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**Trustee Line for September 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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1.	Thoughts on the National Hotline	9/7/10 12:28 PM	<b>1</b>
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**Thoughts on the National Hotline**

9/7/10 - 12:28 PM  
aloha,

I'm one of the seven committee members on the Hotline committee. Richie S is the chair and David M is the hi-tech expert who keeps the data tabulated, surveys formulated and info flowing. I was not authorized to issue this note by the committee, but due to my impatience and desire to have the Trustees up to speed prior to Tampa, I could not resist the temptation to write this. Any opinions not supported by the committee are mine.

I have been fortunate to be on this committee as I have learned a lot and am looking forward to a productive, interesting discussion in Tampa on the direction the BOT and local areas wish to go in the future.

I learned the following and wish to share:

- a. 40 areas have the 1-888-gahelps hotline
- b. 39 areas pay a flat monthly rate (only the great state of new jersey pays a per minute rate both on the inbound calls from the gamblers and the outbound minutes by the volunteers. thanks to Joe B I now understand the charging - same as a cell phone -caller pays and receiver pays; since it is toll free the receiver (new jersey intergroup -basically pays double for the minutes)
- c. fixed rate prices vary widely - see the hotline committe spot on the trustee website with the details listed by david m d. I didn't know that we could access other area hotlines if we were looking for a meeting out of area

here's how - thanks again to david's sharing

1. dial 1-888-gahelps in your area
2. when the system voice answers, immediately hit the # key twice
3. then hit the area code you desire to find a meeting in, for example 302 for chicago

e. approximately 45% of US area codes use the 1-888-GAHELPS hotline system

Things to think about prior to coming to Tampa

- 1 . if BOT decides to make the hotline system completely a national system, via the current system - Erlang communications or a different vendor in the future (with the goal of having a live volunteer answer 24x7)
  - a. does your area that now has the 1-888-gahelps system have the ability to answer rollover calls from neighboring areas that may not have a volunteer available
  - b. how the BOT would pay for enlarging the system throughout the US for those areas that are currently not participating - we don't have any cost estimates yet and will not by the tampa conference
  - c. please check with your intergroup - do they want your area to explore national hotline expansion and be part of it, if it means no cost increase or a cost increase for your local hotline? (how much - don't know yet)
  - d. would your area be interested in a per minute rate instead of flat fee ( no details on cost impact but probably higher - see David's spreadsheet based on the survey on the trustee webpage (personally a per minute rate does not give an area control of its expected costs )

There are many more questions to be asked and answered in the future, depending what path the BOT choses. Hopefully, you can give this important issue some thought so we can have a productive, thoughtful discussion in Tampa.

Special thanks to all the area hotline administrators who responded to the survey by the hotline committee.

Mahalo,  
Bill S. -Area 3B, Colorado

<b>Fellowship and Unity first...PLEASE</b>
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9/13/10 - 10:00 AM  
Hello to All,

The first thing I want to do in this post is to wish Gamblers Anonymous a Happy Birthday!! I am and will be forever grateful for our founders to have started a fellowship 53 years ago today that has saved my life. Happy Birthday and many more.

Next I want to share my thoughts on Unity and the Fellowship. I always thought Unity Step #4 was not only for rooms, but for intergroups also. It states that " Each group should be self - governing except in matters affecting other groups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole." I always assumed It included intergroups as they are made up of individual groups. And No intergroup should affect other Intergroups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

The fact that New York Intergroup has decided to make its 50th Anniversary Mini Conference 14 days before the International Conference in Tampa, affects Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, in my humble opinion. More thought and courtesy should have been put into that decision. As to have members in our fellowship choose which Conference they want or can afford to attend, is not the purpose of conferences.

I have been to many mini conferences and International conferences and they have always provided me with an abundance of recovery and fellowship and has always been an example of our fellowships Unity.

New York's 50th is doing the opposite and I am sure it is NOT intentional. More thought and consideration should have been exercised. But there are some glaring problems with this 50th Anniversary conference.

1. New York's 50th Anniversary was in January. NOT October.
2. Up until just recently you had to take the whole conference or nothing at all. Meaning a member could not attend just for the day and attend workshops it was an ALL or nothing until there were some cancellations and now it has been changed.
3. I have not seen too many \$600.00 plus mini conferences. The many that I have attended were \$25.00 to \$50.00 for the day. Those local mini-conferences do not affect Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

All I am trying to say is this 50th anniversary Mini- Conference affects area 6B's intergroup, and make no mistake, it affects Gamblers Anonymous as a

whole.

We, as a fellowship, will survive this blunder, but in the future more consideration ought to be paid to the International Conferences and Unity Step 4, as we ALL should be thinking of how our decisions will affect Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

Peace and Recovery  
Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

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9/14/10 5:39 PM

I'd like to respond to Richie's comments about having a 50th anniversary so close to our International conference. I cannot comment as to whether NY's 50th anniversary so close to Tampa is detrimental to GA as a whole. I can understand his feelings, that many people will have to choose one and therefore both those members and conferences may suffer.

Though not a 50th anniversary, we too in the Greater St. Louis area decided to have our mini conference close to the Tampa conference (Nov6, the weekend after). Our committee discussed the dates, knowing that our Trustees would be attending Tampa. We determined that our \$25 conference is attempting to reach the local GA members. That said, with hindsight I believe it is unfortunate that we chose that date. Primarily because many of the fabulous Trustees I asked to come and speak were unable, due to cost and timing (primarily since they were attending the Tampa conference.)

St. Louis will have a fabulous conference with great speakers and fellowship. For next year, we will need to think a bit more when planning our event.

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, MO

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9/17/0 - 8:07 AM

It is with sadness that I feel compelled to respond to the letter to the Trustee Line on 9/13 from Richie S. from Florida. A letter supposedly purporting to encourage Unity and Fellowship when in essence it explodes with negativity, insensitivity, but most disturbingly is opinionated, judgmental and without accuracy as to facts. I find it ludicrous for someone to profess Unity and Fellowship and end this diatribe characterizing New York's 50th Anniversary Conference as a "blunder."

My sadness comes from assuming I had a 10 year working relationship with Richie, having shared many personal and program issues; I would have thought that a phone call from Richie voicing his concerns would have been made before scandalizing those who have worked on this conference for the past 3 years. The only reason I am not addressing this directly with Richie is that I do not know how many members of GA have read his letter (is it 20? is it 200?) to make sure the truth is known by all.

So bear with me, please read the facts and details.

Let me first tell you the history as to how this conference came about.

\*In 2000. New York hosted an International Spring Conference for its 40th Year. 10 years later, New York decided to bid for the Spring 2010 International Conference. Representatives from New York Intergroup and New York Unity began meeting in July 2007 to formulate a bid to be presented to the Spring 2008 BOT.

\*In researching hotels suitable in size for this venture it became clear that the Honor's Haven Resort, a renovated hotel with 233 rooms, would not be adequate for an International Conference, and the larger chain hotels - Hyatt, Marriott, Sheraton, Hilton - within a radius of NY, Northern NJ, eastern Connecticut, and Long Island were going to price at over \$800 per couple for the weekend.

\*We had many contract proposals in hand and returned to our membership in November, 2007 to vote on whether we could make an \$800+ conference. The membership voted to support a local \$600 conference for a weekend at Honor's Haven Resort and Spa. The price was contingent on a late fall date in 2010.

\*Clearly aware that we wanted to steer clear of the Fall International Conference we checked ALL religious and LEGAL holidays and PAST FALL

Conference dates to determine that an available NOVEMBER weekend, November 5 -7, 2010, would be the safest to avoid conflict. The contract that was begun in 2007 was finalized during the summer of 2008.

\*Subsequently when we learned that the DATE of the Tampa conference was 1 week before ours, we returned to the hotel and urged them to change the date we had contracted; they were willing to re-date the conference for October 15 - 17, the only other available option.

1. Richie's Paragraph #3: "The fact that New York Intergroup has decided to make its 50th Anniversary Mini Conference 14 days before the International Conference in Tampa ... More thought and courtesy should have been put into that decision."

FACT: New York planned its conference and had a contract in 2007, over a year before the Tampa bid.

2. Richie's Paragraph #5 item 1: "New York's 50th Anniversary was in January. NOT October."

Fact: New York's 50th Anniversary celebrates Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon - the 50th anniversary of Gamblers Anonymous in New York is January; the 50th Anniversary of Gam-Anon in New York is June.

3. Richie's Paragraph #5 - item 2: "Up until just recently you had to take the whole conference or nothing at all. Meaning a member could not attend just for the day and attend workshops it was an ALL or nothing until there were some cancellations and now it has been changed."

QUESTION: Where does Richie get this information from? (Hearsay? Gossip?) What's the relevance?

FACT: From the beginning of the planning of this conference it was agreed by the elected Steering Committee (made up of 4 GA and 4 Gam-Anon members) to have day visitors - Reservations for which would begin Sept. 1, 2010.

4. Richie's Paragraph #5 - item 3: "I have not seen too many \$600.00 plus mini conferences."

FACT: May I suggest that Richie look in the Bulletin and research the prices of the 3 day conferences coming up this fall, one of which is 2 weeks after TAMPA. Am I to assume that New York is his only target?

FACT: The insinuation that \$600 (with all gratuities and 12 hotel dining room meals) is an exorbitant amount for this Conference is unfair when you consider the following:

Approximately 440 GA and Gam-Anon members will experience this: \*Friday afternoon - Workshops begin at 3 PM;

\*Friday evening a special opening that has been in rehearsal for over 2 years ... followed by a Full Conference Workshop ... followed by therapy rooms till ...;

\*Saturday - 24 more daytime workshops (1 Gam-Anon, 2 combined GA/Gam-Anon, 3 GA workshops per time slot);

\*Saturday evening, professional entertainment followed by a Memorial Meeting and Therapy Meetings;

\*Sunday morning a Walk-A-Thon for all (developed for full participation of ALL in attendance) as a fundraiser for for GA and Gam-Anon ISO's - to date rooms have already sent in over \$7,000 and this does not include the funds to be brought in that Sunday morning; followed by an emotional full conference closing, followed by a complete lunch - ending at 2 PM;

\*and for everyone a 120 page interactive conference book with all original GA and Gam-Anon writings, memorabilia, and containing the approved handouts for all our workshops!

GA and Gam-Anon members registered will include approximately 20 members with more than 40 years in program, and, just as important, there will be young couples attending with their infants.

5. Richie's Paragraph #6: "All I am trying to say is this 50th anniversary Mini-Conference affects area 6B's intergroup..."

FACT: After reviewing all registrations, I believe there is not one person who is registered for the New York Conference that would have otherwise gone to Tampa. I would like to say it's growing tiresome to hear this unfounded assertion that New York's Conference is affecting Tampa's registration. Just 3 weeks ago I was personally told by a Florida Trustee that the New York Conference is responsible for 100 people not attending Tampa. I responded to him via e-mail how inaccurate this is with the following data:

With all the ex-New Yorkers living in Florida, I know of only 3 who are registered with New York, 2 of whom I believe are also registered for Tampa and the third had no plans to go to Tampa.

FACT: As far as the other assumption that New York's Conference affects the attendance in Tampa ... I have attended (with the exception of Houston) approximately 12 of the last International Conferences, mostly as a non-funded Trustee. Sadly, with just one other couple, as far as I recall, we are the only New Yorkers attending International Conferences (California's 50th excluded.) This is understandable, though regrettable, knowing the costs involved.

Hopefully this will put this issue finally to rest.

Rather than placing blame on a Conference 1000 miles away, perhaps more time should be spent encouraging Southern Florida to participate in their state's hosting an International Conference.

6. Richie's last Paragraph: "We, as a fellowship, will survive this blunder ..."

How one can put pen to paper and convey such critical judgments while being so uninformed is so damaging to the concept of Unity and Fellowship.

Larry B. - Past Trustee - Area 15, New York

P.S. In spite of attending a GA meeting where we have sponsorship, PRGM (almost everyone has one), open meetings, combined meetings, thriving Gam-Anon, phone calls, sit-downs, Intergroup reps, and where members visit other meetings and support many GA functions, retaining members is still a major issue.

I would think the Trustee Line would serve all of us better if we used it as a vehicle to exchange ideas on improving retention.

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9/17/10 - 12:16 PM

I had a bad taste in my mouth after reading & SEEING THE DATES OF THE CONFERENCE OF "Celebrating 50 Years of GA & Gam-Anon in New York"...I was from the surrounding area (Long Island-Area 14). I have been on both sides of the fence, so to speak, of helping plan a Conference both Mini & International. I have also attended conferences as a Trustee and non-Trustee. My first thought was I would like to attend New York's, but since it is so close to the Tampa, and that I am a Trustee from area 6C, and not fully funded, (which is OK, it is what it is, and I'm happy for what we are funded) but I couldn't go to both. Then I was thinging of going up to New York, visit family & also spend a Sat at the conference, but I can't recall who told me but they are not accepting Sat only registrations. It was all a full weekend or nothing. So that made up my mind on that idea. It was nothing, I am going to the Maryland mini on Oct. 3 & 4.

I never got the word that New York was planning this Conference back in 2007 .. never heard a thing about it, and maybe if we did Tampa may have planned a different date?

After reading further on Larry's reply to Rich, I would think other people will contract Larry to see how many people will register for their conference, his guess sounds good to me " not one person who is registered for the New York Conference that would have otherwise gone to Tampa". Now its my turn to guess, maybe that one person would have brought another couple with him or her.

I hope Larry that you are helping to pass the word about the Tampa conference rather than just giving Rich some advise "perhaps more time

should be spent on Southern Fl to participate" etc.

So I can feel for both Richie & Larry, and do agree that we as a program are always making statements on helping the ones that are out there. I say let's put more effort on those that are still suffering and that are in the program. Tally-ho for now

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

PS - Just to let you know I didn't call either Richie or Larry about this post.

### Problems With Our New Literature

9/13/10 - 6:10 PM

It looks like September is off to a slow start with the Trustee Line. I want to take a moment to bring up something that I believe is going become a problem for the Fellowship through the Board of Trustees. The subject is our literature library.

I don't think there are many Trustees who disagree with the thinking that we have a serious need for more literature. The big deficiency is in the Recovery and Unity Steps. Although some would say that what we have is adequate, we really need to grow and offer additional literature to allow us all to get more deeply involved with the Steps.

Here is the dilemma we face. The Tampa agenda is loaded with new literature that focuses on the Steps.

Ed E. has item 4 up for the first vote  
Mike M. has item 5 up for the first vote  
Ara H. has item 39 up for the merit vote  
Ralph D. has item 69 up for the merit vote  
Leo R. has items 71, 72 and 73 up for merit votes

Let's just say for the moment that each one of them has been brilliantly authored. It is safe to say that each one of them represents a different view of the Steps. What do we do? Do we approve all of them, or some of them? Which material is worth voting for and which is not going to benefit the Fellowship? Will we be approving material that will cost ISO a lot to print up but does not get ordered by the groups? That's not a decision I am going to make in this submission, but I will tell you something that is terrifying about how many of the Trustees operate. This goes back to my first year as a Trustee in 2000 in Montreal.

As excited as I was to go to my first Trustee meeting, I made sure that before the actual meeting that I brushed up on every possible part of the agenda and any other parts of the Trustee meeting that I could learn. Back then there was no Rules and Procedures manual. The meeting rules differed from Chair to Chair, session to session, day to day. We all got through it, but the meetings were overflowing with points of information, points of order, challenges to the chair's decisions and roll call votes - basically, a lot of wasted time. In Louisville, we tackled a 114 item agenda in 2 days. Montreal of 2000 had 25 items and Pittsburgh 2001 had 49. We spent 2 days each on those agendas. Yes we have come a long way in the area of efficiency, but have we really changed how we operate as Trustees at the Trustee meetings?

Back then, and up to Irvine, CA in the fall of '03, the agendas were mailed to each Trustee 45 days before the conference. Although the Internet was certainly flourishing, the BOT did not use it for what it does today. The most disturbing sound I remember hearing back then, was the sound of Trustees opening up their envelopes with the Trustee meeting agenda and looking at it for the first time at the beginning of the Trustee meeting. How could anyone make a rational and intelligent decision about new literature if they hadn't reviewed it before the item was brought to the floor? The answer is that they couldn't, and it is also a contributing reason that very few new pieces of literature were approved back then, versus what we are doing today.

So the long and short of my submission is that I want to beg each of the Trustees who will be responsible for either a yes or no vote on passing the above items, or any other items on the agenda that require reading, to review the agenda well in advance of Tampa and be prepared. Trustees have a huge responsibility for shaping the course of thinking regarding approved

literature. It is not something that should be taken lightly. If you don't review every page of every attachment to this or any other agenda well in advance of the Trustee meetings, then maybe you should be asking yourself why you really wanted to be a Trustee to begin with. You can't do your job as a Trustee for your area if you don't do your job as a Trustee by not following the Responsibilities For International Trustees - item #16.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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9/14/10 - 12:09 AM

I would also like to wish our fellowship happy 53rd birthday today. I don't know where I would be without GA.

I would also like to comment of David's posting today. I am a past trustee who served from 2006 to 2010. I always took my job very seriously, I would have been shocked if I heard other trustees opening up their envelopes and looking at the agenda for the first time at the trustee meeting. Today, as a member, I am going to tell my trustees (area 1) how I feel on the items. Though it is only my opinion, I want them to know that there are members who care and want to be recognized. I like the way our system works and would feel better if more of our members gave their opinions on the agenda items. But I can't control people places and things.

I will miss everyone in Tampa and look forward to being at the trustee meeting in Cherry Hill, God willing.

One day at a time,

Ara H. - Area 1, Los Angeles  
14 years and 11 months, exactly today....

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9/14/10 - 5:40 PM

Thank you David for bringing up the Literature topic. I agree we need more literature on the Recovery and Unity Steps. I believe we have at least five items very similar in nature because we are lacking and our members are trying to fill those gaps. I too am concerned that we will vote items in, because we need them, but that don't flow smoothly from a recovery standpoint.

David concluded his line encouraging everyone to read up and be prepared to which I agree. Sadly I wish I could think of a better solution to our literature problem. Thoughts??

Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis, MO

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<b>Liz N. from Las Vegas - Serious Health Problems</b>
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9/16/10 - 6:06 PM

Just a note, Liz N from Vegas has been in the hospital since Tuesday, 9/14. She originally went in for some surgery to remove an ulcer that burst. As it turned out the doctors discovered that she has cancer of the stomach. She is still in ICU since the surgery. She's going through hell. This may seem cold to place this on the Trustee line, but it is the best and the fastest way to get the word out. So if you would pass the word to all and most of all please keep her in your prayers.

Thanks

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

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9/18/10 - 12:07 AM

Dear Joe -

I was saddened to learn of Liz N's ill health, but appreciate your taking the time to let us know.

Please give her our very, very best - tell her we love her - and that without a doubt, all of our thoughts and prayers will be with her through this difficult period.

With a lot of love at this special time -

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

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9/18/10 - 9:40 AM

Joe, I can't put into words the feeling of helplessness I have knowing that the best friend in your life is struggling to hang onto her life. Each of us has been in this black hole of not knowing what the next day will bring for someone we care for. Irrespective of the 'One Day At A Time' teachings of the program, we fight to gain comfort that tomorrow will be a better day. The not knowing is very debilitating and weakens us during these times. I remembered seeing something about friendship that I saved over the years and found it last night.

I know you for 10 years, since I first became a Trustee and Liz has always been a part of who you are. I read this writing and felt from my perspective that this is how I view Liz and her friendship with you. I hope it gives you some comfort in this difficult period to focus on all that she has meant to you. This is so very much about program and that's how I have always seen your interactions with Liz.

Be strong my friend, we all love you and have Liz in our prayers.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

"Portrait of a Friend"

I can't give solutions to all of life's problems, doubts, or fears. But I can listen to you, and together we will search for answers.

I can't change your past with all it's heartache and pain, nor the future with its untold stories. But I can be there now when you need me to care.

I can't keep your feet from stumbling. I can only offer my hand that you may grasp it and not fall.

Your joys, triumphs, successes, and happiness are not mine; Yet I can share in your laughter.

Your decisions in life are not mine to make, nor to judge; I can only support you, encourage you, and help you when you ask.

I can't prevent you from falling away from friendship, from your values, from me. I can only pray for you, talk to you and wait for you.

I can't give you boundaries which I have determined for you, But I can give you the room to change, room to grow, room to be yourself.

I can't keep your heart from breaking and hurting, But I can cry with you and help you pick up the pieces and put them back in place.

I can't tell you who you are. I can only love you and be your friend.

Author Unknown

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9/18/10 - 10:17 AM

Dear Joe,

I know that Liz is in all of our thoughts and prayers, especially during this difficult time, and knowing the fight she has for this program and life, my heart goes out to both you and her family. Please know that there is a lot of love and support that comes from my heart, and you are never alone. We do this together.

To David, I was very touched with your submission to the trustee line regarding Liz, I think I may have heard that Portrait of a Friend once before, but never with the same meaning, until now, when we all need to hear it most. There are no coincidences in life.

Together we are strong, and in times like this, there can never be enough friends.

My heart goes out to you Joe & Liz. I love you both.

Steve F. - Area 1 - Los Angeles

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9/18/10 - 12:05 PM

Walking into a BOT meeting, it is always so nice to see Liz N. who never



fails to greet each of us with a big welcoming smile. Her dedication to Gamblers Anonymous is never wavering and her honesty is always appreciated. I want to convey to Liz and Joe that I am holding her in my thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,  
Larry B. - Past Trustee - Area 15, New York

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9/18/10 - 2:05 PM

Liz has been a true mentor to me in this program. Like so many others, my heart is breaking with this sad news.

Please know that Liz, her family, Joe and our brothers and sisters who care so deeply for Liz are being held close in my prayers.

Jeannie B. - Area 8A, Minnesota

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9/18/10 - 2:32 PM

I also was very saddened to hear the news about Liz. As you all know, she is a crazy Brit, like myself, with a weird sense of humor, also like me!! I pray to God that she improves and gets back to her old self in the near future.

Malcolm B. - Area 3A, San Diego

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9/18/10 - 3:50 PM

I would like to share with you what my wife, Doris, told me when hearing of Liz's health problems. Each time Doris attends an International Conference - she looks to see if the workshop - Women in Recovery - is on the program. Among the presenters is Liz N, who from Doris' memory, was a founding facilitator for this most special workshop. Whether a woman was in Gamblers Anonymous or Gam-Anon, Liz had a vision for a workshop that would bring a heightened sensitivity to the experiences, feelings, and emotions women face in their journey into recovery. Doris attended this workshop many times mentioning afterward that Joe was always there supporting her endeavor.

Larry B. - Past Trustee - Area 15, New York

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9/18/10 - 5:08 PM

I know this is a rough time for you Joe and wanted to let you know know my prayers are with Liz, Dennis and you at this time.

So to Liz and Dennis A and Joe

Hope you'll soon be feeling fine  
The way you were before  
Because things just won't be the same  
Until you're well once more.

Richie S. - Area 6, South Florida

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

Should the link above not work, copy and paste this email address into a blank email: [trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com](mailto:trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com)

**Contact the [Trustee Website Administrator](#)**

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