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**Trustee Line for October 2008**

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A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 10/31/08.

**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
1.	Contradictions	10/14/08 12:16 PM
2.	I object !!!	10/1/08 4:44 PM
3.	Should a member of Gamblers Anonymous be entitled to or should the member get contract information ??	10/1/08 5:07 PM
4.	Common sense	10/15/08 7:24 PM
5.	Houston Trustee meeting afterthoughts	10/26/08 1:19 PM
6.	Houston agenda item 32	10/27/08 3:12 PM

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

**Contradictions**

10/1/08 - 12:36 PM

David, it is now 1.45 am and I could not sleep because I have been reading your letter of 9/27/08 to myself over and over again - specially this line: " My job as website admin is to post what people send , irrespective of what I may personally think about what they have to say "

Well David for the welfare of G.A., I have to wake you up and say to you, THIS IS NOT TRUE AND HERE IS WHY:

This is how you started your letter of 9/11/08 to me, "I have received your letter and want you to think about something before it gets posted."

And this is how you threatened me in your last paragraph ;

"So George, I am GIVING YOU NOTICE about RETHINKING what you have written, because I will certainly reply to what you have written with this item and show how you have BUTCHERED my statement and completely misrepresented me. Understand, I am not trying to CENSURE what you or anyone writes nor am I telling you to WITHDRAW it. I do this merely to SAVE YOU THE EMBARRASSMENT OF WHAT MY RESPONSE WILL BE IF YOU POST. "

In conclusion, you have said that you post what people sent irrespective of your thoughts, you don't censor and have not told me to withdraw my letter to the Trustee line. And yet, you have given me NOTICE, twice asked me to think and rethink about it. However, I still want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to save myself FROM THE EMBARRASMENT OF YOUR RESPONSE, IF I POSTED IT.

Could you please respond to these serious contradictions?

GEORGE G. - Area 20

10/1/08 - 5:20 PM

The above posting appears on this issue of the Trustee Line because of how the BOT approved guidelines for the Trustee website were followed.

The Trustee website committee deemed it to be inappropriate for posting, but the final decision rested with the 3 BOT Chairs that decided that it was appropriate to post.

Ordinarily, I would respond to any submission that was put to me, as a GA member or in the capacity of committee chair or Trustee Website Admin; however, this posting involves emails between George and myself sent on a personal basis. I personally disagree with the decision of the Chairs. The Trustee Line, again in my opinion, is NOT the forum for airing out problems between GA members on a personal basis.

George, if you want me to respond to 'there serious contradictions', as you characterize them, give me a call, you have my number.

David M. - Area 12

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10/10/08 - 6:37 AM

I am surprised (or not) that no one has stepped up and ask for clarification to George G item about being censored. It appears that George's submission went through a VERY intense lengthy procedure of review.

George's entry and David's response has prompted me to come out and write to the Trustee line in over a year. The mere fact that we have given up the privilege to have a true open forum on the so-called Trustee line has always confused me. Why as a current or past trustee do we have to be under the microscope of GA Police that watches over the Trustee line? Why should any G.A. member be under the GA Police??? If we are responsible enough to be elected to our position and dedicate to the well being of our fellowship, why do we have to go through this process of whom is right or who is wrong before we are allowed to get an item posted. This breaks down Unity, inflates ego, creates levels of power, and makes it not a suggestive program or pretends to be an open forum that really is controlled.

Apparently, David's influence on the trustee website committee has taken over, in fact that the entire committee deemed it "inappropriate" and NOT ALLOW George's entry and our elected Chair and our elected Co-Chairs had to step in to see fit that in fact it is appropriate to be posted. Let alone George getting "PUT ON NOTICE" or to "RETHINK" what he had written. These facts have me very concerned as a GA member and should be clarified in Houston. We may have given up to much right and have enabled some ego's to inflate.

David's first sentence question and challenges our elected Chairs their opinion to the BOT approved guidelines and THAN continues to ask George to call him for explanation to the "serious contradiction". Obviously, this has been discussed several times and days with the committee, our elected Chairs and George G prior to being allowed of the posting of George's letter. Some how George should be answered and if he is correct an apology or a humble Step 10 should be made.

So how do we prevent this from becoming even worst? I suggest that instead of the current handling of the Trustee Line and Trustee Website we set up two BLOGS. For those few that do not know what a BLOG is, it is what essentially the current Trustee Line attempts to be. It is merely a very easy ongoing posting site. There are 960,000,000 of them all over the Internet and anyone can do it with very little experience. There are 2 ways blog's can work. The first is a true posting with no review and the other must be approved prior to posting.

The first suggested blog would be for "Trustee Line" - were any entry submission would be posted immediately. The second blog would be for the "Trustee Rolling Agenda" items would have to approved by the Chair prior to posting. Both are VERY easy to maintain and a committee would not have to be in place to police or control. This is "KEEPING IT SIMPLE" - very simple. The rest of the Trustee site can remain the same as a reference tool. I suggest that the BOT ask the committee or create a committee to investigate this and report back at the next BOT conference in Kansas City.

In summary, I ask three questions and would like to see posting or opinions from our trustees -

- 1.) What are we afraid of?
- 2.) What does our trusted elected Trustees think about George's posting?
- 3.) The idea of setting up the 2 blogs for our Trustees and membership?

Fellowship first and always,

10/10/08 - 4:54 PM

Why is it that when someone follows Guidelines or the Guidance Code, the word GA POLICE comes into to play, for me before I came into the program I could justified just about anything I did or was about to do. Today I have a program to follow as well as it literature, and thank God I do, or I would be justifying everything MY WAY..again now someone is talking about CENSORSHIP ??????????????????, George's first posting ( 9/10/08) to the trustee line was what David said in his response (9/11/08) that he was comparing apples to oranges, David was talking about the BOR not the ISO...then on a posting from George G dated 9/27/08 he asked for an apologies...as far as I can figure out what had been written most of the correspondence were by EMAIL, which was between the two parties, it should not be put on the Trustee line as the Guidelines state...again THE GUIDELINES, not CENSORSHIP. We all have heard as Trustees in the meetings about how many times that the Guidance Code is being violated, the only way I know of , if you don't like something you must put it on the Trustee Agenda and wait for the vote to change the item, but in the mean time and if its not changed we MUST live with what we do have, and not continue to do things MY WAY, that lesson I am glad to say I have learned in the PROGRAM. I enjoy reading the Trustee line and sometimes making posting as I have now, and sometimes I would like to say to some, YOU A\_\_HOLE, but I can't as that would be out of line. Again if you don't like the way things are, then put it on the Agenda, the only way things should and will change.

Joe B. - Area 6 C

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10/10/08 - 9:12 PM

In reposnse to both Gary S and Joe B's response regarding George G's posting.

I was one of the committee members who voted that George G's posting was inappropriate. My reasoning was:

- a) George accused David of threatening him (and I did not see it that way)
- b) George capitalized (for effect I suspect) David's words as if to imply a STRESSING that I did not read in the in the original text.

With that said, once the process of committee review was complete, the item was forwarded to the sitting chairs for vote. They voted and deemed the item appropriate. As a committee member I accept that as part of the process and do not take exception.

As a GA member, I'm not entirely in agreement with the sitting chairs' vote but then too, I accept it. I do not see a need to change, or complain, about the process.

Ed K. - Area 1

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10/11/08 - 5:55 PM

I thank my higher power that guided me into a fellowship that gave me back my freedom and sanity. However, I did not have to sign away my freedom of speech or to have someone police my action in Gamblers Anonymous when I came in to save my life.

I am with Bill B. from Area 6 - Where is our common sense? When I came into GA there was plenty of fog in my mind and I was not thinking clear. But let us stop with all the pretence and playing word games. Lets be real!! To have a committee were they go through a review of what a fellow trustee writes and POLICE and CENSORING- IS NOT A PROCESS.

When people claim the process works in this case - we have to look at the process. Cause there is a big brother looking over our fellow trusted Trustee's shoulder and judging them.

I was sick before but now I am not, a little crazy - yes, but not sick. It repulses me that anyone believes we need a GA police or committee to judge me or take my inventory. After 11 years and 6 of the as a trustee and being involved in many areas of this fellowship - I would pray that I do not have to answer to a committee or a jury panel to sentence me. No GA member of any time in recovery should!!! How and why did we give this committee or even the Chairs to be the almighty? We have set up LAWS (not guidelines) to which people are now the GA POLICE and lost the fellowship way of SUGGESTIONS and just plan old fashion COMMON SENSE.

If I or anyone else post something that maybe out of "suggestions" of what the BOT has establish than I would hope the anyone has that right and would be able to step up and give me a comment, just like I get out of the any other GA room. What right has this committee or BOT to restrict my freedom to do

that? Since when did we establish this??? Some members on the BOT have forgotten that this is fellowship of recovery and not levels of politics that govern, police and jury.

Let us open our eyes, ears and mind and get out of this word game that is nothing but politics that is ego driven we seem to be playing.

For clarification this is what Webster defines the word "Police".

Please read it and tell me if what happen to George that the GA police have overseen and judge our fellow trustees. Than ask the question - WHAT IS NEXT and When are we going to stop these people that judge us?

Police

- 1: archaic: govern
- 2: to control, regulate, or keep in order by use of police
- 3: to make clean and put in order
- 4 a: to supervise the operation, execution, or administration of to prevent or detect and prosecute violations of rules and regulations
- b: to exercise such supervision over the policies and activities of
- 5: to perform the functions of a police force in or over
- 6: one attempting to regulate or censor a specified field or activity

Fellowship First -

Gary S - area 12

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Note from the website admin: This submission was placed in this section and the one entitled 'Common Sense' because the content addresses both segments

10/12/08 - 7:30 AM

Dear Trustees (Current and Past),

I look forward to seeing everyone in Houston and I really mean that. I don't normally feel the need to preface my letters, but this time I do.

The fellowship has changed drastically in just the last seven and a half years that I have been involved with GA. As I first entered the rooms here in Florida, I was by far the youngest member and a female. I know this may not be the case for all areas, but it was here on the West Coast of FL. I struggled my first year relapsing over and over. I guess I could never be 100% sure of this, but I can share my belief in why I was repeatedly relapsing...I refused to believe that the older people in these rooms had any idea of what was going on in my young life. My experiences did not allow me to relate to the others. I had not lost a home or even owned a home. I had not lost retirement much less even had a real job to begin investing in one. I had not lost children because at the ages of one, two, and five they had know idea of what a train wreck their mother was. I had not lost a husband because I was such a good manipulator and made him believe it was his entire fault, however, the marriage was never a good one.

It took a year for me to realize that even though my experiences were not the same the behavioral pattern was. Of course I learned the word YET, but more importantly I learned that if I quit comparing myself to the others, I might actually be able to learn from them. I did learn...I learned that I don't have to go through all the same heartaches that my fellow brothers and sisters had experienced. I learned that with age comes wisdom and experience. I learned that these people knew more about me than maybe even I did at the time. I learned to live life on life's terms and that I am only guaranteed today...not tomorrow. I learned that it is ok not to like or agree with every person. I also learned that life would continue to happen (the ups and downs). Most importantly I learned that the next gambling wager would not change any of the above. I'm still not going to like and be liked. I'm still going to disagree and be disagreed with and life is still happening (the ups and downs).

I am writing this in response to a few of the submissions to the trustee line this month. I want to first address the letter from Bill B. In my opinion and I have had friends disagree with me on this, I felt the letter was appalling. I was on the abuse/harassment committee and this committee worked very hard to come up with the pamphlet that we are presenting in Houston. Now, whether I agree or disagree with it is not the point here. I am not concerned if Bill agrees or disagrees with the pamphlet. My concern here is the voice behind the letter submitted by Bill. (Just in case some don't understand the term voice...it is the tone of the letter.) I feel that to say, "this committee waste of time and money" is disgraceful. First of all, to say that this was a waste of time should only be determined by the individual members on the committee. We didn't waste Bill's time, as a matter of fact; I don't recall Bill

B. attending any of our phone conferences. We also did not spend any money not even Bill B's. money. So, where is the money that was wasted? This committee believed strongly in the piece of literature that they came up with. They felt it was worth the time and worth the fellowship looking into. They believed this could help GA as a whole. They have the right to believe that, just as Bill or anyone else has the right to believe that this is not necessary, "this is common sense." To put an individual or a committee down because they believe they are doing work that might help to make the program just a bit stronger is just not right. The disagreeing is fine, but why does it always seem that when people here disagree with one another, they make it a personal attack? Why can't we just state our differences and truly learn the meaning of OPENMINDEDNESS? We may actually learn something from someone that we don't particularly like if we do this. Are we afraid that if we don't put the individual or committee down to the ground that we may not be heard STRONG enough?

It's simple guys...the trustee line, as I understood it was meant to share our thoughts and ideas in between conferences. If you agree with something than please share it for all to read and give feedback. If you disagree with something, please share that too, so that we can see all the negatives and positives about issues. However, when sharing either of these opinions there is no need to make any judgments about the author/authors behind the piece. Most of the time (I believe) people that are working and volunteering their time on committees or to research issues past or present that might be taking place, so that they can present to you the BOT their findings or suggestions for improvement are doing it only because they care about the fellowship. State your position and lets stop attacking each other.

My second issue and I will try to make this short since I think it somewhat ties in with the first issue. The letter from George G and Gary S in regards to David M. First of all, I agreed with the decision of the website committee that George's letter had no business being put on this website. That was personal emails between George and David in regards to GA. George then choose to air bits and pieces of the email that he thought would be detrimental to David's character. I can't speak for everyone, but I know that I have had personal communications with members of this board and if I posted the comments that were made to me personally and mentioned names to go along with the comments, I'm pretty positive that a few eye brows would be raised. However, the appropriate thing is not for me to expose anyone's character traits that might be unappealing. If there is a need for me to let the BOT know my personal communications or issues with members of the BOT, I surely can do that without trying to belittle the individual/individuals that I may be discussing. Folks, this is about learning how to agree to disagree without making it a personal issue.

I'm aware that the issue above all stemmed from David's desire to exploit what he felt was going on with the BOR. Again, whether I agree or disagree with David does not matter. What matters is that he believed that there were serious problems that our fellowship was facing and he exposed what he believed was true. All of you and I have the right to send a submission stating why David's information is incorrect or why we may no he is correct. To bash David or any brother or sister for trying to look out for the best interest of our fellowship, is again disgraceful.

I close with this...the members here taught me to live a different way of life. To avoid the old ways that use to lead me to the bet. I couldn't handle disagreements, I always had to be right, I wanted people to hear me, so I made sure to make the person/people I was talking to or about feel like they were less than me. You all taught me that it is ok not to always agree...that doesn't mean the other person is wrong or bad. You all taught me that if I was wrong and the other person was right...that's just one more thing I was able to learn. You all taught me that I didn't have to make others feel bad to make myself feel good. You all taught me that if I could learn to love myself first...I could love others. I really hope that before my time is over as a trustee that this board will begin to listen and learn. In my opinion that will happen when we learn to start respecting each other for our differences in opinions and realize that if we just start listening to each other instead of trying to judge each others character so quickly...we might actually learn something from the one person we didn't think we could.

I look forward to seeing you all in Houston.

Dina P. - Area 6B Trustee

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10/12/08 - 6:27 PM

I read with interest the letter from Gary S regarding the Trustee Line and how it is monitored and was rather surprised that someone would suggest a forum

without any controls at all or a website without guidelines. Those who have been around the BOT for more than a few years will recall that the website was once completely controlled by the chairman of the BOT. Even as chairman I was opposed to this and I would hope than no one would want to go back to the days, not so long ago, that the chair had free reign in this and many other areas.

That is why a great deal of time and thought has gone into the Trustee Website. None of this was just thrown together. While I served as Chairman of the BOT, David and I had many many discussions on the format of the website in general, and the Trustee Line in particular. In setting this up we understood the need to protect the site from the rule of just one person, whether it be the website admin or the chair of the BOT. That is why it was vitally important to have a website committee (which anyone is free to join) rather than just an administrator or committee chairman. We also wanted an appeal process for the member who felt aggrieved by a committee decision. Even there, we did not want the power to be in hands of just one, hence the review by the three chairs. This process insures that the group, as expressed by our servants, has the final say.

One may agree or not with George or with David or with the chairs but I am hard pressed to see how anyone could not see the wisdom of the process in place and how well it has worked.

I am proud of the website that has developed over the years and thank the committee for their continued efforts on our behalf.

Brother Denis M. - Area 12

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10/13/08 - 11:49 AM

A question was asked by Bill B. (Florida) and in the latest posting by Gary S. "What is next and when are we going to stop these people that judge us." My question after the dictionary definition of COMMON SENSE.

(Common sense...ordinary good or sound practical unsophisticated judgment)

My question is whose COMMON SENSE, as said by an old wise person in program..

Joe B. - Area 6 C

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10/14/08 - 12:16 PM

ITS FUNNY HOW IT SEEMS THAT THE UNITY OF THE PROGRAM IS CONSTANTLY CHALLENGED ONLY BECAUSE A SELECT FEW THINK THAT THEY RUN THE PROGRAM AND KNOW MORE THAN THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE. DISCUSS, DEBATE AND SHOW YOUR POINTS TO WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH, BUT KEEP IT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM, NOT ALL THE PERSONALITIES. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU OLD TIMERS SHOULD KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE WITHOUT ALL THIS BICKERING. I GUESS THAT NONE OF YOU BELIEVE IN THE STEPS OF RECOVERY AND THE UNITY STEPS, FOR IF YOU DID, THIS WOULD NOT BE HAPPENING.

IT MAKES ME SICK TO HAVE TO LISTEN TO THE CONSTANT COMPLAINING AND YELLING BY CERTAIN PEOPLE. WAKE UP AND SMELL THE FAT AND LIVE THE STEPS OF RECOVERY WHILE CONTINUELY WORKING THEM. YOU MIGHT BECOME A BETTER PERSON FOR YOURSELF AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. THE PROGRAM DOESN'T NEED ALL THIS GARBAGE.

A GRIEVING BROTHER FROM AREA 8

ARNIE B.

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**I object !!!**

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10/1/08 - 4:44 PM

In my opinion, we should be discussing ISSUES not "he said she said"s. I got dizzy reading some of the letters & comments on the letters. It seems that if we quote something from our literature that will make us on the right side.

1. What is the issue?-

- A) if it is disclosure then let's try to deal with that
- B) if it is communication let's deal with that

There should be NO-bot v bor

Bill B. - Area 15

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**Should a member of Gamblers Anonymous be entitled to or should the member get contract information ??**

10/1/08 - 5:07 PM

I think so-all members? Well short of putting it in the Bulletin-but certainly to any member of the BOT or a member with expertise in the particular subject (job related).

The BOR is responsible for the day to day running of the I.S.O. but NOT for large expenditures those must go to the BOT for approval-and it is hard to approve something without all of the facts. It might be a good idea to have a BOR member present the item to the BOT or maybe the Vendor should be called upon to answer all necessary questions.

Bill B. - Area 15

**Common sense**

10/4/08 - 3:10 PM

This committee waste of time and money has me re-thinking what our Gamblers Anonymous program is all about. Here is the answer instead of this committee:

COMMON SENSE.

If someone is having a problem and fears being harmed; let them go to the local police; this is NOT a GA matter. Can you visualize me being on the local A&H committee and a member comes to me because that member was threatened with bodily harm and I say "sure, I'll talk to XXXX" and I do and the next day that person is beat up. We are open for a huge law suit and well as being just plain stupid. We do not have a GA Police force. Gamblers Anonymous is for people with gambling problems. We are here to help each other with our gambling problem. We can not be "A Man for All Seasons". We are sick people trying to get better; nothing more; nothing less. All of the other people problems are for the outside.

So, let us not worry about those who harass for sex, money or power; we will never be able to stop these problems. Should we shoot members that steal the room treasury? Let's use common sense.

Just imagine speaking to a member that is still gambling and going to meetings but not ready to stop gambling; do you think anyone can stop that person from gambling? Highly unlikely. I know how hard it was to change myself; how can I change others?

If someone "hits" on another member regarding sex; that member could answer, "yes or I'll think about it or no, don't ask again". Same answer for members about harassing for money or selling merchandise or investing in something. We CAN NOT control others and their actions. Will a person be guided in this area by reading a piece of literature?

Why do we even think of anything else except helping each other?

Disband the committee and forget any literature regarding Abuse & Harassment; let's get going with helping ourselves and others.

With serenity,

Bill B. - Area 6  
Boynton Beach, FL

10/9/08 - 11:36 PM

In response to Bill B's letter from area 6, I totally agree. The last thing the ISO needs is another piece of literature sitting on the shelf collecting dust. Its as if that every time someone has an issue arise they feel that another piece of literature is the answer. I have been involved in GA for over 9 years and attend at least 3 meetings a week. This issue has never arisen. If it had it would have been handled in the room with a group discussion. This cost of producing a booklet is not minor expense and I feel the cost should be justified with a real need for the product. I have discussed this issue with men and women in our local rooms and the consensus is the same- 100% unnecessary. As Bill has stated if someone feels threatened take legal actions or bring the issue before their room. A little booklet is not going to solve the problem.

Gary G. - Area 6C - NC/SC

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10/12/08 - 7:30 AM

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I am writing this in response to a few of the submissions to the trustee line this month. I want to first address the letter from Bill B. In my opinion and I have had friends disagree with me on this, I felt the letter was appalling. I was on the abuse/harassment committee and this committee worked very hard to come up with the pamphlet that we are presenting in Houston. Now, whether I agree or disagree with it is not the point here. I am not concerned if Bill agrees or disagrees with the pamphlet. My concern here is the voice behind the letter submitted by Bill. (Just in case some don't understand the term voice...it is the tone of the letter.) I feel that to say, "this committee waste of time and money" is disgraceful. First of all, to say that this was a waste of time should only be determined by the individual members on the committee. We didn't waste Bill's time, as a matter of fact; I don't recall Bill B. attending any of our phone conferences. We also did not spend any money not even Bill B's. money. So, where is the money that was wasted? This committee believed strongly in the piece of literature that they came up with. They felt it was worth the time and worth the fellowship looking into. They believed this could help GA as a whole. They have the right to believe that, just as Bill or anyone else has the right to believe that this is not necessary, "this is common sense." To put an individual or a committee down because they believe they are doing work that might help to make the program just a bit stronger is just not right. The disagreeing is fine, but why does it always seem that when people here disagree with one another, they make it a personal attack? Why can't we just state our differences and truly learn the meaning of OPENMINDEDNESS? We may actually learn something from someone that we don't particularly like if we do this. Are we afraid that if we don't put the individual or committee down to the ground that we may not be heard STRONG enough?

It's simple guys...the trustee line, as I understood it was meant to share our thoughts and ideas in between conferences. If you agree with something than please share it for all to read and give feedback. If you disagree with something, please share that too, so that we can see all the negatives and positives about issues. However, when sharing either of these opinions there is no need to make any judgments about the author/authors behind the piece. Most of the time (I believe) people that are working and volunteering their time on committees or to research issues past or present that might be taking place, so that they can present to you the BOT their findings or suggestions for improvement are doing it only because they care about the fellowship. State your position and lets stop attacking each other.



My second issue and I will try to make this short since I think it somewhat ties in with the first issue. The letter from George G and Gary S in regards to David M. First of all, I agreed with the decision of the website committee that George's letter had no business being put on this website. That was personal emails between George and David in regards to GA. George then choose to air bits and pieces of the email that he thought would be detrimental to David's character. I can't speak for everyone, but I know that I have had personal communications with members of this board and if I posted the comments that were made to me personally and mentioned names to go along with the comments, I'm pretty positive that a few eye brows would be raised. However, the appropriate thing is not for me to expose anyone's character traits that might be unappealing. If there is a need for me to let the BOT know my personal communications or issues with members of the BOT, I surely can do that without trying to belittle the individual/individuals that I may be discussing. Folks, this is about learning how to agree to disagree without making it a personal issue.

I'm aware that the issue above all stemmed from David's desire to exploit what he felt was going on with the BOR. Again, whether I agree or disagree with David does not matter. What matters is that he believed that there were serious problems that our fellowship was facing and he exposed what he believed was true. All of you and I have the right to send a submission stating why David's information is incorrect or why we may no he is correct. To bash David or any brother or sister for trying to look out for the best interest of our fellowship, is again disgraceful.

I close with this...the members here taught me to live a different way of life. To avoid the old ways that use to lead me to the bet. I couldn't handle disagreements, I always had to be right, I wanted people to hear me, so I made sure to make the person/people I was talking to or about feel like they were less than me. You all taught me that it is ok not to always agree...that doesn't mean the other person is wrong or bad. You all taught me that if I was wrong and the other person was right...that's just one more thing I was able to learn. You all taught me that I didn't have to make others feel bad to make myself feel good. You all taught me that if I could learn to love myself first...I could love others. I really hope that before my time is over as a trustee that this board will begin to listen and learn. In my opinion that will happen when we learn to start respecting each other for our differences in opinions and realize that if we just start listening to each other instead of trying to judge each others character so quickly...we might actually learn something from the one person we didn't think we could.

I look forward to seeing you all in Houston.

Dina P. - Area 6B Trustee

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10/13/08 - 1:01 AM

Fellow Trustees please give some hard thought into the document being presented in Houston entitled Guidance and Procedures for Handling Situations of Abuse and Harassment in the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship, and help it pass. Many of you may think it is not needed because common sense should be able to handle it. Well, I would like to inform you that common sense isn't very common. I have run into an issue regarding abuse and harassment very early in my recovery. Fortunately, I was strong enough to handle the situation; however, it came close to running me away. The person that was the perpetrator had many years clean and even many more in the fellowship. The disease of gambling involves more than placing a bet as our combo book explains. It involves being a big shot and getting what we want when we want it regardless of the cost to others. We talk of the rooms being a safe place to tell our story and share our strength, hope and experience. This pamphlet will help that stay true.

If you are inclined to vote against this pamphlet please take a look inside and make sure it isn't because it is stepping on your toes. Over the years I have received many calls and met many members in meetings after the meetings in regard to the issues handled in this pamphlet. I have called members because I had not seen them in the rooms for awhile only to hear that something in this pamphlet was the cause. We can't help the gambler who still suffers if they do not feel safe in the rooms. Believe it or not I talked to a female member and had to give her permission to hang up from an obscene phone call. Because it was a GA member she thought she would be letting the fellowship down if she merely hung up. She left the rooms for a while due to this but thankfully after many calls has returned.

Carol K. - Area 9

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10/15/08 - 7:24 PM

First I would like to introduce myself. My name is J.R., I am the new trustee for Area 5A. I am also one of the members of the Abuse and Harassment committee. I joined this committee for the very reason that there is no clear guidelines or literature to help people in the program address abuse and harassment issues in and outside the rooms. As a member of this area I was asked to help people with problems in the rooms, while I was not a trustee at the time, I was more than willing to help. On more than a few occasions I relied on what I heard from other members and from I could determine from the literature that we have. I have found on this very website, a posting from a trustee asking for help with a abusive member. The response was that there is no guidelines in place to help him. His opinion was on the same lines that we have presented in the pamphlet. Those in the program that are willing to try and help other members with problems in the rooms should not have to rely on hear say or search out help on a webpage. Now that I have been in the program a few more years and have more experience, I know that I would do few things differently that would have provided a better outcome for all involved. Why do we have to wait for that to happen or worse to have members leave the program because of a problem. As we all know there are new people joining and leaving the program all the time. So this process is repeated over and over again. This pamphlet would provide the necessary guidelines for everyone in the program. In most cases problems start out small and with help of this pamphlet, will keep a lot of these issues from becoming large ones.

I would like to respond to a few things in regards to Bill B's posting "Common Sense" earlier this month. If someone fears being harmed, they should absolutely go to the police, as we suggest in the pamphlet. The only problem with that is, not all problems are matters for the police. The pamphlet covers some of these issues such as, profanity, offensive conduct, sexual comments, miss use of the phone list, threats, racial slurs, and discrimination. As mentioned we are not G.A. police but we do have a responsibility to the members, everyone has the right to feel safe in the rooms, and as Unity step one tells us, " Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon group unity.

We CANNOT STOP worrying about those who harass for money, sex or power, people who abuse or harass others, are a problem in any part of our society and is unacceptable, whether that is in the workplace, a public place or in a G.A. room. The comment about the answer to being hit on regarding sex is to say yes, no or I will think about it, the problem starts when the person does not take no for an answer. I don't believe this pamphlet is for the person that is abusing or harassing other members, but a guideline for those effected by that action. I also believe that this will give notice as to what steps will be taken if these problems rise.

In closing I would like to say that this pamphlet addresses a lot more issues than sexual abuse, if people joining the program see that any conduct that is unacceptable in the rooms is not tolerated and will be dealt with than we will have a lot less problems to solve. I look forward to my first B.O.T, and meeting my new friends and making new ones in the program.

Yours in Recovery  
J.R. E. - Area 5A Trustee

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**Houston Trustee meeting afterthoughts**

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10/26/08 - 1:19 PM  
Hello my Friends,

I just wanted to say thank you to all of you for making my experience with Gamblers Anonymous more then I ever could have imagined. This was my fourth conference / trustee meeting and I felt that there was a greater tone of unity then I've ever sensed. Previous meetings seemed to have a lot personalities, but maybe it is just my growing up. The time I spend with all of you keeps me wanting more. I see the involvement of some and think I don't do enough sometimes. I get a chill when a new trustee stands at the microphone for the first time, it always brings me back to my first time, WOW. I am already excited about KC.

Yours in recovery,  
Matt H. - Area 16 Trustee

P.S. - Don't forget to submit your Public Relations ideas to our committee or to Andy or my personal emails on the confidential listing.

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10/27/08 - 3:12 PM

I wanted to write the Trustee Line to explain my reason for putting the discussion item on the Houston agenda that dealt with giving Medallions to members with or without the 39 meetings during the previous 12 months.

I feel like I didn't explain my situation very satisfactorily at the Trustee meeting, and I am very sorry that I caused such a problem. Here is why I put the item on the agenda. In Las Vegas our local guidelines do NOT deal with "off" birthdays (anniversaries). Our guidelines state that in order to celebrate an anniversary (birthday) a member (and I will quote EXACTLY how our guidance code reads: "One (1) year of abstinence from gambling: A Gamblers Anonymous member who achieves this milestone for the first time will be eligible to celebrate his/her one (1) year anniversary, preferably at their home meeting provided the member has attended at least thirty-nine (39) meetings during the year. Five (5) years of abstinence from gambling and multiples thereof, will be provided for in the same manner as the one (1) year anniversary."

We do not have any guidelines for the "off" years. (2,3,4, etc.) Also, we generally do not celebrate any of those. If a person is at a meeting on or shortly after they make an off year, and announce it, we will give them the medallion for that year, but it is NOT a group celebration. I believe that is what the B.O.T. members who went ballistic thought. I personally celebrate most of my anniversary's, but the expense for it is totally my own. G.A. in Southern Nevada does not pay for any (what we call "off birthday's). If a member chooses to celebrate, then he or she must pay for all the expense that might be connected to it. I believe that every year should be celebrated to show the newer members that it can be done, and what life can be like without gambling.

So when this guy announced that he had just made 3 years, I gave him the medallion. I didn't really know for sure how many meetings he had made during the past year. We have on our October meeting directory, 110 meetings listed. I think Liz told me or mentioned that there are 116. But my point is, that I have no idea as to how many meetings this guy went to.

When I was questioned by a member who personally doesn't care for the gentleman who made the 3 years, about the 39 meeting rule, I put it on the agenda. I did this on my own accord, and was willing to take all of the "heat" that I got from it, because I wanted to find out what the B.O.T. felt about this. Well, I found out. But in my own defense, I was ignorant of the 39 meeting rule being in effect for "off birthday's", due to our local guidance code, and the fact that we don't actually celebrate them.

In closing, I just want to say to all the newer trustee's who might not really know me, that I would never, EVER, do anything against G.A. For Tom, and any others who I might have offended or hurt by what I did, I apologize to you. It was ignorance on my part, and the next time someone announces that they have 2, 3 or any off year anniversary, I will ask them if they've attended 39 or more meetings during the past 12 months.

Sincerely, your friend and brother through fellowship,  
Howie C. - Area 3

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