, low profit items, etc). This could help streamlining business, reduce printing, mailing costs etc.
- h. consider increasing price of medallions from \$2.50 to \$3.
- i. slightly increase price of pins

I was able to serve as a Trustee representing NJ after 2+ years iin the program. It ws an exceptionally good experience and turbocharged my recovery. Most newer GA attendees are not finnacially able to do this . One conference per year will help give more this special growth opportunity. We alll want ISO to thrive, but major business model changes may be the only way to do that. Providing additional services and efficiencies to our rooms and attendees worldwide is the way to develop better funding paths.

Not an easy issue at a time where I'm assuming that costs related to international growth are skyrocketing...

We have much to consider and some tough choices.

Bill S -former proud member of NJ GA/ Colorado Trustee Area 3B