

Main Menu

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

**Tampa, FL - Fall 2014
Information Section**

[Tampa Conference Info](#)

Rolling Agenda

- [Tampa Absentee Ballots](#)
- [Agenda Information](#)
- [Conference Bids](#)

Submit an Agenda Item

BOT Committees

- [Anonymity](#)
- [Blue Book Revision](#)
- [Conference Oversight](#)
- [Digital Media](#)
- [Hotline Implementation](#)
- [Hotline Files](#)
- [Intergroup](#)
- [International Relations](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Member Retention](#)
- [Pressure Relief](#)
- [Prison - Canada](#)
- [Prison - US](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Rules and Procedures](#)
- [Telephone Conference Call](#)
- [Trustee Removal Merit Panel](#)
- [Trustee Website](#)
- [Website Revisions](#)

Trustee Line & Other Features

- [Trustee Line Home Page](#)
- [Login For The Trustee Poll](#)
- [Trustee Poll](#)
- [>>Trustee Information Update<<](#)
- [Trustee Website Tutorial](#)
- [Area Event Flyers](#)
- [Local Area Website Guidelines](#)
- [New Area/Trustee Accommodation Fund](#)
- [Local Area Help Flyer](#)
- [Board of Regents News Page](#)
- [Trustee Memorial Honor Roll](#)

Future Conferences

[Upcoming Conferences](#)

Select Language | ▼

Trustee Line for September 2014

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 9/30/14.

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

Item	Subject	Last Entry	Entries
I.	They Used To Be Called Anniversaries	5:39 PM 9/3	2

They Used To Be Called Anniversaries

9/1/14 - 12:01 AM

If you were to count the meetings you've attended in your time in program, you could put a minimum number on how many times you've heard someone read the last 3 words of Unity Step 12 – principles before personalities. That phrase has been used countless times more than that in describing a multitude of situations. Reversing that into 'Personalities before Principles' is never a good thing. But, it can get much worse when members take that situation and hike it up a few notches. That's when things turn into 'Egos before Principles'. It's this disgusting situation that I want to address in relationship to anniversary celebrations.

Roughly 16-18 years ago, I thought it would be great to go to an anniversary for someone celebrating 30 years. I had already built up a slight aversion to attending anniversaries of most of the elder members of this Fellowship. They always seem to turn into a stroll down memory lane about 'I remember this...or I remember that...' As the people were called to speak, the new members in the rooms were ignored. The people under 90 days were ignored. This was only about the celebrant picking people who were going to inflate the already overinflated ego of the member who was the subject of the anniversary meeting.

The meeting closed and then the room transformed into 20 minutes of the person's wife coming in from the Gam-Anon room and sitting at the same front table with her spouse talking about her issues. No, this was not a combined meeting. That was followed up by 30 more minutes of the person celebrating the 30 years.

I walked out with such a sense of disgust regarding how egos had overtaken principles. It was then that I developed the beginnings of real disdain for these jumbo anniversaries. What I witnessed, subsequent to that, on an increasing basis is that the very members who are so quick to pounce on others about them using 'Personalities before Principles', were the ones who felt they had a different set of rules that applied to them, but that it was okay to increase it to 'Egos over Personalities', when it suited them. Worse yet was the repeated vain attempts to justify it as promoting unity in the Fellowship.

Earlier, I mentioned 'most of the elder members', because there is still a segment of that grouping that keeps its perspective, and can actually have a big anniversary celebration without making it into an ego show.

Yes, I do understand that when these big anniversaries are put on the local Intergroup calendars, people will come from other areas to be part of the

celebration. That's a wonderful fringe benefit, but it is still just another GA meeting, and that is what many members holding these jumbo anniversaries forget.

So why have I become such a cynic about these anniversaries? Self-promotion is probably at the top of the list. Is that the message we are supposed to be trying to carry? Does the person celebrating have to call individual people and ask them if they are coming to the anniversary, making those who can't feel guilty if they can't attend, or just as bad, guilted people into attending? Do we have to send out flyers pronouncing the anniversary? Do we have to call people from other states to say to distribute those flyers to everyone in the area? Do we need to have a separate location from the meeting to celebrate the anniversary? Do we need to have these anniversaries catered? Is it right to have people call on behalf of the person celebrating and spin some line of crap about how it is an obligation for certain people to be at the anniversary? Worse yet, the person celebrating is paying the bills. Oh wait, isn't generosity a spiritual principle? Sure, just like putting \$1,000 into the basket at a meeting. Who would stand for that?

More and more GA members are approaching the 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and yes, 55-year anniversaries. The elder members are mostly heavy advocates of this homage that is paid to those celebrants, because they know it will be their turn some time soon. Those same people want the same praise, accolades and unadulterated devotion. How unprogram-like. Yes, getting a lot of people together for therapy (if you're lucky) is a grand idea, but we need to remember the process. Anniversaries are just another day in time that just so happens to coincide with a meeting.

The argument that these are monumental anniversaries is just a way to say that the ends justify the means. Each year that ensues should be yet another monumental anniversary, if you believe in the same argument, which suits many who would promote these big anniversaries.

Because of all the fuss that is being made over these big anniversaries, these senior members are carrying a message to others with less time, that the shorter anniversaries are not as important as the jumbo ones? What about that certain spiritual principle called humility? Do we conveniently forget that, so we can make sure everyone genuflects and kisses the rings of the people who celebrate the big anniversaries? That's not what I was taught in this Fellowship, nor is it a condition to which I aspire.

My choice is to avoid these potholes in the Fellowship and concentrate on Unity Step 5 – Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. Because, the suffering compulsive gambler can be sitting next to any one of us at the meetings we attend.

I would like all the ALL GA members to only think about the process of how these big anniversaries are put together. The 2nd item under the Responsibilities for International Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous, says for us to be a living example of the precepts of Gamblers Anonymous and to personally work the Steps of Recovery and Unity. Putting GA members who celebrate anniversaries on a throne for a coronation, is detrimental to GA as a whole and should not take place. What makes it obscene is when the member celebrating decides to put himself on that throne.

As we all age in this Fellowship, let's focus on carrying the message of hope, not the message of 'Egos before Principles'.

Who among the current and past Trustees will stand up for the principles of GA, not their own egos? Let's hear from you.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

9/3/14 - 5:39 PM

I totally agree with David M and I'm quite surprised that there has been no response to his position on Anniversaries. Putting ourselves on Pedestals does a huge disservice to the Fellowship. For me, every day that I'm free from Gambling is an Anniversary, and as such, I celebrate each day with passion! Celebrating the elders on the Fellowship is great, but David hits the nail right on its Big head, it has to be with Humility and Thanks! It should never be a Coronation but a small

celebration of life!

Thank You David for bringing this topic to light!

Juan A. - Area 6B, Puerto Rico

new version