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**Trustee Line for October 2011**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 10/31/11.

**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

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**Issues With Erlang's Hotline Service**

10/1/11 - 12:01 AM

I am grateful that Erlang has been able to provide San Diego with a well designed Hotline product that has been effective for a number of years. However, I have become concerned about the vendor's willingness/ability to communicate. A few months ago, I was asked by Intergroup to negotiate a lower Hotline rate for San Diego. The vendor replied to my Email proposal by asking for more substantiation. I provided detailed substantiation the next day. After the vendor did not reply for one week, I sent another Email requesting that he respond to my proposal. After 2 month's the vendor has still not replied. Recently, I phoned the vendor and did not receive an answer to the phone message I left. I followed up with another Email and still have not had a reply. It appears that next week I will go to Intergroup and report that I do not have a status (again).

This leads me to one of the following possible conclusions:

- 1) Since the vendor has only one point of contact (Steve Zimmers), it is possible that something has happened to him. Hopefully he is just on a long vacation. However the thought of hospitalization or worse has entered my mind. If this were the case then it would only be a matter of time before the entire Hotline system would fail. I do not feel comfortable that there is a single point of failure. (I hope Steve is OK.)
- 2) The vendor may have reviewed the well substantiated San Diego proposal for lowering the Hotline cost. Perhaps the vendor is already aware that San Diego's \$300 monthly rate should be closer to \$125 based on other Intergroup rates and \$50 compared to other Hotline vendors. If this is the case, not replying to the San Diego proposal would be a 'prudent' short term business decision to ensure that Erlang does not have a loss of revenue.

In either case, I am concerned about Erlang's lack of communication.

A few month's ago, Erlang's Hotline was down for about two days. The vendor did not make an effort to notify San Diego about this interruption in service or when it would resume. Instead, one of our Hotline volunteers noticed the apparent Erlang service outage and found out from a 3rd party that the Hotline was down for everyone. I believe that Erlang should have notified us about this situation.

Based on these recent examples, I am disappointed with Erlang's communication as well as concerned that there is a single point of failure.

Doug E. - Area 3A, San Diego

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<b>Hotel Reimbursement With Spouse</b>
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10/3/11 - 5:08 PM

To my brother and sister trustees,

I am here to ask for some advise on how other areas take care of this. If a trustee is being reimbursed for their hotel bills and you are traveling with your wife are you reimbursed for 100% of your room, so your wife stays free, or do you get a 50% reimbursement for your room?

Kathy H. - Area 8, Chicago

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10/3/11 - 5:42 PM

Kathy,

It is the opinion of our area, 8A, that they are paying for the trustees to attend the conference, not our spouses. Therefore, as we would be sharing the cost of the room with our spouse, they would pay for our share of the room. Our spouses are responsible for any and all cost they incur at the conference, including airfare, food, conference fees, etc. Hope this helps!

Karen E. - Area 8A - Minnesota

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10/3/11 - 5:45 PM

Kathy,

This was a very contentious issue in NJ and we have 6 Trustees, 3 of which are married. Our area had a provision in the local Guidance Code regarding funding that if the hotel room is shared, then the Trustee gets 50% of the rate. This became a hotbed for controversy where the married Trustees who brought their spouses to the conferences said that the intention of that provision was meant for sharing a room with another Trustee. I argued against this by saying that other people were gaining the benefit of such a situation if it was paid for 100% by our Intergroup. Examples of that are members, who should be paying their own way, or people who are either attending Gam-Anon functions or are themselves Gam-Anon delegates. Yes I understand that it doesn't matter if there are 1 or 2 people in the room, because the price is the same, but the equation for me and others in NJ is that someone else is deriving the benefit of our Intergroup paying 100%. If these other people want to attend the conference, then they could take a separate room. But since they are spouses, they are gaining direct benefit at the expense of NJ Intergroup. The vote carried, just barely, for paying the entire amount for sharing the room. Oddly enough, the language was written not making a distinction about the 2nd person being a spouse, so we now have language that allows a Trustee to have anyone in their room and NJ Intergroup will pay for it. The vote is the vote. I don't like it, but it is what it is. Hope this helps you and your area.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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10/4/11 - 12:34 PM

In response to previous submissions on this subject, I find that it is my obligation as a trustee to correct certain statements on occasion. Yes, this was an issue that was discussed at great length at New Jersey Intergroup. At present we have 6 Trustees ( 5 of which are married - NOT 3) not that that should matter. It was discussed a few years back when some trustees did not want to share a room with other trustees as " they wanted their privacy ". It was decided at that time that any trustee could have their own room, if wanted, and they did not have to share a room with anyone. Speaking for myself, I almost always go to our conferences with my spouse while a trustee over the past many years. I was always told by my Intergroup that if I did not share a room with a trustee ( where I would be reimbursed 50% of the room cost ) I would be reimbursed 100% only if I stayed alone. It has now changed through an Intergroup vote that 100% reimbursement will be given on a room unless the room is shared with another trustee. This is what New Jersey Intergroup as a whole decided to do. I have found that it has been of great benefit to my recovery to grow with my spouse in the programs to which we belong, and sincerely agree with the decision made by the Intergroup which I attend. PS: At this time my wife happens to be a delegate for Gam-Anon, so when we attend a joint conference we split the room 50/50.

With Respect and Love to all in our Fellowship.

Bob W. - Area 12, New Jersey

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10/5/11 - 12:13 PM

I have to say that I was surprised by the postings from NJ. I know for our area, we could not afford the luxury of each trustee having their own room if they so choose. As our area fully supports the trustees in going to these conferences twice a year, it is our responsibility as trustees to be as fiscally conservative as we can. This would include sharing a room and the cost of that room with someone else, whether they are a trustee or not. The costs to attend these conferences, especially in today's economy, are expensive enough, and we should do all we can to curb those expenses.

Your Sister in Recovery, Karen E. - Area 8A, Minnesota

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10/6/11 - 10:07 AM

Good morning Kathy H, and others:

The By-Laws of San Diego Intergroup cover what expenses are to be paid. However, I always personally chose to make the financial expense as minimal as possible for the area; knowing there were many other expenses incurred throughout the year. It was my choice to find another Trustee as a roommate for the international conferences; to cut the hotel expense in half. This had an additional benefit in that my roommate has become a good friend since; we communicate frequently on matters other than GA; and have continued to be roommates saving both of our groups on the hotel portion of the conference expense.

I do not have a spouse, but should that be the case, it would be my choice to only charge my intergroup 1/2 of the hotel expense - that would have been the right thing to do. I don't believe my intergroup should be responsible for paying for my "spouse" to have a 'free ride' to the conference. However, as I have stated previously, this is my personal choice.

I believe each intergroup has to make their own decision regarding this policy, and I also believe it should be covered in the By-Laws of each intergroup so there can never be any question as to what is acceptable and what is not. (Personally, I think this applies to air fare and registration, as well as hotel expense. If I choose to bring my spouse, his/her portion of the expense is mine, not intergroups.)

With love, faith, hope and trust in our Fellowship,  
Linda S, - Area 7B - Former Trustee, Area 3A, San Diego

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10/6/11 - 2:26 PM

Hi... I also was surprised by the posting of the Trustee, Bob W., from New Jersey, that his spouse should be covered 100% for all costs if she goes to the conferences with him. I am currently in an Area that cannot & does not cover the Trustee expenses in full. The amount ( Currently two Trustees) received is what the area can afford at the time of the conference, like for the LA conference the allotment is \$600.00 each. We are in the process of making up a budget for each Trustee for conferences, when and if we ever have the money to do a 100% for our Trustees' expenses.

However, when I was a Trustee while living on Long Island, New York, and also a Trustee for that area, I never thought I should get covered for my spouse while at a conference, and she did come with me a few times, at our own expense, not Intergroup's.

Joe B, Area 6 C, North Carolina

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10/7/11 - 1:08 PM

Dear Kathy:

Quite a few years ago I had the privilege of representing area 3A as a trustee for six years. On most occasions my wife, Marti, also attended the conferences with me. When she did, I was reimbursed with 50% of the room charge, as per the San Diego intergroup policy. I was, and still am, in total agreement with this policy. Whenever a trustee is attending a conference on his/her own, I think that they should try to pair up with another 'solo' trustee so that their local Intergroup is then only liable to pay 50% of the cost. This is just my own view on this very controversial subject.

Malcolm B. - Past Trustee, Area 3A, San Diego

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Recovery,

Area 8A Intergroup would like some feedback/discussion on the following:

Our website adheres closely to the standards recommended by the Website Guidelines. However, some find the content a little "dry". It's been proposed that the 8A Webmistress be able to post thoughtful written responses to the 20 Questions. The responses would be written by members of the Area 8A fellowship.

I believe that the vision would be to post only one written submission at a time; that Intergroup would be able to form a committee for soliciting and vetting the submissions and that the responses would, of course, be posted anonymously.

What say you about this idea? Pros? Cons? Concerns?

I join with the 8A Intergroup in thanking you for taking time to answer our questions.

Your Sister in Recovery,

Jeannie B. - Area 8A, Minnesota

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#### BOT Agenda Item #41

10/4/11 - 4:42 PM

I would like to commend the members of the Trustee Removal Procedure Committee for a job well done. Item # 41 on the Los Angeles Agenda is well constructed and very thorough in addressing this issue of Trustee removal. It is easy to see that many hours have been spent addressing all possible scenarios and 'what ifs' that can occur. The result is a clear path that needs to be followed and the order necessary to proceed to the next level.

I make a strong recommendation the areas chosen for the Panel participation be modified slightly. I would like to see instead of the Area designated "Canada" that it be renamed to "International" representing all areas with BOT representation outside the U.S. I would hope this could be an amendment offered on the floor or by the Committee itself.

I echo the thoughts of others who have written on this item that I hope it never gets used. It is never an easy matter to handle at any level, much less the floor of the BOT. I am a strong believer of expending "all" efforts to resolution at the Intergroup level. I would say on a personal note that sitting at the front table during the proceedings of voting on a trustee's removal in New Jersey was easily the lowest point of my two years on the board.

I would like to urge all Trustees to vote in favor of this item with or without the change I have mentioned. In addition I hope the Los Angeles Conference and BOT meeting go very smooth for all of you.

One Day At A Time

Steve R. - Past 2nd Co Chair BOT, Area 2B, Sacramento, California

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#### What Intergroups Allow The Trustees For Conferences

10/4/11 - 4:42 PM

As I stated in another post, our Area is in the process of making up a budget for our Trustees going to conferences. Can you please send by email (my e mail address is in the Confidential BOT Listing) what your area's Intergroup allows their Trustees?

Air Fare, Transportation to and from the Hotel, Meals, Hotel cost, (how many nights ) etc., Registration Fee, and what ever I missed.

Thanks, Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

**Note from the Trustee Website Admin: A spreadsheet is available for everyone to view in an effort to help all areas with this matter. [Excel File](#) Please also include this address when sending any information to Joe ... [trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com](mailto:trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com).**

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10/19/11 - 4:54 PM

We of Area 13 are very fortunate that our Intergroup (Delaware Valley Intergroup) is able to fully fund our Trustees. This includes Plan 'B' and two (2) extra nights in the hotel. As to the room cost, the room costs whatever the

room costs, whether I'm alone or my wife travels with me (she doesn't always).

Our funding also includes my round-trip expenses, whether airfare, gas and tolls, etc.; and any extra meal expenses incurred. In short, within reason, my intergroup pays whatever it costs for our trustees to attend the trustee meetings and the International Conference.

Before the conference we give an estimate of what we expect our costs to be, and intergroup gives us a check. After the conference, we turn in receipts justifying our expenses. Obviously, should our actual expenses be less than we were advanced, we return the excess to intergroup.

Your friend in recovery,  
John B. - Area 13, Philadelphia

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10/21/11 - 1:27 PM

There were a few people that stop me told me while at the Conference, what their Areas allow for Trustees for going to the Trustee meeting, but I can't remember which ones, and what they said, yes I know I'm getting old, but I do remember most things, I think. So those that did speak to me or those that haven't written in the Trustee line or send an email, please do to help me..I have only received 5 written answers to the question, I'm asking for HELP!!!!

Thanks,  
Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

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<b>Area Involvement</b>
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10/19/11 - 5:41 PM

Many of our brothers and sisters who attended the Trustee meeting approached Karen and/or me, wanting to know how we get so much input from our area fellowship. I thought I'd outline what we do in Area 8A, in hopes that others may find it helpful.

As the rolling agenda starts to fill up, the Trustees bring an item or two that we think may be of interest to each Intergroup meeting for a brief discussion. We ask Intergroup members to take the item(s) back to their meetings for consideration and discussion. Since the rolling agenda has items on it months in advance of the BOT meeting, this gives us time to go through some of the items without worrying about time constraints.

We will also bring up items that appear on the Trustee Poll.

When the actual approved BOT meeting agenda is put up, we notify Intergroup by email, along with a link to the Trustee Website. We remind them that we rely heavily on the voices from our area and that it is our expectation that each group will have a Group Conscience around the agenda in order to give us feedback. We produce a feedback form that lists the items and has room for comments. We also bring a few printed agendas and attachments to the next Intergroup meeting, in case someone may not have computer access.

It is up to each group to determine the manner in which they approach the agenda. There are some groups that go over each item and some that pick out 4 or 5 that are of significant interest. A couple of groups have volunteers who go over the agenda and report back to the group. Some groups discuss the agenda and then give us carte blanche to vote as we see fit, as they "elected us to represent them".

We usually receive between 10 - 20 feedback sheets back (remember that these sheets represent an entire meeting). We tally those votes to determine if there is a clear mandate on any agenda item, and use the tally sheet for reference throughout our attendance at the BOT meeting.

An additional very helpful feedback tool for us is a core of about 20 dedicated members of the fellowship who do not hesitate to let us know their opinions and feelings around any item on the agenda. Karen and I will often solicit input from these members on complicated issues or subjects that we might not be as familiar with as we should. Some of these folks are past Trustees and some are members that have shown an interest in participating in discussions. (One example: Before Cherry Hill, I posed some questions about adding GamAnon to our Unity program, which resulted in a very lively yet thoughtful email thread with more than 30 responses!)

We feel fortunate to have so many members who really take an interest in the agenda and in the issues being brought up. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact Karen or me— we'd be happy to talk!

Your Grateful Sister in Recovery,  
Jeannie B. - Area 8A Trustee, Minnesota

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