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**Trustee Line for November 2010**

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**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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**Things I Learned in Tampa - or How I Spent 2 days in Grammar School**

11/1/10 - 12:01 AM  
First things first - Bravo Tampa, for overcoming the obstacles of a

thoughtless act of timing by a mini-conference from a different area just 2 weeks before the Tampa conference that absolutely kept many members from attending the Tampa conference.

So much for the pleasantries. Now how are we to characterize the tone and temperament of the Tampa Trustee meeting? I think sad would be the most diplomatic way for me. This was an especially significant Trustee meeting, as is the case in the fall of each even year with the first appearance of the new Trustees, 42 of them for this meeting. How did we indoctrinate our new Trustees? We did it by showing them behavior befitting a visit to recess at a grammar school.

What do we say to our new Trustees when they see people at the microphones trying to make a case that doesn't exist, or distorting facts? What about those seasoned veterans who have yet to figure out the difference between a point of information and a point of order? Better yet the acts to ignore or circumnavigate the Guidance Code because it feels better to go with your heart. We are certainly not a perfect functioning group, but we need to instill confidence, strength and most of all, structure, lest we end up in a state of anarchy. We need to set the best examples we can for our freshman Trustees in order for them to walk away from a Trustee meetings as I did - exhilarated and anxious to go to the next Trustee meeting. 10 years after becoming a Trustee, I walked away from the Tampa Trustee meeting very disheartened from the acrimony I witnessed, not to mention the ill-will that happened frequently outside the meeting room.

For me, the low point of the meeting was the item about discussing verbal abuse in GA. At first, I thought this was going to be about problems in the rooms. Without any attachment to go by, my first thinking was why didn't that person use the Abuse and Harassment booklet to resolve any problems? After 22 years in GA, not much surprises me these days. The email that was given to all the Trustees for that agenda item was something to shake my head in utter disbelief. By the way, you should all know that I do not regret any aspect of the email, 'colorful language' notwithstanding. In fact now, even more than ever, I stand by it.

The email was addressed directly, on a personal basis to an individual that had repeatedly sent me emails, along with many other Trustees, about crusades to help save democracy in the US. The general themes were about some kind of act by the government that was threatening to destroy the very fiber of our country, and each of us had to send the email to 500 others we knew, or write someone in Congress, etc. It was typical Fox News conspiracy crap. It may be your politics, but it's not mine. I repeatedly asked this person, in a very direct and civilized way, to not send me any of the garbage and to take me out of the mailing lists. Fast forward to the last incident where I not only got another email I had no interest in, but to once again see my name with GA next to it in a grouping of addresses that were obviously not GA members. This was done in the CC part of the email, allowing all others in the emails to see who is in GA. Group emails should be sent in the BCC section of an email so that nobody can see who is getting it, especially when anonymity issues prevail. Evidently, the anonymity of others is not a concern to this person, even after it had been previously pointed out numerous times.

Needless to say, I had hit my limit of this member's antics that once again were about ignoring the Guidance Code, and one of the basic tenants of the program - anonymity. Was I angry when I wrote the email, yes. Did I wait to cool off before I sent my response, yes. I wrote the email with the understanding that words in print should always be sweet, because you might have to eat them one day. However, that style has never worked with this person. If you read the email and were offended by the language of the last paragraph, I make no apologies, because this was a personal email between the recipient and me. Clearly this had no place in the Trustee meeting, or any other venue. From what I understand, most of you were outraged that it was going to be the subject of an agenda item. Bravo to those who felt that way and said so.

This brings me to one of my recurring issues with the Fellowship, from top to bottom - the process. It is the process that was breached by this other person, which, by the way, is a recurring theme with this person. What I found out in Tampa was that my email was sent to myriad GA people who were not involved in this personal issue. Again, I just have to shake my head, because the person to whom I sent the original email, did not look to get clarification on why I chose the terse wording. Instead, the email was circulated in an attempt to discredit me. Been there, done that, it's not going to throw me into a panic about what people might think of me. But there are a lot of steps in between getting an email like that and bringing a

personal email to the floor of the Board of Trustees to possibly have me censured for conduct unbecoming a GA member.

I have stated this many times on the Trustee Line about how there are so many senseless items that appear on the agendas. Don't get me wrong, everyone has the right to post whatever they think is going to make a beneficial change for the Fellowship, but take the time to think about it thoroughly and its content before you submit an item. Talk to others before you submit it, and then ask yourself if getting the item passed will be a benefit or is it change just for change's sake. The agendas are an open platform to have items posted and then be subject for comments back to the authors for ways to make them better or maybe even to point out the impracticality of the item to then have it voluntarily removed before the agenda is finalized. Unfortunately, this feature is not utilized by the majority of the Trustees.

We don't always have to be unanimous in our opinions, but let's debate items that are based in some strength. Let's not see any more items like one that appeared a few years ago to change the word 'insolvable' to 'unsolvable' in the Combo book. Some one at this conference asked me why we didn't have a steering committee to pre-qualify the agenda items to screen for only the most important items to be on the agenda. Yes, that is done in other Fellowships and organizations, but I will leave that entire subject for some one with a stronger constitution than I have, because I don't think that will ever happen with us.

We can't have Trustees telling others to forget about the Rules and Procedures, in addition to the Guidance Code, and to just go with your heart. We need structure and we need to follow it at all costs to avoid the chaos of the disturbances of previous Trustee meetings, before the Rules and Procedures were put into place. Then, it was decisions differing from Chair to Chair, session to session, day to day, Trustee meeting to Trustee meeting. It was the GA version of the Wild West. Now we get through 70+ agenda items in addition to many lengthy committee reports, a feat not possible back in the old days. Bravo to the Trustees.

For all the friends of the recipient of my email, why not help that person with what might be a new dimension to recovery for him - conflict resolution and understanding that it's always about the process. Personalities and unresolved issues with others who attend the Trustee meetings have got to be left at the door before we start our Trustee meetings. Let's remember that when we go to Cherry Hill in the Spring.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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11/2/10 - 11:28 PM  
Good evening, David:

One thing this wonderful Gamblers Anonymous Program has taught me is that I cannot change people, places or things. There are many times I wish that I could. When I begin to sense those feelings creeping up on me, my safety net is the October 15th Reflection for the Day.

*"All too often I unwittingly set standards for others in the Gamblers Anonymous Program. Worse yet, I expect those standards to be met.....Not surprisingly, when things don't work out the way I expect, I become frustrated and even angry. I have to learn to leave others to God. I have to learn neither to demand nor expect changes in others, concentrating solely on my own shortcomings."*

It is truly unfortunate that 42 new trustees and many international guests were exposed to what - in my opinion - was not the very best of our trustee meetings. Hopefully they will return and become better citizens and guardians of the Fellowship than we were at that time and in that place. There are no coincidences. Therefore, this happened for a reason - but I'll be horn- swaggeled if I can figure out why - perhaps I am not supposed to.

I do, whole-heartedly, endorse the structure of our Fellowship. It is our responsibility to follow and uphold the Guidance Code, even if our hearts are strongly urging us in another direction. I do not have to like it; but I DO have to accept it. (I can always try to change it with an agenda item.)

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

11/1/10 - 7:31 PM  
Dear Fellow Trustees,

It was wonderful to see all of you in Tampa. I hope you all enjoyed the weekend as much as I did. Congratulations to the conference committee for a job well done.

Now down to business. I would like every Trustee to click on the "Literature Committee" link on the "BOT Committees" section of the Trustee Website. There you will find the literature approval process. Please read it carefully to familiarize yourself with the process. We have four new items that passed the "merit vote". These were Tampa Agenda item #'s 67 through 70. Do your job as a Trustee and help to improve this newly passed literature by reading these items and offering suggestions to improve or enhance them. If you need to find copies, they are all available in the "Main Menu" section of the website under "Download Center".

Remember, you have 30 days for this process and then the comment period ends. Please don't procrastinate!

Thank you all for your service to our fellowship and welcome to our new Trustees.

Chuck R. - Area 15, New York  
Literature Committee Chair

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<b>Thank You Dina</b>
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11/1/10 - 7:48 PM

To Dina P: Thank you for the effort you and your team put forth in an effort to make our stay in Tampa so enjoyable. I can never thank you enough for the personal effort you made on my behalf - and I know you did it willingly....but nonetheless, it was sincerely appreciated.

Congratulations on a fabulous conference! Please pass on our gratitude to all of the members of your team.

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

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11/3/10 - 5:51 PM

Dear Dina:

Arrived home at 8pm on Monday evening after having a great time at the conference. It was so good meeting old friends once again. I thank you and your committee for all of the hard work that you guys did. The only thing was the air conditioning!! I thought I was in a refrigerator at times. I ended up going home with a lousy cold!! But if that is the only thing I can complain about, things can't be that bad. I signed the hotel contract today for our own convention - so now, the hard work starts.....Hope to see you in San Diego in 2012.

Malcolm B. - Area 3A San Diego

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11/6/10 - 2:50 PM

I would like to thank Dina P. and the 2010 Fall Conference Committee for their hard work to put together a great Conference in Tampa.

I greatly appreciate all your efforts you did to make me feel very welcome and mostly on the last minute request for the Spanish meeting we held on Saturday night; it was very special for all of us the Hispanic attendees.

It is hard to please everybody's needs, for what I have to say you did a great job.

My most sincere thanks to you Dina,

Martha G. - Area 28, Trustee Mexico

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11/7/10 - 11:59 AM

Hey Dina;

I like what you and your committee did this past fall conference, and mostly the love I felt from all of you.

What I did like the most and I hope all conferences would follow suit and do

the same, was moving the passing of the touch to the next area on Saturday night, what a move, just great.

With well over 250 people it gave that event more importance that it normally gets, at least for me. See by doing that, again it showed the love that you guys generated all weekend. Hey, I'm getting mushy here and that's not me, (LOL).

Again Great Job !

Joe B. - Area 6C, North & South Carolinas

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**Breaking Anonymity - A Choice We Don't Have**

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11/6/10 - 12:11 PM

I was thrilled to be able to hold a workshop in Tampa on the Internet and Gamblers Anonymous websites. The hour went by very quickly and there was significant participation by the attendees. There were numerous people from outside the US and quite a few local area website administrators. The purpose was to enlighten everyone about the intended purpose of all local area websites and their compliance with the Board of Trustees approved Local Area Website Guidelines.

One of the topics we spoke about was anonymity and how so many of us inadvertently do things that we believe are going help others, but in the process, we open ourselves to breaking the anonymity of us and our brothers and sisters in the Fellowship. Telephone numbers are one way, especially with all the information available on the Internet. I remember not too long ago, a phone call I had with a current Trustee on this subject where I tried to point out how dangerous it was to put contact numbers on a website. To prove my point, I did a quick search for that person's phone number and told him who his neighbors were on either side, his wife's maiden name, her age, and the names and ages of his children. Yes people, it's out there and available.

An area that goes unspoken is the email addresses we use. I took a look at the Confidential Trustee Listing, which is an entirely different area of anonymity issues, and did a quick count of the email addresses that are being used that incorporate the members' last name. Certainly if you go to a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia every week and you announce yourself as Mike S, for example, and then you hand out a room information list with mike.smith@yahoo.com as the email address, it's not going to be hard to find out a huge amount of personal information. I'm not looking for someone to knock on my door unannounced because I gave them too much information using that email address.

To anyone who is reading this, let me first say that 33 out of 105 listed Trustees from the Confidential Trustee Listing use their last name in their email addresses. That's 31.4%. If we add the Trustee outside the US and Canada, it is 11 of 24, or 45.8%. The combined numbers are 44 out of 129, or 34.1%. We as Trustees must make definitive moves to correct this. Don't start whining about how you have used your email address with your last name in it for 15 years and nobody would know how to get in touch with you if you changed your email address. Many people of done so from spam problems and I have yet to hear one say it has become a problem.

Trustees are the Guardians of the Recovery and Unity programs. We should be leading by example. That also drills down to issues of anonymity. We do not have the latitude to say that it doesn't bother me that others know my last name. That may be something you do personally with another member or members, but in program, we must do everything to strengthen our core principle of anonymity.

If your email address incorporates your last name, save it for non-GA business and establish one that doesn't give up your anonymity. Let's make sure we carry that message and example to the members of all the rooms in our respective areas.

David M. - Trustee Website Admin  
Area 12, New Jersey

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11/14/10 - 5:22 PM

David:

I fully agree with your comments. We have become lackadaisical in our awareness - and I am as guilty as anyone else. When I first joined the Fellowship many years ago, the subject of anonymity was firmly planted in

my brain, and I bent over backwards to avoid such a fiasco. However, recently I found myself not as aware as I should have been - and have been so reminded by other local members. I felt lousy.....and I attempted to make amends. If we violate someones anonymity even once, that is once too often - and to whomever reads this, if I have done so, my sincere apologies. It was unintentional, but nonetheless, wrong of me to do so.

I now try - don't always succeed, but I try my utmost - to address any GA message to myself, and blind copy anyone else - just in case their last name is used - I don't dare allow myself to run that risk. If I am replying to just one person, and no blind copies are exhibited, I don't force myself to the same restriction. But it sure scares me now more than it ever has before.

Thanks again for the reminder, David. I sincerely think we need to hear this every so often.

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

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11/29/10 - 12:36 PM

I can remember a specific time (recently) where I broke anonymity without even thinking of it. When called out on it, by a member with a lot less time in the program, I got angry. One of my character defects raised its head. As I simmered over the affront I believed I had received, I realized I HAD broken anonymity. It is times like these that I am thankful my higher power speaks to me through others. Anonymity is one of the cornerstones of our program and needs to be maintained. Unfortunately, many times we do not think of things like email addresses. Thanks David for informing or reminding me.

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

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<b>Trustee Funding Issues</b>
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11/8/10 - 4:39 PM

I really enjoyed the Tampa conference. I got to talk to someone, who's name escapes me, from Houston about fund-raising. Our area does not fully fund the Trustee trips. While I am very excited that we have two Trustees (as we've had a vacant spot for a few years), it is now very obvious how under-funded the Trustees are.

Our IG bylaws specifically state that our Trustees need to be able to afford to pay their own way to conferences and will be partially funded if the money is available. I knew this before volunteering to be a Trustee, as I was part of the group that drafted our bylaws. :) Our area does not receive funding from all of our meetings. We also do not have representatives from all meetings. We have a great group, though small, who get a lot accomplished and have a heart for serving. We are trying to educate the members of what IG, ISO, and the Trustees do.

That said I'm looking for suggestions from other area of how they build their Treasury to be able to fully-fund their Trustees. I understand our area's culture cannot be changed overnight, but would appreciate some ideas. Especially from smaller / newer areas who have struggled with this issue.

Thanks in advance,  
Cathy K. - Area 8D, Greater St. Louis

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11/9/10 - 9:19 AM

Hello Kathy

In reply to your request for suggestions on how to build Treasury in order to fund your Trustees for Conferences and Trustee Meetings, may I suggest, if you have not already done so, to look for the lien called "Intergroup Trustee Funding" on our Trustee website. You will find it in the scrolling menu at the left of the home page, under the heading "Trustee Line & other features".

Our Area's procedure to fund our Trustees is fully detailed there. I hope you can find a submission in there which will help your Area.

André G. - Area 5B (French Quebec)

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11/9/10 - 5:41 PM

Hi Cathy,

Our IG is also fairly new, but we always seem to find a way to fund our

Trustees. Although we only have 21 rooms in our area, we have between 15-30 members at all IG meetings which allows us to "get the word out" in a timely fashion for all IG activities. Although they are not meant to be fundraisers, we always seem to make money on events that we plan for the sole purpose of UNITY.

We normally hold a Unity Banquet every year with the hopes of breaking even. It is a time for members to bond and have a night out with food, dancing and fellowship. We always end up with room donations and scholarships from rooms, not to mention the collection taken at the event which goes directly into our treasury. We also usually hold a Mini-conference which again is designed to be a break-even event. As with our Unity Banquet, we always seem to make money.

From my experience, if we try and bring our members together for functions of any kind for sake of UNITY rather than as a money maker, it not only brings the group closer together and gets more people involved, but in spite of ourselves, we still manage to raise funds for our treasury.

I hope this helps....

Yours in recovery,  
Andy R. - Area 13B, South Jersey

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11/11/10 - 3:06 PM

Hi Cathy, Joe B here. Just read your posting to the trustee Line. We in Area 6 C are not fully funded as Trustees. We have fund raisers to help the Genial fund and then allocated each trustee who is going to the next conference. Some times we have gotten anywhere from 4 Trustees getting \$250.00, or like the Tampa Ba , there were only 2 of us going, so we received \$600.00 each.

What we have done for several years now is order Day Planners with "ONE DAY AT A TIME" on the front cover. They cost this year "2011", \$1.09, which includes shipping & handling, as well as printing. These are good "Stocking Stuffers". We sell them at \$3.00 each, we have made around \$300.00 to \$400.00 net profit.

We also have what we call Pasta Day. One of the guys & his wife donate their time and cook the meal - pasta, meatballs, bread, salad, soda, water etc. We don't charge. What we do is ask for a donation and ask what you would pay if you went out to dinner. We have made from 225.00 to 400.00.

One time we had cookbooks made up from the members' recipes. The cookbook title was "One Dish At a Time", we sold them for \$6.00 each or 2 for \$10. that did very well, but you need good sales people,

Being that I'm in the South now, we had for the GOOD Ole Boys, a pig picking dinner. Between you and me I don't know what was so great about Pig Picking. I'd rather have the Pasta & Meatballs

These are all small but do bring in money and also helps with Unity. One of the guys also does Karaoke, he donated his time at some of the Dinners, we want and invite kids and boy do they enjoy the karaoke.

Hope this helps, tally-ho for now

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

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<b>Rolling Agenda Item 6</b>
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11/10/10 - 12:32 PM

For years I have been in favor of this agenda item or 1 similar. I thought it through and came to the conclusion that it was unfair for GA to essentially carry the financial weight of Gam-Anon. In some ways, I even built up some sort of resentment towards Gam-Anon as a whole due to a feeling of being taken advantage of. Most conferences I have attended, the GA-Gam-Anon ratio was not even close. GA has by far, been the workforce behind the conferences and surely has outnumbered Gam-Anon in attendance by a large percentage.

In my own home, my wife who is a Gam-Anon member has always supported me in my feelings towards this. That was until last week! She came home from a Unity IG meeting and had a whole different perspective on things. She proceeded to argue the other side to me. I immediately went on the defensive and then the program kicked in.... "Open-mindedness is 1 of the keys to our recovery".

Several things were brought to my attention. I was reminded of all the conferences I went to where she stayed home. Not because she wanted to, but rather because we could not afford for both of us to attend. She thought it better for me as a Compulsive Gambler to attend instead of her. Does that show a lack of commitment or a lack of involvement? I think not. What I failed to see is that the Gam-Anon commitment can and is very real. If not in our faces, it certainly has it's part behind closed doors.

This is just 1 example of many. My eyes are now open to the other side of things and it is with this new understanding that I must speak against this Agenda item. I am in agreement that the 55-45 split needs to be changed, but to take the percentage down so far would be sending such a negative message to our "sister" program, I think it could be detrimental to GA as a whole. Perhaps a 65-35 split would be more in-line.

I guess I'm looking for conversation on this subject. Do we know what their budget is and how this would affect them? Would we be better off without them? Do we need them? Should we have any involvement with them at all? These are some of the questions that have come into my mind...

My heart goes out to those areas who have little Gam-Anon support. Being involved in the 2011 Spring Conference has brought me to the conclusion that without the support of Gam-Anon (which is excellent), our job in putting this conference together would be by far much more difficult.

Any thoughts?

Yours in recovery,  
Andy R. - Area 13B, South Jersey

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11/10/10 - 4:18 PM

My opinion, which I agree may have people attack me, is that Gam-Anon has no place within the Fellowship of GA. Before the attacks occur, let me explain my rationale. My reading of the Guidance Code and Unity Steps come from a strict interpretation, which includes not supporting outside enterprises, which the Board of Trustees has determined Gam-Anon to be. Within the last year there was an item on the agenda for the Board of Trustees to amend the Unity Steps to include we could endorse Gam-Anon. It was defeated. But, here is where the things get dicey. Even though the Board of Trustees has held that Gam-Anon is an outside enterprise, therefore endorsing them is in violation of the Guidance Code and Unity Steps, there are parts of our literature that specifically state Gam-Anon's involvement. One such area is in the "Hosting and International Confernece" pamphlet. So, which is it? Do we endorse Gam-Anon or not? In one instance we don't, but we have literature to the contrary. My arguments for changing the way profits at a conference are handled are still the same as they were on the floor of the last two Board of Trustees meetings. Specifically, any loss incurred is at the expense of the local GA (not Gam-Anon) Intergroup, and the seed money comes from GAISO (none of it from Gam-Anon's).

This is not me saying I don't think Gam-Anon has a place in our Fellowship. I feel they do. Personally, I feel that we do need Gam-Anon. I know many spouses who it has helped. I will never say that we don't, or say anything negative about the Fellowship of Gam-Anon. But, until the 12 Steps of Unity are changed, and the Guidance Code is changed, I feel we have a duty to the members of our GA Fellowship to interpret these pieces of literature as they are written. If these changes were made, then I would agree with Gam-Anon involvement in GA, but until that happens, I feel our duty is to interpret our most sacred documents as they are written.

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

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11/10/10 - 6:48 PM

I am glad that the November Trustee Line is spawning a lot of topics for the rest of our Trustees, both current and past, to send in comments. Of particular interest is the ratio split between GA and Gam-Anon on the profits of any International Conference. Steve F, from Area 1, put his item up on the heels of the passage of my item in Tampa to change the fixed 55%/45% split to a percentage split of attendees from each Fellowship. The item passed the first of 2 literature change votes, and now awaits all the heavy artillery from the die-hard faithful GA members who are Gam-Anon devotees that will look to defeat my item in Cherry Hill.

Although Andy brings up some new views from the discussion he had with his wife, it does not change the reality of what the real issues are. What I fear is that those GA Trustees who will speak in Cherry Hill will resort to the only



tool they have - guilt and shame. I can hear it now, statements will be made about how dare we threaten the Fellowship that has been responsible for helping so many GA members in their recovery. Others will be centered on if there are any changes, it will kill Gam-Anon, or GA does not have the singular right to dictate to Gam-Anon how much money they will get from a conference.

The reality is that there are no valid arguments against the change to a floating percentage based on attendance. There are only emotional arguments, meant to make others feel guilty and shamed and therefore to give them proper motivation to vote against the agenda item. To that end, I say remember that the Trustee meetings are about the business end of GA, mixed in with what is a primary concern of every Trustee, to uphold the Guidance Code.

Whether I am a fan of Gam-Anon or not is of no consequence in consideration of this issue. Yet, you will see that those who speak out and vote against the item will only be fans of Gam-Anon. I do not care if we recognize, cooperate or support Gam-Anon or not. That too is not the issue. The fact remains that conferences are supposed to be joint events with Gam-Anon. Each Fellowship should be given the financial consideration commensurate with the effort put forth, which is shown by the attendance.

I will even go so far as to say that the accounting of this should be as follows: Attendance should be for GA members and those who are not GA members. That means that anyone who is not a GA member should automatically be calculated as a Gam-Anon attendee, even if they have never attended a single Gam-Anon member. That would have greatly increased the numbers in favor of Gam-Anon in every conference.

Maybe both Fellowships will be a bit more driven to get as many members as they can to come to the Conferences. I wouldn't call it a competition, but a more directed and focused effort. More members, more profitability, more money for each Fellowship, irrespective of what the final split might be. Who knows, maybe 65% of the attendees would be on the Gam-Anon side, which leaves only 35% from GA. If anyone complains about that, I would say shame on GA for not doing a better job.

I am not interested in subsidizing Gam-Anon or any entity with a fixed percentage. The Tampa conference had fewer than 5% Gam-Anon members. To argue that Gam-Anon should get 45% of the profits with virtually no support at this conference is a pure unadulterated endorsement of subsidizing Gam-Anon. It's time to recognize that is not how things should be.

In advance of this agenda item in Tampa, a new joint committee of GA and Gam-Anon had been formed to deal with things like this and probably much more. My position is that this second vote in Cherry Hill has to be completed and passed, and if the committee has a recommendation that is acceptable to the BOT, then this item and any of the issues that involve Gam-Anon, will no doubt come up in later Trustee meetings to be changed, if the BOT is in agreement with the recommendations of the committee. The other possibility is that the joint committee does not reach an understanding between the 2 Fellowships, which is a subject for another Trustee Line issue. Basically, the BOT should vote on the item, regardless of any other tentative items.

A Trustee who attended the Tampa meeting told me that he had a short conversation with another Trustee who has many decades of abstinence. His comment to the younger member was he shouldn't follow the rules and procedures or the Guidance Code, but he should just go with his heart. Yes, it is quite alarming that anyone would say that, but as you probably already guessed, that older member was one who voted against the percentage split.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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11/14/10 - 6:34 PM

To My Dear Friend Andy:

While I love you enormously, I whole-heartedly and passionately disagree with you on the GA/Gam-anon split for a conference. In fact, I object passionately - as do others on the other side of the fence - to the inclusion of Gam-Anon in any way, shape or form - and here is my rationale:

1. I don't know about yours, but my Combo Book says "Gamblers Anonymous" - not "Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon."
2. My "blue book's" title is: "Sharing Recovery through Gamblers Anonymous -

not through Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon.

3. My "red book's" title is: "GA, A New Beginning," not GA and Gam-Anon, a New Beginning.

4. My "Guidance Code" says "Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code," not Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon Guidance Code. ....and so on.....

5. Unity Step 6 states "Gamblers Anonymous ought never endorse, finance or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

6. Unity Step 10 states, "Gamblers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Gamblers Anonymous name ought never to be drawn into public controversy." .....and, as you know, I have taken a strong stand, and sometimes an unpopular one, against altering Step 6. I have been told that the rest of our literature includes Gam-Anon and supports Gam-Anon, why shouldn't we just change Step 6 to agree with the rest of our literature? Oh, we should change Step 6 and not the rest of our literature? One of my responsibilities as a Trustee is to be a guardian of our Steps. I refuse to support the changing of a Step to INCLUDE an OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION. Why can't the next issue be to support the National Council on Problem Gambling? They try to help the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

7. I have been told - no personal experience - that in the "old days" when Gam-Anon was (mostly) made up of wives of gamblers (who were mostly men), that they were the ones who "manned" (if you'll pardon the expression) the Hospitality Room - they baked the cookies, pies, cakes and served the meals through the what-was-then 'national conference' and thereby supposedly earned the 'right' to a share of the conference proceeds. I find that very interesting when the local group who produces blood, sweat and tears to put on a conference gets no remuneration; and the local inter-group gets no remuneration - we are doing "service work." Does Gam-Anon not have a provision to do 'service work' as well? That's beside the point.

8. Gam-Anon then changed their conference scheduling to coincide with the GA conference therefore the family only had one trip to pay for, and not two.

9. It appears that Gam-Anon is not financially fit to conduct business without the financial support of Gamblers Anonymous. That is NOT our fault.

10. In researching this issue for Louisville, I found that none of the other addiction programs endorse, finance or lend their names to their 'counterparts.' And yet, it is suggested for some reason that Gamblers Anonymous be different? I literally begged for information to support the 'other side of the coin.' Found none/got none.

11. It has been suggested that we, who oppose this measure, are attempting to 'kill' Gam-Anon. Not true. If Gam-Anon cannot stand on their own two feet, why should a compulsive gambler - who may be homeless, may have attempted suicide, has no financial wearwithall to help himself be told that he has to financially support Gam-Anon?

12. Yes, we gamblers have hurt our loved ones - our families, friends, co-workers - but I will not be manipulated or be driven to guilt - to provide financial support to an outside organization when I can barely take care of my own personal needs. I can send only a minor contribution to ISO, but I do it gladly and gratefully. Do Gam-Anon members do good deeds - absolutely - are they supportive of their gambler - without question. But I do not believe - with all of my heart and soul - that alone justifies providing them with a huge percentage of the profit from an international conference.....created by a majority of gamblers. Do they contribute to a conference - of course they do, but then so does the local inter-group and local gambler member. They don't get any financial "thank you."

13. I would go out on a limb even farther by saying - perhaps the gambler himself/herself ought to personally contribute to Gam-Anon as a way of making amends to their Gam-Anon loved ones, instead of expecting the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship to do that for them - talk about a bailout???? I am still paying off my gambling debts and will be for a very long time. Perhaps Gamblers Anonymous ought to help me with that too. (Sorry for the sarcasm)

I love this Fellowship - it has saved my life - and I will do whatever it takes

to protect it - short of anything illegal.

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

11/29/10 - 12:36 PM

What a sticky topic, but one that needs to be resolved. We talked about this item extensively at our Intergroup meeting. Let me preface, that within the past month, a GamAnon meeting has started in our immediate area. Our IG is thrilled. That said, it doesn't mean everyone believes that GA should "support" GamAnon. I believe part of the problem revolves around Unity steps 6 and 10 and some of our literature, which talks about GamAnon. This seems to be at odds.

I do believe that there should be some kind of split of profit as GamAnon does help at conferences. Likewise, I believe they should fund if there is a loss. I do NOT believe we should be funding them from some kind of entitlement or guilt reasons. This is not 30s, 40s, or 50s, where we needed to give the spouses some spending money. (Sorry if that analogy offends.) I cannot think of a better way to share the excesses or losses than based upon attendance at the event. Therefore I support a split of profit and loss based upon those GA members vs non-GA members. Cathy K. - Area 8D, St. Louis MO.

**When Does Anonymity Stop?**

11/10/10 - 5:46 PM

After a member passes away and the Area in which he or she went to meetings would like to pay tribute to them, and honor them by placing a picture, full name and a short story about the person in say a hand out, but only after getting permission from the members family, is that OK or is it not, if not, then why not?

Joe B. - Area 6 C, North & South Carolina

11/18/10 - 2:15 PM

Its a shame that we the Trustees have a site which we can use to ask question or take a position on something, or at times ask for HELP, and just a few, just about the same few will answer. I'm at the point now, why bother.....

One of the Responsibilities of a Trustee is to be available to all members for advice and guidance.

So thanks to all those who do write and help thru the Trustee Line, and for those who don't, oh well ..... Joe B. - Area 6 C, North & South Carolina

11/29/10 - 12:36 PM

Hi Joe - I'm sorry that you have not received any responses to your quest for help. In my case, I have read and re-read your posting and have been mulling it over in my head. Here is my opinion. I see no reason why a tribute cannot be made by the writing of a story (first name, last initial). If the usage of the tribute is for GA members only and will not be available for non GA members to view, I see no reason a picture cannot be attached. If this tribute will be placed in a room where non-GA members may be, I do not believe the picture to be appropriate. I do question the need for using their last name. I believe in our program, the principal of anonymity outlasts our death.

I'm willing to listen to others opinions.

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

**Being A Trustee Or Not Being A Trustee**

11/10/10 - 5:46 PM

I have heard many times at Trustee meetings about a Trustee not enforcing the Guidance code, and also have spoke with Trustees about this issue. Some times I have heard them answer that by not enforcing the Guidance code, "Who is it hurting? Some times you have to look the other way."

I have also talked with Trustees about things that have been done at an International Conference during a workshop, that they did nothing when handouts at the workshop that were about outside issues, and again said

nothing. What about a Past Trustee saying that the Guidance Code is only a GUIDE, nothing more and that the program is a Suggested Program, with no rules.

I believe that the Guidance Code is not a Guide, but as it says inside it under Article II, Section 1: "The Guidance Code is a statement of aims, purpose and Service Structure of the fellowship"

In the By-Laws it states under Article II, Section 2: "...and operates under the direction of a DOCUMENT called the Guidance Code".

Unity Step 3 says: "The only requirement for Gamblers Anonymous membership is a desire to stop gambling." That in itself is not suggested, but is a requirement, which has to be enforced.

The Guidance Code also says under Article VII, Section 1: that to be a group in the fellowship two or more persons with a desire to stop gambling meet together on a regular, weekly scheduled basis to discuss their gambling problem, they will be known as a group, only if they commit themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature. Or Section 2: No new group will be qualified to vote on any issues affecting Gamblers Anonymous as a whole until they have conducted a regular weekly meetings for a three (3) month period.

Numerous times at Trustee meetings I have heard about one of the most violated part of the Guidance Code, Article VII, Section 4, which has also happened in my Area, without my knowing until after it happened, the Abstinence from Gambling and regular attendance to regular attendance of thirty-nine (39) meetings in the prior 12 months is REQUIRED for pinnings and for all successive anniversaries. They let this go because the person is a nice person, etc.

Now, at the last conference there was a workshop with a handout dealing with an outside entry, and again we violated the Guidance Code, with Trustees in attendance and also some past Trustees who have previously been Chairman of the Trustees. One Trustee was too busy doing something else and wouldn't look at the handout when being asked if it violated the Guidance Code. The workshop went on and the handout was used and given out.

I don't know, when are we going to start doing what we should be doing and be Trustees, and stop pussy footing around. Either we enforce the Guidance Code, or maybe we should just tear it up and allow people to do whatever they feel like. I have enforced the Guidance Code at times, and it was a little hard, but it is what it is. I take the responsibility of being a Trustee seriously, and I hope that all Trustees do the same. The structure of the Guidance Code has giving me a purpose to live by, and has also given me a new life to live.

PS..don't you dare call me a "GA Policeman" for I will hit you with my billy club. (LOL)

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

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11/11/10 - 4:43

Joe, you don't know how refreshing it is to see someone standing up for the Guidance Code. I've had numerous conversations the past few days with both current and past Trustees on this very issue. To me, the Guidance Code establishes sets of rules that need to be followed. Not just on occasion, but all the time. Why is it certain areas overseas are not recognized by the Board of Trustees? It's because they don't follow the Guidance Code.

My question, then, to the people who feel the Guidance Code isn't binding, but merely a suggestion, do we even need it? Even during the last Board of Trustees meeting an item that clearly violated the Guidance Code was allowed to pass, only because the Trustees thought it was the right thing to do. I know people say it's just a suggestion. Well, if that were the case, then why can't we display non-approved literature at our meetings? If we're there to help the compulsive gambler who still suffers, why should we be at the mercy of mere suggestions? The answer is simple: We follow the rules, rules which have been established over time. Are they perfect? No. Is there a way to change them? Yes. How do we tell our membership that we, as current or past Trustees, allowed something to proceed even though it was in violation of the Guidance Code because it just felt like the right thing to do? Maybe I'm being naïve, or not open-minded enough. But, to me it's simple: either we follow the Guidance Code and everything it stands for, or we scrap it and allow our Fellowship and individual rooms the freedom to

run as they see fit...without any restrictions.

To read that a Trustee told another member not to follow the Rules and Procedures or the Guidance Code if the situation feels "right" is disturbing. To me the Guidance Code is a sacred document to our Fellowship and we shouldn't enforce it only at certain times...but all the time. My fear is once we decide to only look at the Guidance Code and even the Unity Steps and mere suggestions, we begin to descend down a slippery slope. One which will only bring disunity to the Fellowship that not only saved my life, but has enabled me to move forward in my life.

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

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11/13/10 - 3:46 PM

It's great to see the Trustee Line expand into so many different topics. This is the way it's supposed to be, Trustees bringing up issues for discussion. They don't always have to be a bed of roses, but everyone has that ability to give their dissenting opinions to whatever is written. Certainly, I'm not one to just sit back and be passive about what happens in GA, but this particular topic has bothered me since I first found out about it last week.

The workshop in question, if nothing else, should bring us to the subject of how we conduct ourselves in workshops. This relates to topics, presentation styles, group involvement and most important, handouts. Let me first start out by saying that there are several problems I see with the workshop in question. I was not in the workshop, but have spoken with many people who were involved in various aspects of it.

What is very clear is that the process broke down. The questions distill down to whether procedures were not in place to deal with the problems that arose from the workshop or if people ignored their responsibilities and obligations to assure the integrity of the workshop. Not that I have been put in the position of investigating this issue, but to me, it looks like a lot of both.

The issues as I see them are this:

- 1-A video camera was used to tape the workshop presenter
- 2-Attendees of the workshop had their voices captured on the video
- 3-The video was later loaded to the Internet for public viewing
- 4-An outside entity was promoted in the workshop via handouts.

I believe the first 3 items are in need of clarification by the BOT, so that we know what can and cannot be done in the future. If people are upset about these 3 items, then I suggest they distill them into a solution and suggest remedies via the BOT agenda. However, the fourth item is a problem that is clearly a violation of the Unity Program. I want to say that I am convinced that the workshop presenter truly had the best of intentions, but the process is the issue, and a serious one at that.

The Co-Chair liaison did his job to review the material for the conference and the workshops prior to the conference. This particular workshop was a substitute for one that got canceled. The handouts were given to a Tampa conference committee member only minutes before the actual workshop, as it was not given to the Co-Chair liaison to approve prior to the workshop. At that moment, that conference committee member was busy putting additional chairs in the room. The handouts were already being distributed to the attendees in addition to those that were on the chairs in the room. The committee member gave the material to a Trustee because he was trying to discharge his obligation to get workshop handouts approved for appropriateness, and time was working against him. The Trustee that was asked said he was not on the committee so it was not his responsibility, and he was busy and couldn't look at it. Not quite the attitude one would expect from a Trustee, especially with timing being so critical with this workshop and the approval of handouts.

The handouts were material for an outside organization. Apparently, nobody in the audience objected to these handouts, even with a room full of current and past Trustees. I learned a long time ago, silence is consent. But the bigger picture here is that nobody brought up the fact that the handouts violated the Unity Program. If no one says anything, it does not make it okay. The reality is that the material should never have been passed out to the attendees of the workshop and everyone who is a current or past Trustee had a moral obligation to protect the integrity of the Unity Program by saying the handouts were inappropriate BEFORE the workshop started.

To tell workshop attendees that if they don't like something, they can walk out, is not a solution to the problem. However, that is generally the only

vehicle available to attendees for objecting to any aspect of a workshop. That can't be the only answer to this problem. What we need is a process to eliminate the problems created by the 'free form' setup of workshops. What makes this an important issue is that we don't have any decisions or guidelines regarding the use of non-approved literature in workshops. Yes, I clearly understand that workshops are not GA meetings, but we run on the fine line of appropriateness of what we use and give to the attendees, because they are the collections of thoughts and ideas from many different sources that are frequently not disclosed or confirmed. I'm not even dealing with the issue of members taking workshop handouts and bringing them back to their rooms to be used locally in GA meetings. As they say on TV, that's a different show.

Montreal had a workshop where the handout material that was approved prior to the conference was substituted for handouts that were very clear violations of the Unity Program. Is this a new theme we are trying to promote? Evidently many would rather this topic disappear because after all, 'Who is it really hurting?' (Their words, not mine). Why must a few people connected with the workshops do things that clearly violate the Guidance Code because it is what they feel is best?

As a result of this Tampa conference, we apparently are quickly working our way toward formalized guidelines for workshops. But in the process, should we not reinforce that fact that Trustees have an obligation to uphold the Guidance Code, even if problems arise outside their home area? For me as a past Trustee, I believe that I am charged with a responsibility to uphold the Guidance Code and all the decisions of the Board of Trustees, wherever they may occur. This is not just the responsibility of the current Trustees, but anyone who has been a Trustee. Even more to the point, it should be every GA member's responsibility. Being a Trustee doesn't anoint special status to a member just for the time he/she is a current Trustee. It is an elevation of consciousness regarding the core principles of the Fellowship that should be permanently embossed in our lives.

I would hope that someone puts an agenda item in for Cherry Hill to deal with this subject and take out all the questionable issues, so that we may all concentrate on the messages of the workshops, including the one in Tampa that unfortunately was the catalyst for this subject on the Trustee Line, because of steps that were taken that give the appearance of intentionally trying to trivialize the violation of the Unity Program.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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11/14/10 - 6:57 PM

Dear Joe:

Thank you for digging in your heels - We have the Guidance Code for a reason. We support the Guidance Code for a reason. It is not, in my opinion, there only to be used when we 'feel the need,' and ignored the rest of the time. One of our responsibilities as Trustees in this Fellowship, is to support the Guidance Code. And yet, I have been called 'dictatorial' for citing it, and hard-nosed for not 'using my heart.' That is unacceptable and I will not apologize for feeling that way nor for stating it. No, it is not easy to be a Trustee - but I will always make every attempt I can to do the right thing - for the GA Program, for the Fellowship, and for the gambler who still suffers.

By not having structure in my life - that got me to being what I was; a compulsive gambler and I certainly don't wish to go back there. I find comfort in the Guidance Code - it gives me a set of principles to live by - to encourage others to live by - and not to be tossed aside when my 'heart' tells me to do so. While I can certainly sympathize with and feel empathy for the plight of others - we have a mechanism in place to change things we don't like. It's called a Trustee Agenda.

I don't particularly like all of the agenda items that come up - I don't necessarily agree with all of the decisions made at Trustee meetings - but what I will do is accept them, abide by them, honor and respect them until such time as they are changed, or change them myself if I feel that strongly. What I will never do is toss them aside for the sake of a moment's emotions. In my mind, that is the wrong thing to do.

Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

<b>30 Day New Literature Comment Period</b>
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11/16/10 - 1:22 PM  
Dear Fellow Trustees,

The comment period for new literature that passed the merit vote in Tampa is now down to 12 days. Please familiarize yourself with the process on the Trustee Website by clicking on "Literature" under the BOT Committees heading.

Item #'s 67-70 from the Tampa agenda all need your attention. These are all available on the "Download Center" link on the website. Please do your job as a Trustee and help to improve new literature. You may e-mail me with your thoughts and suggestions.

Thanks for your service to the fellowship.

Chuck R. (Literature Committee Chair)  
Area 15, New York

**Back To Reality**

11/18/10 - 11:41 AM  
My Dear Friends,

As I read the Trustee Lines I am reminded just how very sick people we really are. Most of us would not be here if it were not for Gamblers Anonymous and some people along the way helping us.

Now we have become experts in how the program should be run or should I say how we think it should be run. The saying is true opinions are like ass holes everyone has one.

We seem to spend more time being critical of others and not enough time working on our own recovery and helping the compulsive gambler who still suffers. We surely have the ability to find everything that is wrong with this program, with the people in it and with how things are done.

I found the Trustee Meeting to be so out of control that it made me think we have lost our purpose. We have joked about having the G.A. Police and maybe it should not be a joke. Maybe we need to be more critical of our members and their behaviors, does a trustee drink too much, eat too much, have an affair with another trustee, use too much foul language. Maybe even do any of them gamble? Well maybe we should have all those things examined, polygraph tests for each member of the board of trustees, this would surely let us know what is going on. Send someone to count to make sure that each trustee meets his or her 39 meeting obligation. Maybe we should have a written test to make sure that a trustee has the ability to at least pass the exit exam from high school.

See we have tried to become the proclaimed prophets of the program and have unfortunately forgotten who we really are. We are sick compulsive gamblers who have but one goal to help the person who is still suffering.

We also have to be open minded and realize G.A. is just one tool in our recovery and that each of us has other tools that help us along the way. We spend so much time quoting the guidance code and maybe some additional time should be spent putting a section on ethics in the guidance code that would spell out the behavior that must be practiced by each Trustee and then we must remove people that violate those ethical guidelines.

In my 26 years this is the most I have written in any submission because I truly believe it is better to be brief than long winded. Hey, another rule maybe submissions can only be 250 words maximum.

I have learned many things in this program and I surely view it from a different perspective and maybe that has to do with my Law Enforcement background but I have found that those who complain the most are the ones who in the end are not truly following the principles of the program.

To the new Trustees I pray that when you arrive in Cherry Hill you will not be tarnished by what you witnessed in Tampa and by the disgruntled comments you read from some members here. Remember people complain when they are not happy with their own lives people work together when they truly want Unity.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving

Tom M. - Area 2, Northern California

Past Trustee  
Past Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Past Chairman of the Board of Regents

But in the end just another sick compulsive member of this fellowship

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11/20/10 - 12:19 PM  
Good morning Tom -

It is always nice to "see" you on the Trustee Line. I have always respected your thoughts and opinions.

Correct me if I am wrong, but I was under the impression that the Trustee Line was where we were supposed to share our own thoughts and opinions on any item of our choice. I don't always agree with what is written, and when I don't, I thought I was supposed to say so....if I wanted to.... just as you have done. Am I wrong?

A GA mentor of mine has always told me, "some of us are just sicker than others." I totally agree. But that being said, the Trustee Line, I thought, was supposed to be a tool I could use - and when I am way out of line, I would HOPE someone would bring me to my senses and point out where I had gone astray - giving me time to think about my position and have the opportunity to correct my 'character defects,' or my way of 'thinking and living.' For me, sometimes seeing myself in writing allows me to truly 'see' myself as others may see me. I often cite GA literature to remind myself of what the program teaches me. Are you advocating that I not do this?

Should I really need a swift kick in the shins, my personal email address is on the Confidential Trustee Listing and I would hope someone would care enough to let me know, personally, where I have gone wrong - and perhaps advise me how to proceed or not to proceed. Thanks for your post - it was definitely food for thought.

With love, faith, hope and respect for our Fellowship,  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, CA

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11/20/10 - 2:01 PM

I could not agree with Tom M more. His letter has pointed out the key factor that I have been suggesting over the years. Our fellowship is turning into a society of laws that are being enforced by the trustees.

Now, before I get everyone upset with what may be an off-sided statement lets just look at the Subject line in this month Trustee line.

"Being A Trustee Or Not Being A Trustee" screams how trustees MUST enforce the guidance code and by not doing that hurts GA as a whole. Lets get our ethics and GA morals in line. It is one thing to get a room or member to understand the importance of what the guidance code stands for. It is a totally different meaning, when a trustee comes into a room and explains what the penalties or consequences are if they do not follow the GC by the letter of the LAW.

My attendance at the last BOT conference was number 22 in my 13 years of being part of a fellowship that accepted me as a sick, broken compulsive being with no restrictions, laws or penalties.

Over the last several years, I have seen trustees create laws only to create more laws to tighten up any loopholes. Now we are at the point where we are forgetting that we are all sick compulsive people when we first enter that door. I didn't care about any GC when I first came in to this fellowship - I needed help. Now, it is all about the LAWS of the GC first and recovery second. What message are we sending to the new trustees; it's areas, rooms and new members?

We have boxed ourselves into a jail cell with no room to learn, only to be dictated on how the GC should govern us in our rooms and recovery. We have taken away the fact that each room has the right to be self-governed. It would not surprise me that one day a trustee will make an agenda item for a Unity step 4 change to state;

4.) "The Guidance code guides GA as a whole and any room that does not follow the GC will NOT receive any privileges from GA".

Sadly, this is not far from the reality of where we are today. I suggest that each trustee go to page 2 of our GC and truly study and understand the opening paragraph in section one and let that be our guide and not some personal principals' of what he or she may think it should.



Recovery comes from freedom and not a jail cell,

Gary S. - Area 12 Past Trustee  
Past BOR member

A proud and humble member of GA and in the end just another sick compulsive member of this fellowship

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11/20/10 - 2:05 PM

Tom,

I'm glad you wrote what you did. This will be a prime example of the dialogue that can develop on the Trustee Line, and hopefully foster more contributions from other Trustees, both current and past alike.

I take exception to just about all you have written in your submission and I'd like to explain why. People who state their views of how things should be done that differ from what some may think, does not make anyone sick. The reality is that many members coast through this program with AA mentality. That comes from just sitting back and not paying attention to the structure that is part of GA. The core tenants of our Fellowship are being ignored because those same members want to take back their will and do what they think is best, in spite of it violating the Recovery, Unity Programs and the Guidance Code.

Why is it those who balk at following the Guidance Code always rationalize their conduct by saying 'Who is it really hurting?' Why is it those who are involved with the various Councils on Compulsive Gambling are the ones who tell us in GA that we have to embrace other concepts and ideas? Individually, anyone can do what they believe is right. If GA is perceived to not be a complete package for someone, then they have every right to seek whatever alternatives they wish. None of it belongs in the GA Fellowship, nor are we to promote those outside entities.

We come into the GA program with a complete lack of structure. GA gives us the structure, and we, as Trustees, carry that out by constantly trying to plug the holes of ambiguity in our literature and especially the Guidance Code. AA is riddled with members who do what they want. GA is about guiding our members with a uniformity in structure that should exist from room to room, with the exception of Unity Step 4.

We should be appreciate of those who are bold enough to voice an opinion, as there might be an idea nested in that opinion that might really make sense. In the final analysis, it is group conscience of the Board of Trustees that prevails with any decisions on which there is a vote. In my 10 years of involvement as a Trustee, I have seen immeasurable growth and strength come into the Fellowship as a result of some seemingly radical ideas that get passed by the BOT.

If you want to oppose someone's opinion, then do so. Did we suddenly trash the concept of Openmindedness? Let's be thankful for the wide ranging scope of the opinions, as it gives us all just a bit more perspective on who and what GA is about, and probably more important, how it's going to improve itself. GA has a lot of problems and when some of our members ignore them, it doesn't mean that others shouldn't point them out.

Dealing with statements regarding the tone and temperament of the Tampa Trustee meeting, I believe the 3 Chairs were thrown a significant amount of unwarranted situations in Tampa that were handled directly, and obviously not to the liking of some. They always get a hard time from the floor, but this time just seemed to be more negative in its nature. I wrote about this as the first piece on this month's Trustee Line. Although the Trustee meetings can be bumpy now and then, it is the work of the various committees between Trustee meetings that has been critical to expanding much of what GA is about today. Coming to the Trustee meetings and just voting on agenda items is fine, but not as rewarding as participating on the committees, and witnessing the positive changes of the work of those committees. Dissenting opinion on the committees doesn't come from 'sick people', it is the foundation for looking past our noses and trying to understand new concepts. It is that wide ranging opinion that galvanizes our committees to submit recommendations that have been very solid, from my recollection.

In direct response to your suggestions of implementing an Ethics Section in the Guidance Code, if I'm reading that incorrectly as a big chunk of sarcasm, then take this to the body. Come up with a proposal and submit it to the agenda for Cherry Hill. You might find that you have support enough to get passage of such a situation. If nothing else, it will give you a wider

platform to push this vein of thinking other than to only the few who participate in the Trustee Line. By the way, maybe only a small number of people currently write to the Trustee Line, but many more read it. When someone steps on someone else's toe in the Trustee Line, the word spreads very quickly between both coasts.

By the way, the comment about people complaining when they are not happy with their own lives, sounds like a direct quote from Fox News. Their best way to trivialize dissenting opinions is to take the focus away from the issues and attack the messenger. It worked for them after 9/11 when anyone who didn't agree with the administrations military strategies was immediately deemed 'the enemy'. It was a really dark time for our society. I hope we who have embraced recovery, would really stick to the principles instead of personalities.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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11/21/10 - 11:09 PM

Tom,

I love you, you know I do, but may fear as I continue in my recovery is not having the structure that was evident from my first day in this fellowship. True, when I was a new member, I didn't care about the Guidance Code. I didn't even know what it was. Within my first six months in GA, a Trustee of our area at that time came to what was my homeroom and blasted us for running the meeting in violation of the Guidance Code. My thought was who the hell was he to tell us how to run a meeting? After all, this was our room and we weren't hurting anyone. But, I quickly realized when he explained his actions, that he made a good point. The point was the structure that comes from following the Guidance Code and Unity Steps, not just when it feels good, but all the time.

When I became a Trustee I took my responsibilities seriously. One of which is following the Guidance Code in all my decisions. I was told by people much wiser than me, not following the Guidance Code affects GA as a whole. To me, not following this document sends the wrong message to the rooms. The thought will be the Trustee doesn't follow the Guidance Code, why should our room? To me this creates chaos and disunity. IF someone is afraid to enforce the Guidance Code, or is unwilling to enforce it, for whatever reason, then they shouldn't have accepted the duties of being a Trustee. Oh, and for the record, when the Guidance Code changes, even if I don't like the change, I will still enforce it because that is what I'm supposed to do, and the voice of the majority is greater than my own.

If Trustees are enforcing the Guidance Code at the local level, then the rooms will follow suit. This in turn allows new members to also accelerate in their recovery by having structure. Maybe I'm being a little naive here. Maybe the majority of new members don't need structure in their lives. I know I did, and for that reason, I am glad I have gotten that structure, by following the Unity Program and Guidance Code.

One final note. I agree with David about the service work at the committee level. After my first Trustee meeting I was encourage to join a committee. It was some of the best advice I received. The work, while sometimes long, is nevertheless rewarding. I guess that's why it pains me when I hear current or past Trustees voice their concern over the formation of committees. If someone is willing to get involved, I think we owe it to them to hear what they come up with. After all, it may be something that will help the compulsive gambler that still suffers. I understand not everyone is willing or even have the time to join a committee, and that is fine with me. I'm not going to take anybody's inventory because I just don't know what reason they have for not getting involved and it's not for me to question. Whether or not the committee work I am involved with now ever gets approved by the Board of Trustees, I'll take comfort in the fact that I tried to make a difference.

Pete K. - Area 13B, Southern Jersey

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11/29/10 - 12:36

I really enjoy reading the differing views on the TrusteeLine. I too am recovering and being able to read others opinions gives me things to think about. I do not always agree with everything written. I don't always respond when I disagree.

I laughed when I read the response that said the Tampa meeting was "so out of control". I've only been a Trustee since Houston, but I do not feel it was any more out of control than any I've attended. (Does that make me a sick person, probably?) When people from my area ask me about a Trustee

meeting, I state “imagine a room of about 125 people like us”. We laugh. I have to believe in my heart that every Trustee, former and current, who comes to a Trustee meeting, wants the best for GA. I also believe the TrusteeLine a super tool to hear others ideas and thoughts prior to being surprised at the conference.

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

<b>Tampa Report</b>
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11/20/10 - 3:16 PM

Dear Trustees,

It is about time that I finally get this chance to sit down and write a few lines to share a bit about the Tampa conference with each of you.

First of all, on behalf of the entire committee we were so thankful to everyone that attended and helped to make this a success for our area. It was a great learning experience for all of us here on the West Coast of Florida and so many of the members of the committee are ready to do it again. We are very close to closing the books and should be finalized by the first week in December. As it stands today the conference made over \$5,000.00 to be split 55-45 between GA and GamAnon.

I must admit, I felt a bit ashamed when I first saw a sign by the hospitality committee seeking volunteers to help work the hospitality room. I stopped by the room and found Jojo from Las Vegas working in there at the time. She reminded me that we all work together for the good of the fellowship. Yes, we were the hosting area, but many of other people came through and pitched in, in many different areas. My thanks to so many of you for helping us out.

I have noticed a few different topics that were brought up on the Trustee Line as a result of issues that took place here in Tampa. I would like to clarify as many of the issues as I can. The first item mentioned had to do with anonymity and I am glad that Joe B brought this up. I was well aware that a photo of a deceased member was being placed in our booklet. I was also aware that the family of the member did not have any issues with this being done. I gave the approval for this. As it had always been my impression that anonymity died when the member. I am not aware of anything in our literature that addresses this type of situation. I have had a few conversations about this and have heard opinions on both sides. I'm still not sure if this was a violation or not. I apologize to anyone that was disturbed by this memorial and I feel that it is something for the BOT to look into.

The next issue I would like to address is the workshop titled Love, Loss, & Legacy. Questions have been raised as to the appropriateness of this workshop and as to whether or not the workshop committee followed the guidelines for workshops as set by the BOT. I would like to set forth the events that took place. The workshop committee consisted of the chair of this committee, Les, who is a local guy and Rick B, our local trustee. All of the workshops were set at least a month prior to the conference and all material had been submitted to the co chair of the BOT. About a week before the conference one of the presenters had to back out for reasons unknown to the committee. Rick was able to fill this slot with the workshop presented by Bea G. It was not until Friday, that I was notified by the committee chair of these changes and I reported the changes at the close of Trustee meeting. On Saturday, less than an hour before the workshop Bea approached the workshop chair inquiring if there would be any problem with the handouts that she intended to use. He was unsure but knew that all handouts must be approved prior to the conference. He immediately tried to find me for approval, but could not locate me so he then sought guidance from the other local trustee. He asked Rick to look over the handouts and the response he was given was, “I am not part of this committee and I am too busy to look it over.” Not sure of what to do at this point he gave the ok for the handouts to be used. I am not looking for a debate as to whether or not this was a good workshop. I have heard that ALL the workshops were great! I do know that members from my local area complained that the handout was asking members to join the organization for Lanie's Hope. I am also aware that there were numerous trustees and past chairs of the BOT and BOR in the room. It does not make it right! The presenter of the workshop has been contacted and she now understands the inappropriateness of this kind of workshop at a GA convention. I don't really see there is much to debate here....Unity Step 6.

I hope this explains how this all took place. The workshop was a last minute filler and the chair sought guidance from the trustee and the person that brought this workshop to the conference and he was denied the guidance. I can't speak to the actions of everybody, but I can assure you that in this situation I feel that the chair of the workshop committee tried to do the right thing and did not knowingly allow a workshop to take place that would violate any of the Unity Steps. As I said to the members of the committee at our closing meeting, "when we make a mistake, what is really important is the lesson we learn from it." I can only hope that is the case here for all concerned.

With all that being said, I believe overall we had a terrific conference and I can't wait to do it again.

Hope everyone is well and see you all in NJ!

Dina P. - Area 6B, Tampa, Florida

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11/29/10 - 12:36 PM

Dina - Thank you so much for your posting. First let me state that I, too, was shocked when I saw that the hospitality committee was seeking volunteers to man the room. Then I realized, why shouldn't the committee ask, if there is a need. Why not give the body an opportunity to serve.

Regarding the workshop, I did not attend. It appears you have handled the situation and the presenter understands the problem. I believe I read something earlier about a recording of the workshop (with GA voices) being put on the internet or somewhere. I believe that GA should ask that be removed. Is this something the ISO can do?

Lastly, thanks for stepping up, putting on the conference, and making it an extraordinary event.

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

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<b>Heal Thyself And Not Others</b>
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11/20/10 - 3:51 PM

Hello Everyone,

I have been reading the submissions this month. Many causes me to laugh at the arrogance a some of people who try to treat this program like a parole officer trying to keep a released convict in his or her place once they return to society. I don't respond very often to the line but read it at least once a week. I respect all the members but I feel that a few have real power issues. I read where members say they are sick people, well I don't consider myself a sick person anymore. I am a recovering gambler, I was sick but like a person who is in remission from a disease I don't dwell on my past sickness but only my future health.

This fellowship has been concerned with retention problems and has even appointed a committee to research that fact. I truly respect Tom and he is right in my opinion about the problems with retention are caused by too many people trying to control new and current members rather than just offer their support and wisdom . If anyone thinks that changing a word or two here or there in the GC or the combo book is going to increase success in the program they need to have their heads examined. I have attended rooms in my area that are still using 3 and 4 year old printings of the combo book. Their books are stained with coffee spills and pen marks. We have a group discussion every month on ways to improve the way our rooms operate sometimes we make small changes such as shortening the pre-meeting announcements from 2 or 3 pages of rules and regs to one short page of suggested do and don't during the meeting. Retention is good and those who stop coming know they are always welcomed back. We have never run anyone away because they felt like the rules were smothering them. We become friends who help each other not boss anyone around. All I can say in closing is like Tom said---Get a life and heal Thyself.

I heard many new trustees in Tampa make comments on why do they need to waste their time, many taking time off work to attend meetings which in a lot of ways are totally dysfunctional. I wonder the same myself sometimes.

Good luck

Gary G. - Area 6C, NC/SC

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## Phone Numbers On Meeting Lists

11/23/10 - 5:52 AM

Okay I understand that you can find someone from their phone number. I have done it often in work related matters. What I would like is to know how we accomplish our primary purpose to reach the compulsive gambler who still suffers when they can't find the room. Some of our meetings are difficult to find, whether where in the building or where the building is. Phone numbers are listed in order to help people that are lost. The hot line isn't any help as the people answering the hot line may have never been within 200 miles of the meeting. We cover a large geographical area. There is over 500 miles from one end to the other.

It is not fun to get a call from someone who tried to get to their first meeting 200 miles from home and couldn't find it.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

## New Literature

11/23/10 - 5:53 AM

If you truly want an appreciation for our literature committee, try reviewing one of the pieces of literature that have been approved based on merit. I have been and am still working on item #69.

It is past time for we that call ourselves trustee to be of service in our role. Yes, the trustee meeting is important but so is every other aspect of our role. The follow-up work to the trustee meeting is every bit as important as the meeting itself. Personally I owe my group an amends in regard to new literature review and will make a verbal one at Intergroup. However, to put that amends in action I am working on the new literature.

I would like to challenge all to look at the duty list as a trustee and decide for yourself if you are living up to that.

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

## Help For Hearing Impaired

11/23/10 - 12:19 AM

Fellow Trustees:

A group secretary called and asked me if GA had a meeting (regional), a program or any assistance for a gambler who is "hearing impaired." I am aware of our Literature on CD for the visually impaired, but not aware of any assistance for those with hearing difficulty.

If any of you have had such an experience or know of any assistance available, I would appreciate your input. Thank you.

With love, faith, hope and trust in our Fellowship  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

## Happy Thanksgiving

11/24/10 - 5:34 PM

To all of my fellow Trustees -

Happy Thanksgiving. May each of you enjoy the holiday. As stated so eloquently by others - I am so thankful for this program and the Fellowship.

With love, faith, hope and trust in our Fellowship  
Linda S. - Area 3A Trustee, San Diego, California

11/24/10 - 6:12 PM

Thank you Linda, for helping me to put on the brakes in my otherwise hectic life and take a moment to remember what this day is about. It got me thinking about a few quotes I've picked up over time. Since this isn't a meeting, I thought I would list them on the chance that someone reading this might just get a bit of inspiration.

1. - As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

2. - Thanksgiving Day comes, by statute, once a year; to the honest man it comes as frequently as the heart of gratitude will allow.
3. - Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action.
4. - Thanksgiving comes to us out of the prehistoric dimness, universal to all ages and all faiths. At whatever straws we must grasp, there is always a time for gratitude and new beginnings.
5. - To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven.
6. - Thanksgiving is possible only for those who take time to remember; no one can give thanks who has a short memory.
7. - None is more impoverished than the one who has no gratitude. Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves, and spend without fear of bankruptcy.
8. - Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.
9. - Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

and my favorite...

10. - Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

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