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Trustee Line for December 2008

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From The Trustees

The subjects listed below are just a listing of themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them or start an entirely new subject

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Can we practice what we preach - - Money is not our problem.

12/4/08 - 4:27 PM

To All Trustees, I rarely use this forum to disagree with a group decision within this wonderful fellowship. But after reading the minutes of the last BOR meeting I feel I must convey my opinion.

I am forever grateful for the work done by the I.S.O. and the employees there are so dedicated. I for one truly appreciate all their efforts. When I read the letter that was sent to them with this years 'bonus', I was saddened, and felt we as a fellowship could have done, at the very least, the same for them as we did last year.

I know this has been a tough year, but I am sure it was tough for all of them too. I think the BOR might have been short-sighted, when they made their decisions. I certainly do not want to lose any of those dedicated workers. I know of times they stay late, and meet deadlines and get all the work done that we need as a fellowship to get done, and I am sure that there are many, many times I do not know of. Being an employee myself I know that many employees look forward the year-end bonus to make the holidays. I am saddened we probably disappointed them.

Also in the same set of minutes, \$1,600.00 a month was removed from our expenses, as we will enter the next contract with Erlang. Terrific!!!! Why couldn't we have found the revenues to cover those employees bonuses. I do not know.

So I will say the Serenity Prayer, turn it over to my Higher Power, and pray we do not lose any of these trustworthy employees, because I want everyone to know I believe in the process of group conscience, at every level.

So now that I have gotten that off my chest I would like to wish every brother, sister, employee, and the compulsive gambler who still suffers a safe and healthy and wonderful, joyous holiday season filled with peace and serenity.

Your Brother,
Richie S. - Area 6 - Southern Florida
1st Co-Chair BOT

12/5/08 - 1:58 PM

I remember early on in my 20 now years in this Fellowship when I would give therapy in my rooms and say how I was embarrassed that I was a compulsive gambler. Sure, I wanted the magic pill to make everything to go away because I stopped gambling, but I was too new in the program

and certainly had a lot to learn. Not too long after that initial period of disappointment, I learned that I was in fact very glad to be a compulsive gambler, because in working the program, I was able to get my life back. To this day, I still continue to enjoy the benefits of being a compulsive gambler in recovery.

However, I have been brought back to the point of once again being embarrassed to have the Board of Regents associated with this fellowship due to their propensity to stick their collective feet in their mouths. Embarrassed may not be strong enough. Nauseated might be a bit more to the point. Yes, this is about the 5 BOR members who voted for the reduction in this year's bonuses for the ISO employees, and let's not forget about the 1 BOR abstention vote. Decorum prevents me from writing what I really want to say, but let me try it like this:

Are you (fill in this blank) kidding me?

The longer I am in this fellowship, the more I see that this is a group of people called the Board of Regents are trying to validate themselves as administrators, but clearly show that if there is a wrong move to make, they will probably make it. Harsh words? Yes indeed. How many different metaphors do we want to use? 1) Cutting off our noses to spite our faces? 2) Shooting ourselves in the foot? 3) Etc, etc. What has happened with this latest fiasco is nothing short of shameful, misdirected and unsubstantiated.

The ISO Bulletin has a wealth of information in it on the financials of our fellowship, including salaries and benefits. The letter from John C, BOR Chairman, mentioned a 4% bonus rate paid last year. Salaries were listed in the Bulletin at \$169,750, which translates to \$6,790 at that 4% rate. The 1.6% that was actually paid was a \$2,716 equivalent. That's a difference of \$4,074. I understand that the actual amounts may in fact be less of a difference, but I am working with the cryptic information we usually get on this and many other subjects in the monthly BOR minutes. As they say in the television world, 'That's and entirely different show.' I also noticed a line in the Bulletin that allocated benefits of \$10,500, indicating that the bonuses were appropriated for last year.

So let's take a moment and sift through the rhetoric that caused this brilliant stroke of genius that helped the BOR justify cutting the legs out from underneath 4 very important employees of the ISO.

1) - A motion, which thankfully failed, was made for no bonuses 'due to operating deficit of \$24,000 for four months ending October 31.' HELLO....McFLY??? Does anyone feel it important to understand why that exists? Would it have anything to do with the unusually large literature purchases made earlier this fiscal year of almost \$52,000, a 60.9% increase over the same period last year? Is there anyone on the BOR who mentioned that we sell our literature for twice what we pay for it? This \$24,000 operating deficit is not from an unrecoverable expense, it's from inventory stocking. Saying that this is the reason for the bonus cutbacks is disingenuous and unbecoming of an oversight Board, especially the Board of Regents. It is strongly reminiscent of our recently concluded Presidential election campaign. Half-truths and statements taken out of context as a means of justifying an unjustifiable position. And while we are at it, why are we only using a 4-month window when we are talking about a bonus for the entire year? Sure we know that GA's fiscal year starts 7/1, but let's not be so myopic when we are talking about annual events like bonuses. The logic of taking only 4 months into consideration for bonuses each year is nothing short of insanity. What about the other 8 months of the year? Does none of the rest of the year have any bearing on the health of our financials? Are we to believe that the next board is only going to deal with the same 4-month period for this matter next year. I guess the BOR members have never heard of the Theory of Holes, which states, when you are in one, stop digging.

2) - GA, through the ISO, has just gone through a 2-year period of paying \$19,200 per year for the Telephone Helpline. HELLO....McFLY??? We no longer have that expense because the new contract is a no-cost contract to ISO. Is there anyone on the BOR who mentioned that our expenses are now lowered by \$19,200 per year as a result?

3) - We at Gamblers Anonymous are not going through tough times, in spite of the current state of our economy. We need to deal with facts for this year and the facts are that our contributions have increased on an annual basis and even over the 1st 4 months of this fiscal year. Check out the old issues of the Bulletin. HELLO....McFLY??? The BOR is handicapping the effect the economy on the future of our cash flow with this horse crap, unsubstantiated, penny-pinching exercise in self-aggrandizement. I think I remember someone telling me that handicapping is gambling, but who am I to say that, other than just another compulsive gambler.

If 2009 proves to be a difficult year, then maybe there would be 'some' justification to revisit this topic of shaving the bonuses next November, but the BOR really dropped the ball on this subject this year. This fellowship is very good at taking things that are provided to the membership for granted. One of the biggest assets we have is not monetary, it is the human capital we have in the ISO. These people are not overpaid by any stretch, but there are often overworked with little more than an occasional thank you from some members. The workload continues to expand each year and many of us just expect things to be done without understanding the pressure that everyone faces to actually

make that happen.

I'm not saying that the ISO employees are saddled with more responsibility than any other company's office help, but they deserve to be treated with more dignity and respect than the huge slap in the face they received from the BOR with a 1.6% bonus. I would not be surprised if we end up losing some of the employees because of this masterful financial wizardry from the BOR. Sure, we are always at risk of losing employees who wish to seek more gainful employment, but we don't have to give them a reason to think we are trying to push them out the door.

Although I understand the motivation behind the letter John C. wrote to the employees of ISO, it just really reads as exceedingly patronizing. I implore the BOR to revisit this subject at its earliest opportunity and right the wrong that has been committed and restore the bonus level to the 4% that has previously been given. I also believe that this annual issue cannot be as subjective as indicated in the minutes. A formula should be put into place so the incorrect premises and misdirected facts brought up this year are eliminated from consideration.

Revisiting this matter will be a hard subject for the BOR to digest, because past experience has clearly shown that once the Board makes a decision that is shown to be flawed, they then show that they belong to an 11 Step program, one that is missing Step 10. I like what the Red Book says about this step on page 49. 'To promptly admit to being wrong means that one has become a little humble and that can rid oneself of deceit, arrogance, false pride and other character defects.' I couldn't have said it better myself. Add to that what the Guidance Code says under Article XIII, Section 5, 'The sole purpose of the Board of Regents is to supervise the operations of the International Service Office (I.S.O.) and see that it is operating effectively and efficiently.' I submit that the actions by the BOR with the employee bonuses are inconsistent with 'operating effectively and efficiently.'

So what do you say, Board of Regents? You screwed up, but you can make it better. You might even improve your perception within the Fellowship. Who knows, I might even say something nice about you, for a change. Like we tell our members in comment meetings...'Do the right thing.'

David M. - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/5/08 - 2:48 PM

Hi Everyone, There is not much more I can add to the blatantly wrong decision of the BOR in regards to the year end bonus to the ISO employees.

Both Richie and David have clearly defined why this decision was not only wrong spirited but also very short-sighted. I might have used different words, but, I fully agree with the content of both Trustee line submissions.

Instead of more criticisms or name calling, I would like to implore the BOR to revisit this issue immediately and change your minds. Give the employees of the ISO a signal that they are appreciated and can have a better holiday season with a decent bonus which they all need and deserve, instead of nice empty words.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and a healthy new year in recovery.

Herb B. - Trustee Area 5 - Montreal

12/5/08 - 5:29 PM

Hi everybody..I would first like to thank Wendy B, for a good recording of the minutes of the BOR Nov. '08 meeting. It was a clear picture of how the motions went, etc. The only thing I don't know, was there any analysis done on the 'Operating Deficit of \$24,000.00 for that 4 months prior' nothing was said...If they look at the 6 months between the Chicago & the LA International Conferences, would they have given the people working in the ISO office a bonus of say 10%, with all the money that was received from these conferences? I really don't feel the our program should be use in with what our nation is currently going thru..'Our program as well as our nation facing difficult financial times'. What's next? Is the BOR going to ask congress for a bail out also? I agree with all those who have written before me. Let the BOR meet again and make things right. Give them their bonuses based on 4% as in years past and the extra days pay for Friday, 12/26/2008

Joe B. - Trustee Area 6C - North and South Carolina

12/7/08 - 10:06 AM

To All Trustees,

I saw BOR minutes that came out on Thursday and was saddened that the BOR made a decision to cut back the year- end bonuses for the employees from 4% to 1.6%. I don't feel this decision was made for reasons that were well thought out. I felt I had to write something to the Trustee Line and express my feelings that this decision was wrong.

There are already some entries on this subject and I agree with all that has been said on this subject. For all the ISO does I felt a need to stand up and let the BOR know that they have made a tragic mistake, and that they need to revisit this issue during the December 19th meeting and reinstate at least the 4% bonuses they paid last year.

Alan J. - Area 15 -New York

12/7/08 - 11:10 AM

Open Letter to the Board of Regents:

I was quite disappointed to receive the BOR minutes the other day and read that you voted to cut back on the annual bonuses for ISO employees. When you do something like this, you are telling our valuable employees that they are really not worth as much as they were last year and that we don't believe that they did as much work.

I don't sit in the ISO office, but I know from experience with phone calls and e-mails that the people in our office are as capable and as competent as we could ever hope to find. I personally will be increasing my Lifeline contribution and my weekly room donation so that this does not have to happen - I sincerely hope that my fellow Trustees and program members are in agreement and will do the same.

This should not be a financial decision on the part of the BOR. The current financial crisis in our country is not an excuse to display poor behavior. You should be telling the ISO employees that they are a valuable asset to our program and enforcing this concept by awarding them at least the same percentage as last year's bonus.

Sincerely, Chuck R. - Area 15 - New York

12/7/08 - 11:23 AM

I disagree with the bonuses for the employees of ISO, I feel the 4% should be paid to them this year and looked at for next year within six months of year ending 12/31/09.

Thank you,

John D. - Area 12, past Trustee - New Jersey

12/7/08 - 11:24 AM

Hi

I am one of those people who read the Board of Regents minutes when they are sent out.

I was SHOCKED to read that the Board of Regents did not approve a year end bonus/Christmas bonus for the ISO employees. I was surprised to read about the members who obtained and number of votes required on this issue (Good work to Wendy for providing these minutes.) I feel that the staff desire some sort of bonus for their hard work they put it!!!!

On a side note, I think that the Board needs to hire even more people! I was speaking to Karen on Monday following the 4 day Thanksgiving holiday, she had to work one of those days as there was so much to do.

The Board had no problems spending \$1600 per month for the last 2 years on a hotline that is NOT universally used; BUT they have a problem giving a bonus to 4 valuable people. Imagine the cost of having to hire and train new people. Let's not loose them.

LET'S HAVE THE BOARD OF REGENTS MAKE THIS RIGHT and give the employees their bonus with a letter of apology.

Thanks

Richard C. - Area 2A, Past Trustee - Calgary Canada

12/7/08 - 11:41 PM

I guess I will have to be the bad guy on this very touchy subject. Having served 11 terms on the BOR with 5 terms as Chairman I probably know what goes on in the ISO office and how hard our employee's work as well as anyone. I have been saying for years that our IES is very underpaid compared to most non profits but if we were to pay her what she is really worth we would receive many harsh letters and emails telling us how overpaid she is. In effect the BOR can't win either way. The same goes for year-end bonuses. If the BOR were to give the 4% there would certainly be some complaints from members saying how can you give a 4% bonus to all the employees when the unemployment rate is so high and the economy is so bad.

It is my personal opinion that the bonus should have been more but the decision of the BOR has been made and should not be revisited. The membership should let this go and support their decision.

When the employees come up for salary increases in May that is when the BOR should really analyze the financial situation and pay them what they are worth. Much more than they are presently making.

Bob W. - Former Trustee Area 1 - Los Angeles

12/7/08 - 1:01 PM

I am writing to suggest that you discuss and vote again on the reduction of Bonuses for the Staff at ISO for this Xmas and Holiday season. The work they do and how many people they help is infinite. Please look at this issue again and show full respect to these people doing a very challenging and thankless and necessary job

Cindie T. - Area 2A - British Columbia

12/7/08 - 1:35 PM

To My Fellow Trustees and to Members of the Board of Regents:

I agree with many of the statements made in the foregoing Trustee Line Comments regarding offering our ISO employees a year-end bonus. The work they do for the Gamblers Anonymous organization, the efforts they make on our behalf, the encouragement they provide and the friends they make for the program are simply priceless. While I realize the economy is currently not in the best shape, I think we all need to rethink our priorities. To me and many members in the San Diego area, the GA program is our life or death certainty.

If the Board of Regents continues this negative approach to our ISO employees bonuses, I shudder to think how I, in turn, can then encourage our groups to continue to support their local meetings and Intergroups. The outcome could be frightening. I believe we just need to tighten our belts - "do the right thing" - and ensure that our priorities are well placed.

Linda S. - Trustee, Area 3A San Diego

12/7/08 - 2:08 PM

Greetings, my Brothers and Sisters,

I haven't submitted anything to the Trustee Line in some time, but the issue of giving holiday bonuses to our ISO staff has touched a nerve.

I am one of many who elected our Board of Regents. I expect them to not only watch over where and how MY money is spent at ISO, but to also treat MY ISO employees with respect. This includes giving them a decent wage and benefits, and, if at all possible, a Holiday bonus.

The purpose of wages and benefits is to be compensation for services expected and rendered. A bonus is an employer's way of thanking the employees for services above and beyond those expected.

It looks to me like we have the money. Let's give those who serve in our ISO every day the monetary thanks they richly deserve.

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

12/7/08 - 2:23 PM

'Tis the season to be Scroogy me thinks. I read the recent BOR minutes and when it came to the part about cutting the year end bonuses of the extremely valuable (and most likely highly underpaid) employees of the ISO from 4% to 1.6%, I couldn't believe my eyes. Since when are bonuses determined on a four month operating budget only? I sincerely doubt that any company or business bases their bonus system solely on the amount of cash or revenue they generate in four months out of twelve.

We are all well aware of the rough economic times, but to cut people's bonuses during a period of stagnant growth is ludicrous to say nothing of being downright mean. These people who work in our ISO offices go above and beyond the call of so-called "normal" hours; handle difficult situations with diplomacy and tact; and were hired to serve US, the recovering compulsive gamblers, in achieving abstinence from a terrible disease. Do you have an exact dollar figure of what that is worth, Board of Regent members? I certainly don't, but I do know I definitely wouldn't want to lose competent, caring people from the ISO due to what surely cause them to have feelings of frustration and disappointment by being overlooked by their 'bosses' at year end and having their much anticipated bonuses cut.

Board of Regents, I ask that you seriously reconsider your decision as I feel that we, the everyday Gamblers Anonymous members, have shown enough indignation over this Scrooge-like attempt to save money that we've taken the time to actually post something here on the Trustee Line. Certainly our voices should have some merit... don't they?

I am only one person, but I do know the following statement to be true: 'I sought my soul, but could not see, I sought my God but He eluded me, I sought my brothers and sisters and found all three.' Now give these much valued people at the ISO the bonus they've earned and deserved, because they ARE my brothers and sisters!

Sincerely,
Marlene O. - Past Trustee, Area 5A - New Brunswick, Canada

12/7/08 - 3:55 PM

I'm in agreement with the sentiment expressed by current and past Trustees in 12 of the first 13 submissions this month that the Board of Regents ought to revisit and reverse its decision to reduce this year's bonuses by 2.4% for the ISO employees.

The reason I believe the BOR ought to revisit the matter is that John C.'s statement in his letter to the ISO employees -- "This year finds our program as well as our nation facing difficult financial times. ... it is necessary to reduce this amount to 1.6% for the reasons mentioned above." -- lacks substantive support in justification for the reduction in year-end bonus payments.

If the 2008 year-to-date and projected year-end operating revenues, costs and net results were quantified, and the Board used these factors in arriving at its 2.4% bonus reduction decision, then I would like to see the financial analysis published. However if the Board merely made its decision based on the sluggish economy, as reflected by John's statement, then it has the responsibility to place this matter back on the agenda for the December 19 meeting and conduct bonus decisions with quantified discussions.

I ask that the Board of Regents thoroughly "examine the numbers".

While there would be restatement issues resulting from timing differences between ISO's Calendar Year 2008 and Fiscal Year 2008 operating statements, I refer to the ISO's Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

- The actual 7/1/07-6/30/08 Employee Benefits expense line item is \$8261, which represents 5.4% of total payroll. The estimated 7/1/08-6/30/09 Employee Benefits line item is \$10,500, which represents 5.9% of total payroll. The Employee Benefits line item apparently contains other expenses since it exceeds the 4% actual and budgeted bonuses, but my point is that a 4% bonus was budgeted and therefore justified.
- There is no specific reference in John's letter that there are Fiscal Year 2009 expenses the Board anticipates to be over-budget that it seeks to reduce the budgeted Employee Benefits line item, i.e., the 4% year-end bonus.
- There is a \$13,000 G.A. 888 National Hotline budgeted expense line item, which represents an over-budgeted expense of \$3400 since the \$1600 monthly Erlang expenditure, or \$9600 fiscal year expense, ceases at 6 months ending December 31, 2008. Therefore, this \$3400 cushion in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget can be used toward absorbing the 2.4% bonus reduction.
- There are various other budgeted expenses that ought to be scrutinized for over-budgeted expenditures.

In summary, the Board of Regents should revisit and reverse its decision to reduce this year's bonuses for the ISO employees. If John's statement in his letter to the ISO employees has any validity -- "...the Board of Regents, on behalf of our fellowship, thanks each of you for the hard work and dedication that you do for us each and every day. The extra effort to get something done or putting in extra time is appreciated. ..." -- then the Board owes it to the 4 ISO employees, and Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, to go the extra mile and find the "2.4% differential in bonus money" in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

Ed E. - Past Trustee - Area 2 Northern California

12/7/08 - 4:11 PM

Hi All brothers and sisters,

I am not happy with what I read as far as bonus's go for the staff at the ISO office. We are first a fellowship, but we do have the BOR which runs the business end of Gamblers Anonymous. They need to take care of our employees at the ISO. The employees are the backbone of all our mailings. They smile and help all people who call the ISO office. I for one know firsthand that a happy or satisfied employee is the most helpful. I did not use any names but I do know the whole staff. They totally deserve the same as last year no less or even more. As I have read and served on the BOR, the money is not always a problem. This decision that was made, should be changed, asnd if I remember correctly, the yearly budget should include the bonus. Enough said on my part.

My Best and Love,
Lloyd A - Trustee Area 6 - Southern Florida

PS : This is my first post many to come !!!

12/7/08 - 5:11 PM

Hello Everyone,

I would like to put my 2 cents in here concerning the BOR decision to cut back the year-end bonuses of the 4 ISO employees.

I feel that anyone who works as hard as those 4 people do, for OUR fellowship, should receive AT LEAST a 4% year-end bonus.

I know when I receive my bonus each year, it reminds me that I am truly appreciated and I think these 4 people should get the same reminder from this Fellowship.

BOR, please revisit this subject and reverse this decision.

Thank You,
Kathy S - Trustee, Area 7 - Louisiana, Mississippi, and Lower Coast of Alabama

12/7/08 - 7:22 PM

Hello everyone,

I will suggest this item be reconsidered also. The staff is always available with advice and service. The funds can be found somewhere and the organization can tighten up the budget without cutting the bonuses at the 11th hour. I feel the BOR if they had a case should have made it months ago. As far as GA is concerned I feel this is doable and should be corrected.

Thanks,
Gary G. - Past Trustee Area 6C - NC/SC

12/7/08 - 11:24 PM

I have been reared in this fellowship to respect one another and trust in our program and its structure. I find most of the above letters do not have the understanding for those who we elect to handle our business. I am positive that this was not an easy quick decision. All of the BOR are very close and not only working towards the best of our fellowship, but most are VERY close friends to all in the ISO office. I am also positive that if the BOR body felt it was within our normal means they would give more than 1.6%. I am sure that ALL of our BOR feels that the ENTIRE staff deserves a year bonus. Our appreciation and love for Karen, Jason, Israel and Lisa for the above and ever ending dedication year round should be on our gratitude list everyday, and not just at the end of the year.

We have elected the BOR and their vote HAS to be respected. That is the foundation of our GC and principals. It is no different than the BOR second-guessing, handicapping or playing Monday morning quarterbacking a BOT decision to create a new booklet that has been passed. It is not within the BOR right to send back a BOT decision - nor would it show respect for the BOT decision to impose a money outlay for that booklet. HOWEVER, with that understood there has to be some kind of understanding and resolution to this policy with respect to all. More to come later on.

Please I am the furthest away from being a Scrooge, and I am will aware of what the ISO and our staff do on an INTERNATIONAL level. It is and always has been a mind blowing global effort to me. I love and respect the entire office - but some of us are speaking from our hearts and thinking about a bonus from our fellowship to show respect for their efforts. I ask you all to look deep inside and be honest - how many actually send any of them a holiday or a thank you card? Let alone a gift as little as a box of cookies or a phone call during the holidays. I do not mean this in disrespect to you - but in respect to them. The bonus that we are all rightfully upset about, we ourselves have to look in the mirror.

Money is not our problem and should never be - this is another word twist. Instead of those who blame the BOR for doing their job, we should look at why the BOR and ourselves had been put in this position.

There are 7 new Spanish versions of our literature being printed and the remake of the ISO webpage so far in 2009. Just because we print them - does not mean they we will sell them right away and make a profit. Just because we create a new website does not mean more members. The BOR cannot look at the profit margins and gamble when the profit will be returned. They are asked to spend the money and somehow make it happen. MAYBE WE SHOULD NOT DO THESE ITEMS? - OF COURSE NOT.

The ISO office has been in the need for more staff and raises for the current staff for a very, very long time. All of you are not looking at the big picture. If you ask the current staff what they would truly like us to do - they would surely tell you more help - Please.

Some of the trustees that have been around for awhile should remember our current BOT chair, Tom M being the BOR chair at the Boston BOT conference over 4 years ago, stating over and over "Were are we going to get all of the money" that the BOT was passing at that time. There were many items that were requiring a lot of money. Now, I am not stating that was being passed was wrong or right - just being questioned by the BOR chair about the money and how are we going find the funding. This pleading for understanding was not new than - nor is it now. The BOR has been stating this for several months as well as Karen H. asking for new funding via lifeline in the ISO monthly bulletin. Let alone the passing agenda, 72 - 17 approval, that all trustees be lifeliners. Tom M being the author of this item is not a coincidence. I ask again to look inside and be honest - how many of you have become a lifeliner since Houston?

I had started the International Walk A Thon 2 years ago to help with the concerns of funding. Last year we raised a nice sum of money to support our ISO office - this year I am not sure if we will make half. I am

ashamed to state that my own area had decided to do they own Walk A Thon and just donate 25% of what we had raised to the ISO. How many of the trustees that have written supported the International Walk A Thon this year or last.

Look, the bottom line point that I am trying to make is those that live in a glass house should not cast the first stone, WE ARE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS - ALL OF US. We all should have respect for our members and those we elect to do is right and sometimes do what looks like the dirty or a no win job.

I remember when I was a corporate manager and I had to instructed not to give out a full bonus gift. All of my managers and their staff had to be cut on their "normal" bonuses. It did not mean any disrespect for their efforts for the year, it was just the time and funding my CEO had sought fit to guide us through some bad times. It was not pleasant and like most of you complained about it and did not see it through the CEO's desk. But we all respected it.

These are uncertain times and the single dollar that the average member gives is not the same as in 1957 and all of us are responsible and not just the BOR. We are trusted servants, trustees and members have to dig a little deeper to ensure that this does not have to be BOR decision. Let us not pass the buck unto the BOR but support and respect our program and the ISO.

What I would suggest is that we ask the BOR to take some money out of our emergency CD funding with the hope and understanding from this body to help raise more.

We need to understand that we are growing in leap and bounds all over the world and we need funding to support those that need our help. If we do not do support our ISO - who will? Lets rally the membership and stand behind all and not break down our unity - but to build it.

I ask for the final time - Are we all doing the very best we can to support our ISO? Or are we just preaching?

Fellowship First and respect to all -

Have the Best of holidays with our loved ones and give thanks for what you have due to our program.

Gary S - Area 12 past Trustee and concerned grateful GA member.

12/8/08 - 1:27 AM

To All My Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to thank the employees at our ISO office for an exceptional job in the year 2008 and years preceeding. I have had nothing but wonderful experiences in dealing with any issue that involved the ISO. The employees have gone above and beyond normal service to take care of the needs of our members in Area 10B. I am asking the BOR to reconsider their decision to lower the employees year end bonuses and give them the 4% bonus that they have earned. I have heard no talk of money deficits. As a matter of fact, our contributions seem to be up. Is this BOR's decision a fiscal need or an emotional reaction to our economy? If there is a fiscal need for cuts, I am sure that our fellowship can work it into the 2009 budget.

Respectfully,
Gary B. - Area 10B Trustee

12/8/08 - 8:20 AM

I too was surprised, and a bit baffled, by the decision made by the BOR regarding the yearend bonus for the ISO employees. I am also surprised, and very encouraged, by the reaction expressed here thus far.

I have often thought it strange that we, as a nonprofit organization, give yearend bonuses. I know of no other nonprofit that does so. In fact, before posting this I reached out to several that I have contacts with and confirmed that none give bonuses to their employees. With that in mind I could have understood our new BOR changing the policy of old and, instead, rewarding our staff with the raises they deserve based on year end reviews. (I suspect that even the staff might have felt better about that).

That said, the current BOR obviously has no problem with the bonus policy itself but only with the amount of the bonus. This is impossible to understand.

In all my time in this fellowship and in all my years of various levels of service with the Board of Trustees I don't believe I have ever heard a complaint about the service of the ISO employees. Even the BOR seems to agree they go above and beyond the call of duty. The respect and appreciation expressed here so far is evidence of the feelings of the fellowship at large. (I think David M. would confirm that no subject has ever had this type of response in the trustee line).

It is hard to even guess what the real motive is here so I will not try. Whatever the motives, and wanting to or not, I think this is a real slap

in the face to our staff and clearly send a message not supported by the BOT. In the past, the BOR has shown great reluctance to admit a mistake and one post here encourages them to follow that path and for the BOT to support their mistake.

I sincerely hope that the BOR will break ranks with previous boards and do the right thing.

Brother Denis M. - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/8/08 - 9:01 AM
OPEN LETTER TO B.O.R.

I just read in disgust about the decision the B.O.R took, i.e. I.S.O. employees' bonus. How could you take such a step while G.A. is exploding worldwide. This is partly due to the diligent efforts of our employees at I.S.O. I wonder what you at the B.O.R. are smoking.

F.Y.I. I have been a small part of this explosion and without the help from I.S.O. I don't know where we (G.A.) would be today, especially when dealing with foreign governments.

Therefore, I beg the B.O.R. to not only reinstate the bonuses in full but also to give additional consideration for the work they have done to date and the tremendous work/responsibility they will be faced with tomorrow.

Thank you,
George G - Area 20 - URUGUAY

12/8/08 - 10:03 AM
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I trust these comments will get to the ears of the members of our BOR... The decision by the BOR to reduce this year's bonus to our four dedicated employees was "yes" the wrong message to send [even in these hard times]

The four, led by our committed International Secretary Karen H, I believe work for our Fellowship out of a deep desire to help those who are still suffering and as such the BOR should make every effort to send our appreciation...To reduce the annual bonus from last year's amount of 4% is not the right message...The salaries and wages paid to these four people should always be held in the highest regards and in all situations our gratitude for their work should be so shown

I encourage and exhort the BOR to revisit this matter and their vote at the upcoming December BOR meeting and a resounding affirmation to retain the bonus as in the prior year I hope would be the outcome...

You're Friend and Brother in the Fellowship
Lou W - Area 3B Past Trustee

12/8/08 - 11:39 AM
The Board of Regents has made a serious error in judgment. Since we all know nobody is perfect, I am sure they are more than willing to admit their mistake and reinstate the proper bonuses to the wonderful staff at ISO. I do not need to restate the reasons for this, the onslaught of letters to the Trustee Line speaks for itself. The sooner this is corrected , the better, To the BOR....' Do the Right Thing'.

Peace, Fellowship and Happy Holidays.
Dave S - Past Trustee Area 13

12/8/08 - 11:44 AM
Greetings to all-

Having read the previously submitted letters to the Trustee Line, I am in full agreement with almost all of the submissions. I absolutely would implore the BOR to re-address this item on their December agenda and correct their previous decision to reduce the year-end bonus from 4% to 1.6%. I guess, though, that I'm a little confused (having been a blonde for many years) and if they're fiscal year starts in July and ends June 30th, why are they receiving their annual bonus in December???

I also never realized that the ISO employees had been receiving a bonus (since most non-profits do not pay out year end bonuses and I've worked for the USO as a Director and know this), but there is no question in my mind that they deserve a bonus. In fact, I do know for a fact that we do not pay them enough for the service they provide.

I know, for a fact, that Karen goes above and beyond for the ISO...working many times on the weekend or a federal holiday...coming in before the office is officially open for calls and staying late past closing to be able to get the job done. I know Karen quite well and have met Israel several times and talked with Lisa a couple of times...these are all terrific people and they love doing what they do..getting material and literature out to groups ALL OVER THE WORLD. For those of you that have never had the opportunity to visit the ISO office in Los Angeles, it would astound you to see what they accomplish in so little space

(although the views are great).

I also know for a fact that living in California is expensive...rents, insurance, food and sundries; not to mention the fact that California also has a state income tax. We do not pay enough for the valuable service that Karen, Israel, Lisa and Jason provide...not to mention the intangibles of friendship, caring, and love that goes out to all that call in with cries for help. Notwithstanding the sheer volume of managing the requests for new group starter kits, Karen also has the responsibility for payroll, the minutes for BOT, and editing and putting together the monthly ISO bulletin.

Finally, is the fact that we are no longer having to pay the monthly \$1,600 administrative fee to Erlang Communications (thank you Steve Zimmers). I find it impossible to believe that our BOR could not find the necessary funds to fully pay the 4% bonus to some very hard-working individuals. I pray that the BOR will re-address this wrong and make it right as quickly as possible.

Best regards-
Karen L - Area 3 Past Trustee

12/8/08 - 1:14 PM

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Originally I was going to wait to post something on the Trustee Line regarding the issue of the employee bonus so as not to be accused of attempting to sway people in their decisions.

Well it appears I do not have to sway anyone. As I read the submissions already posted I saw that there are many people out there who do get it. The employees at the International Service Office do the work of 8 people and there are only four of them.

Everyday Israel goes to the Post Office to pick up the mail in his own car with not reimbursement from the I.S.O. , Karen picks up supplies and does the banking using her own vehicle and yes, they even stay late without compensation. They are entitled under the F.L.S.A. to be reimbursed 58.5 cents per mile for use of their own car.

Why do they do what they do? Simple they are the best of the best and for this reason alone we have an obligation to treat them as we have in the past. I agree with Bob W. that we need to bring their salaries up to an appropriate level but we also need to reward them at the holidays for being the type of employees we want.

I guess what I look at is that we already had the holiday bonuses in the budget so I feel it should have never been an issue. Maybe we as a fellowship need to think about sending restricted funds next year to be used only for the employees bonuses.

How much is it worth to keep good employees? Letters telling them they are great does not put food on the table or presents under the tree. I hope the B.O.R. sees that this issue has gathered support for our great employees and on December 19th revisits this issue. It is okay to take a 10th step and let people know you are human.

My best to you all during this holiday season.

Tom M. - Area 2 - Chairman Board of Trustees

12/8/08 - 2:00 PM

I have read with interest all the mailings about the year end bonus, for the employees.

First let me say I am so disgusted with the actions on the B O R. When I first read the minutes I wanted to spit nails. Having served 3 terms on the B O R and knowing some of these things, it makes me really mad. First since when does 4 month equate to a year?.Second how many of you on the board go over and above like the employees at the I S O. I have spent time at the office watching them.

Then I read that members of the board Abstain from the vote. Why are you being voted in if you cant make a decision.

Having said that. I along with so many others urge the B O R to correct the situation. I honestly believe you are making a huge mistake. You are also sending the employees a message that you don't care about all the service they give us. Just take the money from the \$1,600 you saved this month.

Thank you for listening.
Liz N. - Area 3 Trustee - Las Vegas, NV

12/8/08 - 2:11 PM

I have to admit that I hadn't read the Trustee Line for December yet. When I caught wind of what was going on regarding the reduction of the ISO employees bonuses I immediately read all the emails to date. I have very strong feelings on this.

On Wednesday, November 26th, the day before Thanksgiving without the

knowledge of any of this I sent an email to the ISO employees expressing my thanks. My thanks for the everyday hustle and bustle that is the running of the ISO. In years gone by I was thankful but never really had "a clue" just exactly how much goes on in that office. Over the past four years I have had an up front and close picture of what goes on there now. The making of the 50 year history book for the 50th anniversary of G.A. found me in that office several times in the course of the three years I did research for it. I was amazed at the daily volume of business that went through that office while I was there. At first I thought wow I must of caught them on a particular busy day. Sometimes staying three days at a time I quickly realized that was an everyday occurrence.

I for one don't wait to thank them till a holiday arrives. Bob W. was correct in saying if we paid Karen H. what she was worth it would be considerably more than she now makes. I have seen her in action there in the office, I know that her hours extend well into the night frequently, and that many nights the workload goes home with her. This in no way reflects on the work the other three employees Israel, Lisa and Jason put in. They are also very loyal and dedicated to the job they are doing for our fellowship.

Not a day goes by since my involvement with the International Relations Committee that I don't stop and think about a suffering individual halfway around the world. I read these international emails on a daily basis as they are forwarded to my personal email account for our committee to address. The work that is done in that office is very vital, and we can't say it enough or overuse the term "it saves and restores lives".

I along with all my fellow Trustees think that this decision was a mistake and needs to be rectified. I do not believe with the statement that "Whats done is done" is true. The BOR needs to make it right, this isn't the opinion of just a few members.

I don't agree with the use of the sarcasm etc. in some of the emails but the sentiment behind them I do believe in. It concerns me that the Trustees will read these emails (those that do read the Trustee Line) but will the Regents? That thought is leading me to send this to John C. the Chairman of the BOR. We are all human and we make mistakes, being willing to revisit and make corrections sends a message that integrity still exists.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and especially those four at the ISO.

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee
IRC member

12/8/08 - 6:22 PM

When I came into the program, I had a pressure relief. One of the main lessons I learned was not make rash decisions with my finances since I had a tendency not to think things all the way though. Perhaps the BOR needs a reminder. I do believe that the BOR acted in what they thought was the best interest of the program. However, I couldn't disagree more with the decision. I understand that ISO has been running a deficit the last few months, but the bonuses would probably equate to less than 2% of our current reserves.

We also have to look at the potential impacts of employees with low morale (not to say the ISO employees would ever be unprofessional). Perhaps they will become dissatisfied and decide to look for other employment options. Would we be able to find new employees as qualified as the current staff? What would it cost to hire and train them? What happens to the ISO office while we are shorthanded?

The ISO office is often the first contact GA has with the compulsive gambler that still suffers. Isn't worth the money to ensure the best people possible are there to begin someone on the journey of recovery? I think so and I hope you do too.

Jeff F. - Area 8 Trustee

12/8/08 - 11:20 PM

Wow!!! I would like to say that I am shocked. However, since cutting the end of the bonus was a decision made by the BOR, I simply am just not shocked.

Saddened, disgusted, appalled those would be better adjectives to describe the feelings I got after reading the minutes and the reactions of the current Board of Regents. I can't really add much more to what has been said about this matter. If the year-end bonus was already included in the budget...then for crying out loud, give these dedicated employees the bonus they deserve.

However, once again it seems the BOR is using the powers they possess to keep us all on their strings. I spoke about this months ago, right after the election of the BOR. We elect these people to take care of the finances of our fellowship and the reality is there is not a thing we can do when we don't like the way they are operating. It seems on a few different occasions the BOR has acted in ways that were not in the best

interest of Gamblers Anonymous. I am happy to say that at least now the hot line system has been fixed, but the bottom line is, ISO should never have been paying 19,000.00 plus dollars a year for the system and if the BOR made the decision not to change...we couldn't do a thing about it.

It seems as Bob W. said in his submission...let it go! This is exactly what the BOR wants us to do when we are not happy with their decisions. I'm thrilled to see that we are not letting this go. Our voices are all that we really have when it comes to dealing with the BOR. We need to let them know when we are not satisfied with the job they are doing and hope that if enough of us speak up against them that they will humble themselves to remember that they are working for the fellowship.

I hope those who made this decision to reduce the end of the bonus will hear the voices of the members. Our ISO is the lifeline to our fellowship. These folks work diligently day in and day out to help GA worldwide. Give them thanks and give them the 4% bonus that was budgeted in for them...or just use the money that was saved from the hotline ☺

Happy Holidays
Dina P. - Area 6B

12/9/08 - 10:06 AM
Aloha

What an amazing outpouring of support for the ISO office staff via the TrusteeLine. With a monthly payroll of 10,911.80 per month (based on September budget in the November bulletin), a 4% bonus on an annual basis would come to approximately \$5280 per year for four employees. The reduction to 1.6% reduces total bonus dollars to approximately \$2090 or a savings of \$3190. It was stated by others that the full 4% was budgeted for 2008. Additionally as stated by others ISO expenditures will decrease by \$1600 due to Erlanger hotline payments completed as of 12/08. By the end of February of 2009 the bonus obligations could have been covered. I am many miles from the day to day operational finances of ISO. However, the impact to employees morale is high as they had to know the money was budgeted. The BOR should reconsider their decision. The efforts expected from ISO have increased greatly due to new literature approvals, etc. The efficiency demonstrated by ISO office employees when a new meeting starts in one of our areas is world class.

It has to be extremely difficult to predict and expect contributions to stay at historical levels. Charities throughout the country are experiencing significant contribution decreases in 2008 and expect 2009 to be worse, so the BOR certainly has to manage accordingly for the future.

There are significant profits in our literature, but it may require higher prices in the future to balance the budgets. But those decisions are down the road.

Currently, we are only looking for \$3190 for full bonus for 2008. Look and ye shall find.

Please restore the full 4% bonus as employee morale is PRICELESS, especially for underpaid employees living in a high cost of living area.

Bill S. - Trustee area 3B - Colorado, Wyoming and parts of Utah

12/9/08 - 11:46 AM
RE: Bonuses for the ISO Employees
I am sure that these employees who work so hard for us were counting on the 4% Bonus. We should do the right thing and give them what they deserve. Let us not be "Bah Humbug". Wishing everybody a happy holiday season.

Mike R. - Area 15

12/9/08 - 12:08 PM
This is a first for me.
I have never sent anything to the trustee website although I have been a trustee for many years.
Needless to say how upset I was about reducing the bonuses for the ISO employees who work so diligently all year long to run a smooth organization without any qualms.
I feel it was unfair to pull this off.
I know I depend upon my yearly bonus to make life a little easier and if my employer pulled that on me I would not be a happy camper.
I think the BOR should do a little step 10 of the Recovery Program and admit the mistake.

Carol L. - Trustee area 12

12/9/08 - 3:04 PM
I have just read the Board of Regents minutes and noticed that the bonuses for the office staff have been reduced. I believe this is a wrong decision.

Although I live in Australia I have had to contact the ISO many times. I

have been impressed by our staff. They are a credit to the fellowship. I am confident that when a struggling compulsive gambler makes that first call to the ISO they will be treated in a way that reflects well on all of us.

I accept that GA has had a bad year financially. Cutting wages is an easy way of cutting expenditure but I believe it is wrong that the financial burden should fall on the few people who rely on GA financially, especially when they are such fine ambassadors for us.

I would like you to ask the Board of Regents to reconsider their decision.

Yours in fellowship
Andy D. - Trustee, Area 18 - Australia

12/9/08 - 4:06 PM
Board of Regents:
Recovery Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it! Let me cut to the chase. Just change the bonuses from 1.6% to 5% and I think everyone will have a much happier holidays.

With love and happy holidays to all,
Ronny W. - Area 17 Connecticut

12/9/08 - 9:05 PM
Are we kidding here BOR? Is this really where we need to cut corners? Who are you to take from the mouths of those who I believe are under paid in the first place? Anytime I call ISO they (all of them) diligently work to find an answer to any question that I may have and I call a lot. I believe without these ISO workers GA would come to a screeching halt. In this time of financial in our country we need to take care of those who take care of us. I'm a small business owner myself and my fixed costs have skyrocketed but I still intend to give the same bonuses to my employees who have served my family and I so well throughout the year. Even if that means a few less dinners out for my own family. I know they are employees and get paid for the work they do but i also know that those holiday bonuses are figured into the budget for a lot of families. GIVE 'EM WHAT THEY DERSERVE. A happy employee will serve us so much better then a resentful LETS take our heads out of the sand or wherever else the are stuck and do the right.

With all due respect,

Yours in recovery,
Matt H. - Area 16 Trustee - Upstate New York

12/10/08 - 3:02 PM
Hello all,

I just had a long discussion with one of my fellow trustee about the bonuses to our ISO staff. Although I had reservation at first about trying to influence a decision taken by some of our Trusted Servants, I have to reconsider my position.

I just read all the posts on this subject and, while I feel that some of them are very blunt, to say the least, I now feel the need to add my voice to those asking the BOR to change their decision. How much would it cost to pay our ISO employees for their overtime ? Without having all the proper figures, I suspect it would be much more than 4%. Reinstating the bonus to last year's level is only fair, taking into consideration the fact that we do not pay overtime.

So, please BOR, put this item back on your Dec. 19th agenda and reconsider.

André G. - Trustee Area 5B - French Quebec

12/10/08 - 5:13 PM
To all my brothers and sisters in our wonderful program. I am not an elegant writer like some of those that have sent messages before me, but here goes.

As per what the BOR has done this year for bonuses for our employees that work at the ISO is ludicrous. They give of their time and energy to keep the office working like a well oiled machine, putting in extra effort and time without asking for anything in return.

Unfortunately. Most of us cannot go to the ISO everyday and see what these folks do each and every day, rain or shine. If they did not do all of their work with a smile on their faces we would not be able to continue to get the message out to the people who are still suffering and of course the brothers and sisters that are trying to have a better way of life, only because they are following the program that is held up by the BOT and BOR.

I believe the BOR should revisit this decision and do the right thing for the people that have busted their tails all year for us, the brothers and sisters of the program.

Arnie B. - Area 8 Trustee and past BOR member

12/10/08 - 5:39 PM

Wow, I'm sure members of the BOR are probably thinking that we're beating a dead horse... I'm amazed at the number of submissions on this subject. But it goes to show how passionate we are, as a fellowship, to do the right thing. What message are we sending to the office employees by cutting back at their expense? I know that every year I count on my bonus in planning for my holiday shopping. To make a decision like this a month before the holidays is in poor taste. I don't agree with cutting back at all. They are invaluable. If we need more money - spread THAT message. Ask for more support. I plan on doing my part in promoting greater donations for the ISO because I'd rather be part of a positive solution than dwell in the problem as the BOR has demonstrated. I have the most respect for our BOR members, but we're all human and we all make mistakes. In the spirit of the holiday season and our recovery program...PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING!

Happiest of Holidays to all my brothers and sisters,
Kathleen J. - Area 2G - Oregon

12/10/08 - 6:12 PM

I have read the prior submissions on this subject and agree that the decision to cut the bonus should be revisited and reconsidered. The LAST item that should be cut is the compensation we give to our staff. To not increase the bonus is one thing, but to take away something-- especially at the 11th hour is just not right. Karen, Israel, Jason, and Lisa in the office do an outstanding job and all the praise I have read here-- and more-- is most certainly deserved for all work that they do for GA.

Speaking negatively about the BOR, however, is not the way to accomplish anything. The BOR is in a very difficult and unenviable position. I believe their intentions are good and that they are doing the best job they can. I vastly prefer to let the BOR know that I strongly disagree with the decision, but to not make personal attacks against the BOR. How many of us regularly pay attention to the BOR or do things to help them out? This certainly points out the need for more involvement. In the same minutes, I noted that the BOR voted to continue to provide the current health care insurance to the employees at an 11.12% increase. Let's give them some credit for not trying to push off the additional cost on the employees as many businesses are doing.

I have served for many years on the board of directors for another not for profit and I agree that bonuses are really not the way to go. Certainly, I think that the BOR should look at increasing salaries as they are much deserved; and if salaries are properly increased, the bonus could be discontinued--with appropriate advance notice. But how can the BOR increase salaries---and do all the other things the BOR is asked to "make happen" on behalf of GA-- if the funds are not there?

What this discussion also clarifies to me is how much more effort current and past Trustees must make to do more fundraising. Fundraising is a difficult task and one that not many of us, including myself, want to address. What better way to show our support for the outstanding work of the ISO office than to redouble our efforts to support ISO financially. How can we ask others to give if we are not giving ourselves? If you are not a life liner--why not---I mean really ask yourself why not?! With a few possible rare exceptions, no one with two years of clean time or more in this program can tell me that they cannot find a minimum of \$5 to \$10 per month to contribute to ISO. If you are a life liner, when was the last time you increased your donation?

Fundraising is a difficult issue for many organizations and especially so for GA. I know that there is much more I can do in my area to make this issue a priority. I know from personal experience that it is a "tough sell" in many areas and that members are for some reason VERY reluctant to give to ISO. After a while is it so discouraging that I simply stop talking about it. Well, now is the time for me to begin talking about it again.

Michelle J. - Past Trustee Area 8B

12/10/08 - 8:20 PM

Dear all

I have lived through all of the N.S.O.,G.S.O.,I.S.O. changes & employees-paid & unpaid.

As a member of the B.O.R. I attended a meeting on 12/19/1969. Our balance (total \$) at that time was \$692.34. At that meeting we voted to spend \$84 (12% of our worth) to purchase a answering service.

Now I did a little math and if We have a payroll of \$10,000/month 4% would be \$4,800 -1.6% would be \$2,600-the differance would be \$2,200-assuming 10,000 members that's 22 cents/member-maybe the BOR would like us to send in the 22 cents each to solve the problem. But maybe the BOR is sending out a message--

The employees did not do a good job

They want to get new employees

The Employees are overpaid

They don't want to set a precedent

We don't have the money
Our monthly expenses are going up

Lets get with it the BOR has already had three votes on this subject-why not a Fourth? Revisit this again

Also what are these %s please tell me what this is in real \$s

Our employees should get more than 4% not less

My Best to all for the holiday season

Bill B - Area 15 - New York

12/10/08 - 11:26 PM

To all G.A. Brothers and Sisters, and to the B.O.R.,

My Name is George L. from New Jersey and a past trustee for Area 12. I do not get into the "Politics" of G.A. I sincerely believe in program and fellowship that's what we're all about! (I hope).

Upon reading the decision that the BOR made regarding bonuses, I think they are entirely wrong. Let it be known that I respect each and every member on the BOR. Some are really personal friends of mine. But again, I do not agree with their decision.

As for Karen, Jason, Israel and Lisa let me say I know them personally and have visited the ISO office on many occasions. They work very hard and are truly dedicated people! Something that is VERY RARE these days. I have been to about 40 national conferences over the years. Anyone who has ever attended one of these conferences knows how hard Karen works. She is not there on vacation, but to keep track of all the things that go on at the trustee meeting. Not a very easy task for anyone!!!!

Her staff keeps the ISO office fully functional in her absence. Again, I say trusted and dedicated employees!! I do not know how much a 4% bonus amounts too but it is well deserved. Please revisit your decision and give them their due.

If money is the issue, than let everyone of us "STEP UP TO THE PLATE". Increase our lifeliner donation, ask your local Intergroup to increase their donations or raise the price on all GA literature if needed. We are not about money, and I hope we never will be! Make it mandatory that ALL National Trustees MUST be a lifeliner. I am sure that would more than cover the holiday bonuses.

Let's support our people at ISO, they are the lifeline of the fellowship.

George L - Area 12 Past Trustee - New Jersey

Note from the Website Admin: I think it's important for everyone who reads the Trustee Line to understand what George's submission really means. You can agree or disagree with the topic, George's answers or any other points he raises, but I know that George does not have a computer. So for him to submit something for the Trustee Line through another member, just underscores his conviction for what he wrote. This is the essence of what the Trustee Line is about - letting the rest of the Trustees know when you need guidance with something, what you think needs to be done, and letting others know right from wrong.

12/10/08 - 11:34 PM

As a recent former member of the BOR, I am compelled to weigh in on the current Board's decision to cut the year end bonus for the ISO employees. The Holiday bonus was included in the Annual Budget that was reviewed and approved by the prior Board. I am not aware of any extraordinary expenses that have been incurred by ISO since my departure earlier this year to warrant a deviation from that approved Budget. Also, it is my understanding that the total ISO cash which includes savings is actually greater than it was about 1 year ago.

In addition, literature prices have been increased. The monthly financials that are presented at BOR meetings are based on cash flow and does not take into account the increase in literature inventory on hand. I suspect that all these items were not taken into account in the current decision to slash the year end bonus.

Notwithstanding the financials, our Unity principle requires the Fellowship to employ special workers. Do we truly treat these "special" workers, accordingly. If our primary purpose is to carry the message of hope to those who still suffer, how can this be done without these "special" workers? Employee morale is key in today's difficult times and it is vitally important to keep key and talented personnel. This retention can only be accomplished with proper recognition and compensation that can be relied upon on a consistent basis.

I implore the current BOR to carefully review their conscience and seriously reconsider the impact of their decision making in the lives of these ISO "special" workers. I for one, would be willing to step up my ISO contribution to support these employees who are reliable and depended upon to fill Area 9's literature order every month on a timely basis.

Peace & love,
Daryl R. - Area 9 - Michigan

12/11/08 - 11:40 AM

I think the BOR has heard the desires of past and present Trustees loud and clear. I believe when they made the decision to cut bonuses to 1.6% they were doing what they believed was for the best interests of GA. I too hope they will come up with a way to make things right. Some years ago there was a real problem between the BOT and the BOR. When Tom M became Chairman of the BOT he found a way to bring these 2 boards together and things were really good for several years.

I have no objection to the many letters on the Trustee Line asking the BOR to revisit year end bonuses but I do have a problem with the letters with name calling and insinuations of the BOR doing things that were not in the best interests of Gamblers Anonymous. Things have gotten to the point where members in So. California are refusing to serve on the BOR. Although I am not on the BOR this year but was on the board the previous 2 years have been subjected to name calling and harassment. The job just doesn't pay enough for me to put up with the aggravation.

I know we can get our points across without being harsh and try to understand what the BOR members have to go through. Lets try to give a little respect to the 9 members that you the BOT elected to serve on the BOR. Most of you have proven that you can do just that.

Best

Bob W. - Former Trustee Area 1

12/11/08 - 12:10 PM

"TIME FOR ACTION"

I have just finished rereading the trustee line submissions and am very pleased that every one is supportive of the ISO employees and the fact that they are all underpaid. It is obvious to me now that the BOR will change their decision and give the 4% bonuses that are needed and deserved. However I have not yet seen a submission from anyone on the BOR either defending their decision, or admitting that they made a mistake, and, will correct this mistake. (a true step 10 as we know it.) Doesn't any one of the current BOR members have the courage to step forward and take the initiative to try to right the wrong. Show us that our program really works and that making amends is an important step that should be taken as soon as we realize that we were wrong. We would all have a better holliday season if we saw "now" that our collective opinions are being taken seriously and not have to wait until we receive the minutes from the December 19 BOR meeting.

Waiting patiently for the real BOR to step forward,

Herb B - Trustee Area 5

2nd. Co-chair, Board of Trustees.

12/11/08 - 4:17 PM

My fellow brothers and sisters,

As current Co-Chair of the BOR and a past Trustee, I feel an overwhelming responsibility to respond to your letters regarding the decrease in bonuses for our ISO employees.

First, let me say that this decision was very painful for me on many levels, both personally and as a member of Gamblers Anonymous. I feel very strongly about this issue, not only philosophically but financially as well. What I'd like to do is share part of a letter with you which addresses these feelings. I thank you so much for your love and concern, we've taken a beating here and deservedly so; hopefully we can make it right. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me any time.

Sincerely,

Steve K. - Area 1 - Los Angeles

What is the mission of a non-profit? Everything should ultimately be directed at serving our members. They are our consumers, if you will. So everything that we do in the office should revolve around how to better serve our members. Our staff, especially Karen, is critical in making sure that our members are connected and well cared for. She is personally involved in the care and well being of everyone who needs help or clarification or support. So values should always be our driving force and the bottom line should be the realization of a social mission.

We should be measuring our success in terms of how our fellowship is being served, and I think that the current staff is doing an amazing job. The fellowship is NOT getting smaller, the problem is NOT decreasing and the fact is, there has not been a slowdown of any sort in our office. Our staff is working harder for us and most importantly, for our fellowship, than they ever have. Small offices face extra challenges in planning, organizing, motivating and guiding. Things that should be simple and easy to take care of (ISO website upgrade) take on extra dynamics, such as a need for skilled outside consultants and multi-level approval.

One of the main problems for a small non-profit is in getting and keeping an excellent director and to a lesser degree, staff. I don't know about you, but I believe that our staff is underpaid, especially Karen.

Someone may cite the percentage of our operating budget being devoted to payroll expenses but again, it's not to be measured in dollars and cents but in how our membership is being served by our office. Can anyone tell me that Karen isn't deserving of her salary? We're fortunate to have someone so dedicated to doing what is best for all of our fellowship. This isn't a job to her, she cares more about the people that pay her salary than we do, as she takes care of them every single day.

We are currently \$24,000.00 in the red after four months. It doesn't appear good but what is the reality? We've been here before as recently as two years ago. Why? Because of a large literature purchase. We've replaced dollars in the bank with literature on the shelf. It's not a loss of money. If we want to do this correctly and not just react to the overall economic situation, we should get an accurate picture of the office: see if our can donations are down, if Lifeline donations are down, if the fellowship is shrinking and if there's less work to do in the office, before we start putting the hurt on people who have been so good to us. Frankly, I was blindsided by this and feel ashamed about trying to save \$3,000.00 at the expense of our employee's feelings. I don't believe that they're lucky to have a job and find that thought shameful as well. We're lucky to have them doing our good bidding and feel that they're perfect ambassadors for Gamblers Anonymous.

12/11/08 - 4:46 PM

In my 31 years in and out of the GA fellowship I have never seen such a snowball effect of emotional responses from the Board of Trustees on one specific issue. And I have seen motions to change the Steps, what to do about felony theft of GA money, the trial and subsequent banishment of a GA member for life. But never an overwhelming response from this Board like I've seen in the past week.

I know as well as any member the dedication, hard work and expertise that Karen and her staff perform day in and day out. I know this because I have witnessed it. During the 6 years that I was an officer of the BOT I made it a point to spend one week each summer in Los Angeles and went to work as a volunteer each day at the ISO. It was a pleasure to see the professionalism that took place from each of the staff.

That being said, and openly admitting that I was a catalyst in what Bob W. referred to as a "real problem between the BOR and the BOT" back in the 90's. Although I believe that back then and still today the trusted servants of each board have made decisions based on what they felt was best for the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous.

I am sure that the current BOR made their decision feeling that what they were doing was best for GA as a whole. I have no intention to suggest or demand that anyone do anything about this item. That is for the respective boards to decide. I would only like to repeat what Brother Daryl pointed out. IF this 4% bonus was ALREADY BUDGETED then it would be certainly understandable that the employees would be counting on that bonus. Barring of course any financial disaster during the year. I have not heard of that in these writings. Therefore, if the Board wishes to decrease the amount of bonuses, then budget that increase NEXT year when those involved would be notified well in advance. But this year, in my humble opinion, the bonus should stand as budgeted.

Sincerely,
Danny M. - Area 8 - Island Lake, Illinois
Former chairman BOT

12/11/08 - 5:03 PM
My Fellowship Members,

Where is our sense of program? Have we learned anything in recovery???? Can we stop beating a DEAD HORSE? This is like when I use to bet on a horse that was ready for the glue factory and betting it to win first place. How many letters will it take? Do we not think the BOR have heard your message - loud and clear? To ask for the BOR to make it right at this VERY moment is crazy. Their meeting is next week and I am positive they will take all of this support. I have spoken to John C, Chair of BOR, and this item is already on the schedule. Nothing can be done prior to that - so please stop beating the dead horse. Let all of us be the trusted servants we are suppose to be.

This is the BOR of nine fellow GA members that are in the same program you are. It is so obvious that this decision was based on finance. Why was it not 1.7 or 1.8? Was it right - NO, in my view - but it was the body that came to the final outcome. Just like the BOT - do I like all the final votes - NO but that is what makes this program so great. How many times has there been a vote that "just" passed by one or two votes. Does everyone like it - NO - but we move on. The BOT were not there at the BOR meeting and does not know what the process of this vote - just like our members are not present at the BOT meeting and don't understand some of the vote process. IT IS WHAT IT IS.

LOOK - THE BOR ARE OUR FELLOW GA MEMBERS and we are beating them like a dead horse and when they are down. Please stop the bad name calling and pointing out what they now know was wrong from your own cry's. ALLOW THE PROCESS TO HAPPEN and let's see what the will

happen. UNITY FIRST, this bad name calling letters is not what I have learned. Please respect one another.

Meanwhile, Let all of us start figuring out how we ALL can step up to the plate to help support our ISO better than what we have and not stop beating up the BOR.

Gary S. - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/11/08 - 5:55 PM
Dear Fellow members:

I made a mathematical mistake in my prior post-there were FIVE prior votes on this subject not 3 as I stated .
I'm sure that the members of the BOR have more & better info than I do.
I do not understand why names are recorded for abstentions and not for the yeas & nays-the Chair does not vote unless there is a tie, however none of the FIVE votes recorded 9 votes. I would think that the entire BOR should be able to vote on an issue.
Let me also state the the members of the BOR are not mean, dumb or in any way trying to hurt our Fellowship. I just feel that their vote was wrong & sent the wrong message.
I have encountered resistance many times when I tried to get Lifeliners &/or get specific groups to contribute to ISO and the main reason that is voiced is "we don't need any more money"
The financials in our monthly show a lot of \$ and no explanation as to what the money is doing or what it's going to be used for.
One thing about this item that is very interesting to me was the fact that about 15 members who are not current trustees took the effort not only to read about what was going on but to respond.

Bill B. - Area 15 - New York

12/12/08 - 10:52 AM
Hi everybody,

I'm so glad by seeing the postings of 48, as I write this, to the Trustee Line by the BOR not approving the 4% year end bonuses, which were part of the budget that was approved before. I hope to see another 100 ...even if the author on the posting "Beating A Dead Horse" doesn't approve. Also his statement, Nothing can be done prior to the next meeting of the BOR on DEC 19th is wrong. It was nice to hear that the item is on their agenda, but why doesn't the Chair of the BOR call for a SPECIAL MEETING, as stated in our By_Laws Article 7, Section #6, and this could have gone away already. I hope and agree with Herb's posting that we don't have to wait until the minutes come out to find out how, if they do take another vote. Also I really don't see as some people do any bad name calling. What I do see is what is a great outpouring of our program working with the tools we have, and I don't believe that any of this or things in the past was what has been called "Washwomen Line". So please keep the postings coming until the BOR does the right thing.

Joe B. - Area 6C Trustee - North Carolina

12/12/08 - 2:32 PM
Hello everyone, I am writing to you about the information that i received about the ISO employee's Christmas bonuses.

It is my feeling that these people work so hard all year long that, if I may, they should receive the same percentage as last year's bonus. I in Canada understand the problems with the recession in the United States, but without those personnel the services we received would not have been the same. So if I am asked my opinion, we should pay the same thing as last year as a minimum.

Thanks for reading.
Jean Marc L. - Past Trustee 5B - French Quebec

12/12/08 - 8:04 PM
To my fellow Trustees,

For years I have read the Trustee Line with great interest. Sharing the many views from other Trustees with the members of my area. However, this is the first time I felt a need to share my thoughts on this forum.

Through this program, I have learned many things, but I might just be missing something.... Since reading these posts, I have gone back to my GA literature to see where it says its ok for me to call names, point fingers and most importantly decide that my way is the only way.... This is the way I reacted when I was in action or worse yet, can you imagine "abstinence without recovery".....

Although I do not agree with nor understand the decisions made by the BOR in respect to the lack of bonuses, I do understand that their job is no easy task. The BOR are also my brothers and sisters suffering from the very same illness I have. For that reason and that reason alone, they deserve the same respect and dignity we would offer a new member walking into our room for the first time.

There is no doubt about the amount of dedication, commitment and time

that these four individuals put into our program. Do they deserve the bonus? ABSOLUTELY. Do they deserve a raise? ABSOLUTELY. Do they deserve accolades from every member of this program? ABSOLUTELY. I don't think anyone, especially the members of the BOR are arguing this fact. I think their decision was based on financials only, warranted or not.

As our fellowship grows, we will be faced with many critical decisions. It is our duty as trusted servants to not only look out for the better welfare of our fellowship, but to also be living examples of how this program works. It works with Honesty, openmindedness and willingness. Honest enough to have made a difficult decision in the first place, openminded enough to realize there may be other factors involved (not just financially) and finally willingness to make a change when necessary.

It is also important to note that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. This stands true whether you are Secretary of a room, an Intergroup Chair, a member of the BOR or a member of the BOT. It is clear that this body overwhelmingly has a difference in opinion and believes that not only do our employees deserve the 4% bonus, but that we are being financially responsible in giving it to them. If it can be shown to us that we are wrong on either account, please let us know. If not, please reconsider.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year!!!

Yours in Recovery,
Andy R - Area 13B - South Jersey

12/13/08 - 7:37 PM
Hello Everyone

A simple step 10 for the BOR is all that is needed to fix this. I am sure that the BOR has heard our voices.

Thank you to Karen, Jason, Israel, and Lisa for their hard work all year.

Wishing everyone a Great Holiday.

J.R. E - Area 5A Trustee - Atlantic Canada

12/14/08 - 10:14 AM
Hello everyone

I have read what the present and former trustees have said regarding the decrease in bonuses to Karen and her staff at the ISO and would like to offer the following.

I have always experienced that giving employees who work hard, well deserved bonuses at the end of the year, and not reducing these bonuses when the continued good effort is produced. It's almost like a slap in the face to all the individuals involved, who look forward to these additional monies not only to pay for things they buy for their families during the holiday season, but knowing it was acknowledged that they performed their jobs at a very high standard.

I feel it's time to turn a negative into a positive as I my dear father Mitch R. would always say. It's time for the Board of Regents to shine. That being said, I feel it's in order for the Board of Regents to give a letter to all the employees of ISO stating that they are restoring to each one of them their full bonuses, and that they truly appreciate all the hard work they did during the year of 2008 and look forward to working with them hand in hand in 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Marshall R. - Trustee Area 12 - New Jersey

12/14/08 - 3:19 PM
Dear Fellow Trustees, After hearing about the recent approval of a reduced holiday bonus for the ISO employees I was at first shocked then stunned into immobility.

I have come to my senses and can now reposnd accordingly.

This error in judgement could and should be rectified ASAP. Our ISO employees deserve better than this and of course as the subject of this thread/post says, "Money is not our problem."

To the BOR, please rectify this immediately.

With Serenity,
Ed K. - Area 1 - Southern California

12/14/08 - 6:25 PM
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have taken time in reading the responses on the Trustee Line and the various emails and had discussions with older wiser members here in Australia.

I think the BOR has made the right decision at the last meeting. They are Trusted Servants who first duty is to the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous to make sure of its well being. In our 4th Step it talks about a moral and financial inventory. Are the BOR not doing this in reviewing the financial accounts of Gamblers Anonymous? Any business which does not review its cash flow suffers. We are entering a new time around the world with the financial crisis. This will impact on GA as a whole as people will review their expenditure and hence their Unity 7 offerings. For me and other senior members that I have spoken to here in Australia they believe this decision must not have been easy though it is prudent and healthy.

I do whole heartedly believe that our wonderful staff is very deserved of bonuses. The question is how can the Fellowship support this? This is the question that every Trustee, RSO, Intergroup, group and member must ask of itself. I think this is the question that needs to be discussed and solutions placed forward. Here in Australia GA has just celebrated its 48th Birthday. When I entered GA some 9 years ago here in Queensland, Australia we had no real connection with the ISO, no literature was purchased and no monies were sent. Today we buy all literature from the ISO direct and send an amount of \$50 US every quarter. I ask that all Trustees ask themselves honestly if there RSO, Intergroup, Group and members are supporting the Fellowship as per Unity Step 7? I think from reviewing the bulleting over the last 5 years that answer would be not. There is no growth in Literature sales that I can see over the last 5 years? (That is another issue for another Trustee Line submission)

So instead of engaging in personality attack and sarcasm I offer a solution. That we have a worldwide special collection each year at every group with which all funds are sent directly to the ISO. We might call it Founders Day. Certainly the issue of how the Fellowship can support the work of ISO and its wonderful staff should be our focus. It is not the BOR who has let them down but every member in our Fellowship for not supporting ISO. Because of this we placed the BOR in the position of acting on behalf the Fellowship in this manner.

Go well
David McA. - Aussie Brother - Area 18B

12/14/08 - 7:58 PM
To the Board of Regents,

I write, as one of the Trustees for Area 18, to express my disappointment on learning of the Board of Regents' decision to reduce the Christmas bonuses for the I.S.O. salaried staff members.

My own direct contact with the I.S.O. office staff has, so far, been only that involved in my recent appointment as a Trustee.

But I am aware that the volunteers, who staff the New South Wales R.S.O. office, have nothing but praise for the prompt, helpful and always efficient responses they receive from the I.S.O. office team, in their regular contacts with them.

I am also aware that, when our financial situation fluctuates from year to year, we have never even considered reducing the travel allowance that is the only recompense our office volunteers receive.

Loyal and efficient staff should be recognised as one of the most valued assets that any organisation can have. Add to those two qualities the expectation, that we both share, that our office staff will always reflect, in the day to day performance of their duties, the special needs of an organisation such as G.A., and we have an asset beyond value.

It is my sincere hope that the Board of Trustees will reconsider its decision and pay the I.S.O. office staff their customary Christmas bonuses.

Yours in fellowship,
Ron Mac - Trustee, Area 18 - Australia

12/14/08 - 8:52 PM
As a new trustee, it is hard to voice an opinion, but since I am from the Los Angeles area, and have been to the ISO office, I know how hard all of the employees work. Without their efforts throughout the year, the office doesn't function. I think their dedication to Gamblers Anonymous goes a long way, and they should definitely be compensated for that.

I am definitely in favor of reinstating the bonuses back to the level that they previously were at. If anything, they should have either remained the same or increased.

Thank you.
Steve F. - Area 1 - Los Angeles

12/14/08 - 10:50 PM
Hi everyone!

It's generally known in our Fellowship that the salaries paid to the 4 ISO employees are below average for comparable positions at most other

companies, even at other organizations in the non-profit sector.

So although a bonus payment made to an employee is generally a discretionary pay-by-performance bonus, in the case of our Fellowship the nature of the 4% budgeted holiday bonus is essentially considered a component of annual salary due to below-average compensation paid to the ISO staff. Therefore, by reducing the bonuses by 2.4%, the annual salary of each staff member is effectively being reduced by the same percentage.

The Board of Regents is expected to use sound judgment and apply reasonable, consistent, justifiable and fiscally sound criteria when making bonus payment decisions. To this end, I urge the Board of Regents to revisit the bonus matter at the December 19 meeting and for each and every Regent to reverse his or her decision to reduce the holiday bonus, and ultimately yield to "doing the right thing".

Sincerely,
Sandy T. - Past Trustee - Area 2 Northern California
Past Member - Board of Regents

12/14/08 - 10:14 PM

I was thoroughly disgusted with the BOR in reducing the bonuses of the staff that keeps the entire membership of Gamblers Anonymous intact and moving forward. I STRONGLY suggest that you listen to the members that have spoken already and revisit this issue with some compassion and heart.

Ian S. - Area 6D Trustee - Georgia

12/15/08 - 6:18 AM

\$3,000 divided by 100 Trustees is \$30. per Trustee, Let's get busy, I'm sure a copy of this discussion taken to any meeting will raise at least \$5, So it seems we all need to go to 6 meetings to solve this problem.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee - Northern California

12/15/08 - 9:01 AM

Hi everyone,

I feel the BOR has made an extremely short sighted decision by cutting back on the employee bonuses this year.

While I fully understand the need to manage our fellowships finances in a responsible manner I disagree with slapping our hard working employees in the face by cutting back on their annual bonus.

These four employees are very dedicated to serving the needs of our fellowship. The least we can do is give them a holiday bonus at least equal to what we gave them last year to show our appreciation for their hard work and dedication to our fellowship.

I feel the BOR should do the right thing by correcting their mistake and give our hard working employees the 4% bonus.

Greg M. - Trustee Area 13 - Philadelphia, PA

12/15/08 - 12:08 PM

Hi To All,

As I was reading the minutes from the BOR meeting, I went back 2 different times to re-read the results of the vote for the ISO bonuses, thinking that I had misread the "Failed" status. Nothing that I had read up to that point (on the financial side of it) gave me any understanding for this decision. I honestly believed that there must have been some underlying reason (that would make the approval of the ISO bonuses impossible) that I was not aware of.

I read all of the responses on the Trustee Line hoping to find one from the BOR that might clarify the reason for their decision, but found none.

Do I agree that the BOR is making a statement to us all on the value of the employees at the ISO, by not approving their bonuses, ABSOLUTELY NOT. The BOR are not the bad guys.

I will not put them on a pedestal and forget that they too are in recovery, the same as me. I find myself many times in simple life situations, where the ol' tunnel vision sets in and it isn't always easy to think outside of the box. This is where practicing my recovery comes in. What makes the BOR any different ?

It's very comforting, considering the content of soooo many postings before mine, that I am not alone in my daily struggle to Place Principles Before Personalities .

My FAITH in this program reassures me that "The Right Thing" will be done, just not always at the time that I think it should be.

Could someone please tell me, what do the holidays have to do with any of this? Would it be different after the 1st of the year??

One more thing... the subject of "beating a dead horse" has been mentioned. I myself don't deem the 1st response to any specific topic more important than the 50th. If there are 115 Trustees, I would love to see 115 postings on every topic here on the Trustee Line!!!!

HERE'S WISHING A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON FULL OF THE MIRACLES OF RECOVERY TO YOU ALL, GOD BLESS
DEBB W. - AREA 2G - Oregon

12/15/08 - 2:57 PM
Attention BOR:

It is with great concern that I am learning that you have approved a measure in the ISO Budget to give a bonus of 4% to the employees and have now decided to reduce this year end bonus to 1.6%

I understand that the original 4% was voted on, and agreed to, in the December 4th minutes. It comes to my attention that on the agenda for the December 19th meeting it has been decided to bring this decision up again and make the aforementioned change to 1.6%. I find this shocking. I do not recall anything like this ever happening before. What is the criteria for this change? The employees of ISO deserve and have already been informed of the 4% allotment.

I urge you to withdraw this item from the agenda or to defeat this 1.6% change.

Ray H. - Area 6 - S. Florida

12/15/08 - 4:02 PM
To all,

Find a way to make Christmas Bonus's work for our ISO office staff. Anything is better than nothing, take my work for it. I have been with companies that pay them and ones that do not. I always speak highly of the ones that did!

They are very hard working and supportive. WE could not do this without them.

Chris (tine) G. - Area 2H - Western Washington

12/15/08 - 4:45 PM

I am very upset to hear that the BOR is going to give a smaller Bonus to the ISO employees. I think it is not in the holiday spirit and that all who voted to lower it should be ashamed. I hope you will rethink your decision and get with the HOLIDAY SPIRIT and give them the BONUS you had allotted for.

Walt H. - Area 17 - Connecticut

12/15/08 - 7:33 PM

I THINK THAT THE 4% THAT WAS GIVEN LAST YEAR SHOULD GO FOWARD, AND WE SHOULD TRY TO PUSH LIFE LINERS IN ALL OUR GROUPS . LETS ALL MAKE A PUSH & MAKE OUR MEMBERS MORE AWARE .

MATTY C. - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/15/08 - 9:53 PM

TO MY FELLOW GA MEMBERS AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS,

I AM WRITING THIS NOTE TO SUPPORT RESTORING THE 4% BONUS TO THE ISO STAFF. I TOO HAVE NEVER SEEN THIS AMOUNT OF RESPONSE TO AN ITEM ON THE TRUSTEE LINE. I THINK THIS RESPONSE SPEAKS VOLUMES TO THE RESPECT AND APPRECIATION WE FEEL FOR KAREN AND HER STAFF. I THINK THAT ANYTHING LESS THAN THE BUDGETED 4% WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE.

PEACE TO YOU ALL,
PAUL K. - PAST TRUSTEE AREA 9 - Michigan

12/16/08 - 4:55 PM

When I first heard about the cutback in the bonuses, I admit I did not see a problem. However, as I reflected on the issue some more, I realized that this was a bad decision by the BOR. Bonuses should reflect the hard work and dedication of the employees. Both of these are evident in the overworked employees of ISO. Taking away part of, what in essence is part of someones salary, to me, goes against the principles of the GA program. We can't let a poor economy be the basis for poor judgment.

Your in recovery,
Pete K. - Area 13B - South Jersey

12/16/08 - 10:58 PM
Hello everyone.

What an outpouring of feelings, convictions & compassion about the

BOR's decision! I am very happy to be involved in a program where we can agree to disagree. (mostly) I also would like to thank all members who serve in any capacity to help the compulsive gambler who still suffers. Like step 5 of the Unity Program says-"Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose-to carry the message of the compulsive gambler who stills suffers." That's our bottom line, and for the most part, the BOT & BOR do a pretty good job doing that for a bunch of liars-cheats & thieves!

I feel it's a privilege. An honor. And yes, an obligation to be able to serve on the BOT. I am blessed for having served for the last several years.

Our BOR made a decision. One I feel needs to be revisited and corrected as soon as possible. Thanks for all of your work. Correct the mistake, and let's move on.

Karen, Jason, Israel and Lisa do a great job. Let's show them how much we appreciate all their hard work! Give them that 4% or higher bonus.

I hope everyone has a truly merry Christmas and Holiday season.

Dennis A. - Area 6C Trustee for NC & SC.

12/16/08 - 11:31 PM

I wish to add my voice to the many who question the BOR decision to cut bonuses. I would urge the BOR to reconsider.

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

12/17/08 - 2:54 AM

Fellow Trustees,

I would like to comment about the decision of the BOR to reduce the year end bonuses for the ISO employees.

Let us all realize that the BOR is elected to oversee and be sure the ISO is operating in the most efficient and beneficial way for G A as a whole.

Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made. Reducing employee bonuses in our present economic environment was certainly prudent. There is no question we have an ISO staff that works very hard and has the best interest of G A at heart. The employees are to be paid for the day after the Christmas Holiday.

It is easy to second guess decisions without being privy to the discussion which took place at the BOR meeting. How many of us tried to contact John C, the BOR chairperson, to ask what was the thinking that motivated their decision?

I think people elected to make important decisions on our BOR or BOT should not abstain when voting. As difficult as an item may be, unless one has a conflict of interest or does not understand the issue, MAKE A DECISION, VOTE YES OR NO.

G A is a self-supporting fellowship. The best way that we as Trustees can help to financially support our ISO in these difficult times is to be consistent and regular Lifeliners and to encourage all the members of our groups and intergroups to contribute to the best of their abilities.

Let us remember Steps 5, 6, and 7 of our Unity Program and how they apply to this matter. Enough has been said about this decision of our elected BOR. Let us get on with other important issues that confront our fellowship. Remember, principles and unity for all of us before egos and personalities.

My very best wishes to all for Happy Holidays,

Your fellow Trustee,
David F. - Area 3A, San Diego

12/17/08 - 9:34 PM

Everyone makes mistakes..has momentary lapses of judgment...improperly assesses a situation. The Board of Regents has done just that. I'm sure they can revisit their decision and reinstate the proper bonuses for the incredible staff at ISO. I am in total agreement with the entire outpouring of letters in support of this issue. No need to restate the obvious. Just admit their mistake and rectify the wrong.

Happy Holidays.
Dave S. - Past Trustee Area 13 - Philadelphia

12/17/08 - 10:45 PM

As a gambler I would say most anything to get money from someone and or not pay what I promised. In recovery I make it a point to keep my word. In this situation I as part of the fellowship. I gave my word as an approved budget that I would give a bonus of 4% to the workers at the ISO. Now as part of the fellowship you are asking me to go back on my word. I don't appreciate the situation you are putting me in. I thought part of recovery is to stand by my word. Please don't put me in the

situation of going back on my word. This needs to be addressed quickly. I apologize for my late response but as a reason, not an excuse, I have been in a MS relapse.

Carol K. - Area 9 - Michigan

12/18/08 - 1:40 PM
Dear BOR,

My father used to tell me that it was OK to make a mistake, but correct it right away and learn from the mistake. That's why they put erasers on the ends of pencils. So please erase the 1.6% and change it to 4% at your meeting tomorrow.

Have a Very Happy Holiday Season and All the Best for the New Year to all my GA friends!

Henry I. - Past Trustee Area 2A - British Columbia

Use the tools - reap the rewards

12/10/08 - 6:45 PM
Hello again to all Trustees,

I am so over-whelmed by the ALL the responses that have come into the Trustee Line. The position that has been taken so far is NOT the reason for this post. It is to express my total elation with the response from Past Trustees and Current Trustees. And think about it, it is only December 10th.

But I would like to encourage ALL the New Trustees, that had their 1st Trustee Meeting in Houston to put pen to paper and write down your thoughts. On this issue or any other. Maybe share your experience with us of your first Trustee Meeting. What you thought or what you felt. What you liked, and what you disliked. What you might do different in Kansas City etc.

Your input is needed. You can see how the forum of the Trustee Line operates, by reading the previous posts. This is one of our tools to express ourselves on ALL different issues.

So, you guys and gals. You are not "newbies" anymore. It is now your opportunity to "get involved" and write something, anything.

This is what it is all about for me....The Process is what is important, the exchange of ideas and thoughts. And most all of them were so eloquently written. So thanks for the outpouring, I am sure our Staff at I.S.O is smiling. Just as I am from ALL the postings. Peace and Happiness to ALL

Many thanks to all those who cared enough to submit their personal opinions on the issue of bonuses

Yours in Recovery,
Richie S. - Area 6 - Southern Florida
1st Co-Chair BOT

Washwoman Line VS. the Trustee Line

12/10/08 - 6:45 PM
The problem that some people have is not to know when to give up - just like beating a dead horse. I am the author of the original "Washwoman Line" for very good reason.

So I do not offend everyone and maybe some. The term "washwoman" is an old Ralph Kramden's, from the Honeymooners show, term that I remember when I was growing up. I am sure some of you old timers remember that show. Maybe even are still living there. Anyway, Ralph use to complain that Alice use to spend her time complaining about Ralph while hanging the wash on the line and sending across it the building yard along with the other women doing the same. My Dad and Mom had a lot of fun and laughs with it roll playing Ralph and Alice too. It is meant to be a lighthearted thing.

Prior to the Trustee Line if someone had a problem within our program or a fellow member they would pick up the phone and work it out or come to agree to disagree. Now is seems some of us feel they have the right and privilege to air it out on the wash line via the Trustee Line and give lots of wrong information while doing it.

Program has taught me to respect someone rights and if there is a problem or misunderstanding to have a set down and work it out like two mature human beings. Not disrespect or mock them by airing it out on the Washwoman Line. But some of us still are living in the Bronx or was it the Queens with Ralph and Alice.

Maybe "One of These Days" we all can grow up and go back to picking up the phone. Just think if all of the letters were phone calls to the BOR members, instead of posting them on the Trustee Line or being that washwoman, like Alice.

The Trustee Line makes it easy to throw pot shots from the peanut gallery under the cloak of the Trustee Line. Look, I happen to love the Trustee Line for what it is suppose to be - however it loses big time when comes to working out problems. It airs the problem and it never gets corrected properly the way I was taught. Even when the problem does get worked out the damage or wrong information is still there with some of us. It makes a very bad taste in my mouth and for our fellowship when we beat the dead horse and not show an ounce of respect for those members that took on the respective jobs to better our fellowship. **If you think this is the right process - please think again!!!** It builds egos and takes away being humble. Breaks down UNITY. Divides some of us while chasing away others that do not like what they read. It builds walls around areas and members. It shows our fellowship, that hear about the disorder that goes on in our ranks and Boards that we are not a fellowship but a program that are at ends with one another. We should be grateful and respectful for those members that step up to the plate and fill those positions that are needed. This beating a dead horse will make the next time a position needs to be filled more difficult. Why would anyone in their right mind want a position that they get beat up? Why should they get beat up? Just like the paid staff of the ISO office that we are so thankful for - we should be equally thankful for those of us that volunteers their services.

Please lets have more respect and less washwoman.

Fellowship First
Gary S - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/12/08 - 6:08 PM

To Gary S -

I always listen intently when you speak or write. I sincerely appreciate all of the work you do, personally, for the Program; and I respect your opinion and knowledge of the workings of the Program.

My feelings, however, were somewhat hurt by your "washerwoman line" - not due to the male/female issue - but due to the fact that you didn't like some of the postings to the Trustee Line. I was thrilled that so many of us cared enough to take the time to allow our thoughts and opinions be known. This issue obviously struck a chord in each of us, and I think the purpose of the Trustee Line is for us to be allowed to share our thoughts, feelings and opinions.

At no time did I ever feel that trustees were intentionally "beating a dead horse." I honestly and truly believe that we all love and respect those who have accepted the challenge to be a member of the Board of Regents, and we honor and respect their difficult role in this Organization. How they must have agonized in trying to make this decision!

But - I also believe that every single Trustee has the right - if not the obligation - to let his/her feelings and opinions on the issue be known.....and if that location just happens to be the Trustee Line.....so be it. I don't believe anyone meant any disrespect; they just wanted to share their love and concern for our ISO employees.

I whole-heartedly agree with you that unity is perhaps the single most important aspect of our recovery - and in trying to look at the glass half full - I thought it was so good to see so many trustees "unified" in their respect for ISO.

With respect,
Linda S. - Area 3A - San Diego

12/12/08 - 8:27 PM

I would like to thank Linda S. for her kind words and her well thought out positive constructive letter. I agree that is wonderful to see the BOT stand up for what is right. I fully support it. The difference is how you responded in a positive manor versus how some just some just do not show the same respect or in positive way. You can always turn a negative thought into a positive. My first draft was not as calm or positive, I am ashamed to say. My action, I try to have ALWAYS a positive outcome and you have proven it.

Thank you,
Gary S. - Area 12 - New Jersey

12/13/08 - 11:35 PM

To the author of the Washer women article.

I have read every one of the submissions on the trustee line. I am trying so hard to find where people are beating a dead horse. I cant find it. I can however see where some letters are more direct than others. I honestly feel that those who wrote were feeling very passionate about the subject. I was a member of the B O R who went over the Budget for 2008. We agreed that the 4% be included. What I don't understand is how is it that the new board can change the budget.

Now with regards to the washerwoman line that saying was common knowledge back in England before we all had TV. It refers to the ladies

back then who gossiped as they hung out the laundry. It is the term used for women. So to use it in reference to men is degrading. Also I feel that to keep on about these things is baiting people to argue. My recovery has taught me not to buy into these things So I am asking that this all stop, We all have a right to our feelings and no one has a right to deny them to us.

Thank you for allowing me my feelings.
Liz N. - Trustee Area 3 - Las Vegas

A time for healing

12/16/08 - 10:42 PM

To all my Brothers and Sisters,

Here I am writing again! The old man from the "Stone Age" of paper and pencil, no computer, no email, not text messages. First, I'd like to say that I'm sure that the BOR will reverse their decision on December 19th. Let it be known that the members of the BOR are "Human" just like the rest of us. Who among us is without error? Enough said about this issue!

Now, I believe is the time for "Healing". Lets not write to the Trustee Line, but directly to the ISO office. Let us show the appreciation, the respect, the gratitude and most of all the "Love" we have for all of you at ISO that work so hard for this GA Fellowship. I truly believe "Unconditional Love" at this time is worth more than any monies they will receive. We all made a "Human Error" and for that we owe all of you an apology. Please know that you're all a very important part of this GA Fellowship.

You are our lifeline throughout this country, and throughout the world!

So lets all start out the "New Year" with Love, Understanding and Compassion for each other. Work out our differences and put program and fellowship first!

Happy Holiday to all! Peace on Earth and Bring home our troops!

Love and Serenity,
George L - Past Trustee Area 12 - New Jersey

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