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Trustee Line for December 2010

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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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Trustee Poll

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

I would like to speak very much in favor of the new feature we have in the trustee website "Trustee Poll", it will give me the opportunity to know ahead how you the TRUSTEES feel about an agenda item I may think to submitted at next the BOT. And at the same time I can let you know how we feel about your posts.

But for that we need to be active using this new feature. It takes less than 5 minutes to read and send an email with our comment on how we feel about the item is post.

Let's take advantage of "Trustee Poll"

Martha G. - Trustee Area 28, Mexico

From The Eyes Of A New Trustee

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

Dear Fellow Trustees,

I have attended other International Conferences but never attended a trustee meeting until Tampa. I am one of the new trustees. It was truly a great experience. I've read here and heard comments at the conference regarding critical remarks about the trustee meeting. Some of the comments were about how seasoned trustees were embarrassed that new trustees

witnessed such a meeting. Yes, there were times when I found myself frustrated and critical of some of the trustees regarding how they handled themselves but, I remember telling myself "principles before personalities, don't make a decision based on emotions, and don't work someone else's program, just work yours." My experience with the trustee conference didn't have a negative affect on me what so ever. It was an opportunity to grow in my own recovery.

I came in with an open mind and voted after I had more information. I listened, heard and asked questions, and realized that my vote on several agenda items had changed. I also believe that the members back home trusted me or I wouldn't have been elected so I voted accordingly. So thanks for worrying about me as a newbie, but I survived and I'll be back.

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

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

Greetings from a "Freshman" Trustee

First, I would like to sincerely thank all of those that have posted their ideas in this trustee line. After reading all of the posts for November, I can see that this can be a valuable tool for sharing and exchanging ideas and information and for asking for help with important issues.

All of the themes were interesting and informative, and I have so much to say about all of them, but I will keep my comments to one area that really caught my attention and I thought about the most, and those are the posts regarding the importance (or perceived lack of importance) of the Guidance Code and all items related to it.

I like to think of myself as very open minded, and if someone makes a good, solid point regarding something I feel passionate about, my thinking on said subject can be swayed. That being said, these are my feelings about the BOT, our purpose and the importance of structure.

I have always been told that the BOT are the guardians of the Recovery and Unity Programs. This is a huge responsibility, as many thousands of lives were saved by and depend on these principles. In order to carry out this responsibility, we need some type of structure (or rules, if you wish to call them that) because there are 120 or so people with 120 or so different ideas as to how to go about this task. And before you start thinking that maybe I have lost focus of our primary purpose, which of course is to stop gambling and help other compulsive gamblers do the same, I have not. In fact, this is the paramount reason for why we need rules and structure, for if not, how can we, as a body, carry the message? Like it or not, we need some sort of "rule book". In my mind, that would be the Guidance Code. I believe the BOT created the Guidance Code and only we, as a body, can change it. So, great, we have the Guidance Code we need to keep us on task, and if we don't like something in this code, we change it. Simple, right? I thought so, until I attended my first BOT meeting.

There was a very important and emotional item on the agenda. I wanted it to pass, as it would allow GA to grow and help our brothers and sisters from a foreign country who are suffering to receive the structure they need and deserve. However, the Guidance Code articles pertaining to this item were not followed, but in the end, the item still passed. HUH? I thought we had these Guidance Code articles in place for all to abide by. It seems if we make an exception for this item, why not make exceptions for all? I really wanted this item to pass, but it should have been passed in the correct way, not by circumventing the rules by "voting our hearts", as I was told to do. By the way, I believe the Chair had an option to move this item to the back of the agenda, which would have solved all the problems. I don't pretend to be an expert on Robert's Rules of Order, and If I am wrong I apologize.

I am sure some will call me a curmudgeon or a GA Policeman, but this is truly not the case. I just believe that without structure, nothing of import will ever get done. There are reasons we have these articles in the Guidance Code, and there are avenues in place to change the Guidance Code if we wish. Someone asked in a previous post why even have the Guidance Code if we are not going to follow it. I agree. But we do have a Guidance Code, and I believe in it, and in structure. Without structure, how can we, as elected Trustee's carry out our duty and be the guardians of the Recovery and Unity Programs? The BOT meetings are not GA meetings. Like it or not, they are business meetings, and we need to see them that way.

Well, for my first post on the trustee line, I think I said a lot more than I intended too. But I am passionate about Gamblers Anonymous (as I'm sure

we all are). I would not be a Trustee if I wasn't. I believe that I have been given a huge responsibility, and the members in my area expect me to take it seriously. Thank you for allowing me to state my feelings.

Levi B. - Area 2, Northern California

12/10/10 - 10:53 PM

Hi All,

I hope everybody is doing well.

I enjoyed reading Jo K. and Levi B.'s submission to the Trustee Line and hearing their thoughts of the Trustee Conference in Tampa.

I heard this somewhere, but the conference for me was "Intergroup on steroids".

I truly enjoyed being part of the process and seeing the sausage being made. It made me have a greater appreciation of all the hard work that has been done for the past 53 years to get our program to where it is today.

I have an agenda item on our local Intergroup agenda next month titled "G.A. approved literature". At the conference, I witnessed the painstaking work that goes into G.A. approved material and I want to spread that message to our local chapters.

As soon as I got home, I attended an anniversary where a person handed out a poem that "changed his life". I felt terrible having to tell this person and the Trusted Servants in the room that this was not the appropriate venue for this poem. Yes, it was very inspirational, but it was not G.A. approved material.

In my role as trustee, I do not view my role as "G.A. police officer". I am just spreading the message, based upon the Guidance Code and my own experiences. Most people are happy to be educated about issues; they care about G.A. and don't want to do anything to hurt the program that has helped them and their families so much.

With that being said, I enjoy learning and giving back to the program that has given me so much. Were some of the discussions in Tampa heated and passionate? Of course, but at the end of the day, I believe that we are all in a room working towards the betterment of the program that we love so much.

See you in Cherry Hill and Happy Holidays to all of you and your families!

Tom Z. - Area 14, Long Island

Back to Reality - Part 2

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

After reading Tom M's posting to last month's Trustee Line, let me start by saying I never was Chairman of the BOT, or Chair or a member of the BOR; however, I have attended 30 Trustee meetings, some as just a member, also some as an alternate Trustee & some as a current Trustee. As I write that statement it sounds to me like the old radio show "Can You Top This" . (I know Bill B can top us all).

It was also interesting to read how the last Trustee Meeting "was so out of control and that we may have lost our purpose." There have always been some feathers that have been ruffled at Trustee Meetings. It is a business meeting, not a Step Meeting, so s**t happens, to quote Forest Gump... Even when Tom M, was the leading chair, things sometimes got out of hand. But in Tampa, anything that may have happened was taken care of by the lead Chair, Denis M, even to the point of a member eating a candy bar when speaking to the assemble, which by the way was GROSS.

But to see writing in the Trustee Line, that maybe a Trustee drinks too much, eats too much, uses too much foul language, and the one I feel that shouldn't have been written at all, "have an affair with another Trustee". My program has taught me that I speak privately about those things to those people, it is not to be placed in the Trustee line. It takes me back to the Agenda item in Tampa, about an email from one person to another. It had no right to be put in front of the Trustees at the meeting, nor does your posting Tom (To thy own self be true)

So far none of the new Trustee were tarnished in Tampa, from what I have

read . As the program has taught me "Keep coming back, it gets better"

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

Wishes For 2011

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

I wish for a new year where we would accept and respect our differences and our right to express our opinions without being criticized or ridiculed and without inuendos.

I wish for a new year where we tolerate and embrace all our brothers and sisters worldwide and, if they need direction, that we help them to stay on the proper path to recovery and serenity.

I WISH for a new year where we would remember that we are all brothers and sisters of different fathers and mothers but, with the same spiritual needs and the need for similar guided paths to recovery.

I wish for a new year where we could all be respectful of each other and agree to disagree in a manner of love, and a willingness to listen and understand.

I wish for a new year where we respect and support those of us who wish to uphold the principles of our Guidance Code and respect those who wish to advance in their recovery the way our predecessors did, and appreciate how these predecessors created a program called Gamblers Anonymous which has grown and flourished for over 53 years.

Finally, I wish for all of us to have a healthy, serene and mutually compationate New Year.

Herb B. - Trustee Area 5, Quebec, Canada

12/6/10 - 3:58 PM

Well said Brother Herb!!! Thank you for your eloquence.

Cathy K - Area 8D, St. Louis

Rules & Procedures, Agenda Item 4

12/1/10 - 12:01 AM

When I first saw this item on the agenda, I admit it gave me cause for concern. While I will never criticize someone for adding anything to the agenda, I will voice my concerns over an item if I feel strongly about it. This is one of those items.

Page 17 of the Combo Book states, "get involved and be of service." I can't think of any way of giving back to the GA Fellowship than serving on a committee of the Board of Trustees. I currently serve on more than 2 committees, and I feel that it is within the work of the committees that much of what helps a compulsive gambler who still suffers comes from. The committees of GA serve an invaluable purpose. To think that I may be able to serve on only 2 will no doubt be detrimental to my recovery. I have the time and the desire to serve the Fellowship that changed my life. I constantly preach about service at meetings and how much it has helped in my recovery. If I am willing to serve on any committee, I don't think it is right to be told I can only pick 2. I wish more current and past Trustees would give more of their time to join committees, but I realize that not everyone has the time to do so. I won't judge those people because I won't take any one else's inventory. But, to tell me that I can't serve, well, my recovery is what will suffer.

While not everyone agrees with all of the committees we have, and may never for an item that comes out of these committees, don't we, as recovering compulsive gamblers, have the right to serve as we see fit? If a person is willing to put the time and energy into trying to make this a better program, don't we owe them that freedom? This agenda item takes away from that right. If this passes we might as well pass an agenda item in the future that changes page 17 to read something like this: "get involved and be of service as long as the service work you do is approved by everybody within the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous. If it's not, then you're not permitted to give back." Now, that may seem extreme, but isn't that the road we will travel if this item passes?

By telling me I can only serve on 2 committees, in essence, I'm being told how to work my program of recovery. I learned a long time ago that giving back will help in my recovery and it has. It's one of the things I believe strongly in and to be told that I have to give up a part of my recovery, well, that's not something I'm willing to do. Finally, I'd like to add, if the limit is 2 committees, what's next? An agenda item telling me I can go to no more than 2 meetings a week?

Pete K. - Area 13B, South Jersey

12/9/10 - 4:41 PM

I agree with all that Pete K. has posted on this agenda item. Well said and done Pete.

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

Who is violating The Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code?

12/11/10 - 8:31 PM

Dear Current Board of Trustee Members,

This submission is not a response to the entire Board of Trustees and all their members, but a response to the few Trustees who consistently present their opinions to the Trustee line. Those Trustees consistently voicing their opinions have every right to do so, but those Trustees represent a small percentage of the entire Board of Trustees. Most of the thoughts and ideas presented by these Trustees represent their own personal opinions. They not speak for Gamblers Anonymous as a whole or have any influence over Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

But, that small percentage of trustees are the most vocal and seem to consider themselves to be the most influential in their ability to influence their fellow trustees to join their cause...even when that cause indicates a willingness to ignore the basic principles of the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code as it is written.

Many of these writers infer that other trustees, individual members, and individual Gamblers Anonymous groups are violating the Guidance Code without presenting evidence or proof. These accusations are based on personal opinions that some trustees don't follow the Guidance Code in making decisions but are only following their hearts. I believe we need more heart and obedience by all trustees new or old to the principles of the Guidance Code as they are written and less confrontation, criticism, unfounded accusations, or efforts to make the Guidance Code into an authority code. The Guidance Code prohibits authority or assumed authority by any member of Gamblers Anonymous.

This trend for enforcing authority is not new in Gamblers Anonymous. The reality is that no Gamblers Anonymous member regardless of the service position they hold has any authority to censor, restrict freedom of expression, or punish any other admitted compulsive gambler who is a member of Gamblers Anonymous. That principle is clearly stated in the Guidance Code and in the Gamblers Anonymous Unity Program.

The remainder of this submission will be the words of Gamblers Anonymous contained within our approved literature, and I ask all Trustees to review them and their importance to Recovery, Unity, and guidance for all Gamblers Anonymous members. .

“Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.”

“Gamblers Anonymous relies primarily on group conscience to keep functioning. Leaders within the Fellowship are entrusted to carry out the will and the conscience of the group. They have assigned responsibilities, but they act only within the authority granted to them by the group to serve the group. We shall be held responsible if we elect irresponsible Trusted Servants who cannot serve the group in the manner determined by the “Ultimate Authority” which is the spiritual concept of the “Group Conscience.” They are not elected to command, order, demand, change, or alter but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by all members of the group. Trusted Servants in each group are rotated, so that each of us is reminded to remember that we serve for the good of all, without authority over anyone.

Ego and pride tend to become lost if one listens to the Group Conscience,

Acceptance is the spirit and trait that can carry us through. (Those words are the principles set forth in Unity Step Two.)

Gamblers Anonymous is run by the spirit of service and not by force of vested authority. In order to avoid the problems inherent in authority, Gamblers Anonymous is not organized in a formal way. The Fellowship has no central autonomous leadership. The Service Boards that have been created have no formal veto power and are responsible to the will of the membership as a whole.

The International Service Office, The Board of Regents, and the Board of Trustees have been set up by the membership of Gamblers Anonymous to administer and guide the Fellowship. These groups do not have power within themselves, but they are responsible to each other and to the entire membership (Those words are the principles set forth in Unity Step Nine, "GA as such should never be organized, But we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.").

"No one is more important in this Fellowship than the individual member. HE OR SHE HAS NO RULER OR SUPERIOR, but he or she may select a person or group of persons to represent him or her and his or her rights in this Fellowship." (Those are the words and principles of Article VI, Members, Section 1 of the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code)

The Board of Trustee members have responsibility to the membership as a whole who elected them, responsibility to honor the Spiritual Principles of the Program, the Guidance Code which guides the Trustees as well as the entire membership, to consult the membership on issues that affect the membership as a whole, that each Trustee will inform their area membership of major proposed changes being proposed for the Recovery or Unity Programs, or Guidance Code, and responsibility to listen to the feedback from the membership they represent.

Some Trustees have neglected in the past, or presently are reluctant to communicate with the membership as a whole on what actually are proposed changes to the Program or what is accomplished at the Trustee meetings held each year.

Board of Trustee members are not an elite or secret society. No Trustee can claim they have the right to impose absolute rules or they possess implied or vested authority in adding restrictions on the membership they may propose be put into the Guidance Code without advice and consent from the entire membership of the Fellowship.

To the new Trustee who wrote to the trustee line today that we need more rules and more structure in the program is apparently not aware of what Fellowship stands for, and should take a closer look at the Spiritual Principles that guide the Fellowship, and the discipline needed to honor those Spiritual Principles. The Fellowship cannot be ruled by personalities or personal opinions that do not measure up to the Spiritual Principles that guide us all.

"Principles before Personalities," builds kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility for all Gamblers Anonymous members. "Personalities before Principles," provokes anger, resentment, frustration, and most important, possible disunity among Gamblers Anonymous members.

Yours in continued recovery,
George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, past trustee area 12

12/12/10 - 9:15 PM
Hello to All,

In response to the remarks made by George W, NY . I only have 2 words-- WELL SAID. Happy Holidays to all.

Gary G. - Area 6C, North Carolina

12/13/10 - 9:59 AM
George,

All that you cite in your posting represents values that are critical to the composition of the core of our Fellowship, but you subvert and distort their purposes as the sole theme of the Guidance Code. The reality is that the material you cite is but a small percentage of the content and directives of the Guidance Code. No doubt you and your followers hold the Guidance Code to be 'just a guide - nothing more, because there is a suggested

program.' And although you would argue against it, the Guidance Code is the structure that binds us together and prevents the anarchy you suggest in your writings. Yes, I'll said it again. Anarchy - absolute freedom of the individual. You want to do as many others, which is to carry on with a 'Who is it really hurting?' order of business. Anarchy breeds chaos, the very thing our lives were about when we were gambling. Following the Guidance Code and its provisions keeps us in check from allowing us to not heed Recovery Step 3 and take back our will. In other words, to hell with the Guidance Code, Rules and Procedures, and do what feels good. Make sure to add more 'follow your heart' thinking into the equation.

The Guidance Code is to be enforced and that is the job of the Trustees. Every area, Intergroup, meeting and member should know the Guidance Code. If anyone goes against the Guidance Code, that is a choice that they make, and if there are consequences for such action, then that member has brought it on him/herself. It's a simple concept that you and others misuse to then launch into a tirade about how the GA Police are being mobilized, and that is not what our program is about.

Possibly the most offensive statement to me is your citing of Unity Step 2 as if the Trustees are violating this. - Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Why not take a look at the By-Laws, which are the results of actions taken by the Corporation of Gamblers Anonymous.

Article II, Section 2: The Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is under the jurisdiction of a Board of Trustees and operates under the direction of a document called the "Guidance Code".

Flip back to the Guidance Code,

Article VIII, Section 7: The Board of Trustees primary function shall be to insure the most effective exchange of thoughts and ideas between all Gamblers Anonymous groups and to act for our Fellowship in an official and executive capacity on all matters affecting Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, except matter coming under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents or International Executive Secretary.

Article XX, Section 1: The Guidance Code may be amended by the Board of Trustees by a two- thirds (2/3) majority at two (2) consecutive Board of Trustees meetings with at least a quorum present at each voting. Within thirty (30) days after an amendment is adopted, the International Executive Secretary shall notify each member of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Regents and each group of such change.

The Trustees do not govern, they abide by group conscience, and that comes from all the areas that should be funneling their thoughts and ideas to the Trustees. If areas don't do that and they allow the Trustees to perform their duties on their own, then shame on the areas.

Your citation of Article VI, Section 1 is another distortion of the truth. No Trustee is elevated to a superior position above anyone else. However, when becoming a Trustee, there are certain responsibilities which must be followed. Maybe what others object to is that the Trustees become increasing aware of what those responsibilities are, and the members' own local issues of control are at risk, as a result of this greater level of awareness. Key to that is enforcing the Guidance Code and the decisions of the Board of Trustees. Nobody governs when they do that, and all those that would object to such enforcement, once again take back their will because it suits them.

Toward the end of your posting you talk about discipline. What about the discipline required by the Trustees and other members who are following the Guidance Code, in its entirety, and constantly have the headwind when they have to fight with people in the program that only want to follow the Guidance Code when it conveniently suits them? Why isn't that something you are running up the flagpole?

Also, your last paragraph states this: "Principles before Personalities," builds kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility for all Gamblers Anonymous members. "Personalities before Principles," provokes anger, resentment, frustration, and most important, possible disunity among Gamblers Anonymous members.

Principles without structure and the ability to commit oneself to those principles does exactly what you say...provokes anger, resentment, frustration, and most important, possible disunity among Gamblers

Anonymous members. Let's exercise some H-O-W and not be so eager to put our own interpretation into what the provisions of the Guidance Code show.

From my experience, the agenda items of the Trustee meetings that cover Guidance Code items are outgrowths of situation where members who spend enormous efforts to circumvent its provisions. If nothing else, the Board of Trustees has been steadily removing much of the ambiguity of the items in the Guidance Code. However, I fear that the clearer the Guidance Code becomes with these changes, the more some members will look to find ways to ignore its provisions, which only supports the 'anger, resentment, frustration, and most important, possible disunity among Gamblers Anonymous members' that you only partially deal with in your posting.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

12/15/10 - 12:49 AM

Thanks George, it is nice to see there are some that understand the principles of our program.

The problem as I see it is that members often confuse the two parts of the guidance code. One part is our unity and recovery program which contain the principles that introduce us to a higher power that grants us recovery. The rest of the guidance code are rules and procedures that have been developed over the years to guide the fellowship in living by these principles. Any single rule or procedure should and must be judged against these principles. This is exactly what happened in Tampa Bay; one of the principles, "Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers." came into conflict with one of the "rules. " The chairman was given a change resolve this conflict by noting that the rule had no time limit on it. He chose to ignore this advice; and then the board fulfilled it's primary duty, to uphold the principles over the rule that thwarted the principle. It seems our program is working exactly as the Designer designed it. As long as we live the principles in the recovery program and the unity program, the GA police will never be able to arrest us.

Paul N. - Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

12/16/10 - 11:49 PM

Clarification from Paul N.

1. In my previous posting, I certainly had no intention to hurt or offend anyone.
2. I do not know George and I have never met him, therefore I cannot be one of his "followers." I took his writing at face value, which apparently not everyone in our fellowship does.
3. I do not believe, nor did I intend to portray that the chairman did anything wrong during the Venezuela agenda item discussion. Actually, I believe he performed his duty to the best of his ability. He interpreted the rule as he understood it, and then he made his ruling based on that interpretation; he could do nothing else.

The point that I wanted to make is that that the board also acted properly in overruling the chair, and thereby admitting Venezuela as a new area. I do not believe that I voted with the majority because of my feelings, as several have suggested - I voted on my understanding of the unity program. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that admitting Venezuela would further the cause of carrying the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. It is my further belief that the board was influenced by this same principle as it arrived at a just and principled conclusion.

I stated that there are two part of the guidance code - the recovery and unity program and the rest of the rules and regulations. If any take offence at this statement; I quote Article VIII, Section 8 on page 8, "The Board of Trustees shall act as guardians of the Twelve Steps of RECOVERY and the Twelve Step UNITY PROGRAM and must be guided by these precepts in all their decisions." Clearly, this suggests that the programs must take precedence whenever there is conflict between the recovery and unity programs and any of the rules in the rest of the guidance code. That was my statement, and I stand by it.

Paul N. Area 2 Trustee, Northern California

12/17/10 - 5:25 PM

To: Current BOT members and Past Trustees of the BOT.

From: George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee Area 12

This is not written to engage in verbal conflict with any member but to expand on my original posting "Who is violating the Guidance Code?" This message is long...so I submit it in two installments. First installment will focus on the Guidance Code as it is written and my comments regarding the principles it proposes. The second part will be in response to the posting David M. addressed directly to me which deserves a reply..

Following is not only a "small percentage" of what is contained in the GA Guidance Code, but this "small percentage" contains the most important principles that all members are asked to follow and honor. I have a right to question if and how the Trustees honor these principles. Exercising that right is not anarchy.

ARTICLE II Guidance Code

Section 1.

"The Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous is not to be construed as a legal document. The Guidance Code is a statement of the aims, purpose, and service structure of the Fellowship."

My Comment: "Service structure" is how the Service boards conduct their business. Service structure does not pertain to the structure or conduct of individual groups and their members who are guaranteed the right to be self-governing by Unity Step 4 except when to do so would injure other groups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

The individual groups and their members are the heart and soul of our Fellowship who contribute not only financially but most importantly spiritually to the growth of the Fellowship. They deserve respect and appreciation-not critical judgment.

In my 45 years in the Fellowship I have attended thousands of Group meetings where the GA format and purpose, (to the best of my knowledge) were not violated and I left those meetings feeling inspired by my fellow members and their honesty, openmindedness, and willingness to strive for recovery and unity, placing the principles of the Program first and foremost. In fact, the worst meeting I ever attended was great.

ARTICLE IV DECLARATION

Section I.

"We are dedicated to the proposition that a structurally sound Fellowship based and granted in democratic and spiritual principles will not only strengthen us but will win the confidence, respect, and help of people everywhere, as we extend a stronger hand to compulsive gamblers in every part of the world. Therefore, in order to build the greatest strength for ourselves and others we set forth the following principles for our recovery, unity, and guidance."

My Comment: The principles "set forth" are the Twelve Steps of Recovery and the Twelve Steps of Unity. There could be no personal opinion that could bend or replace those principles regardless how good or well intentioned those opinions might seem. What seems good to some may be the enemy of what is best for all! I have been accused of being an anarchist, but truly, I whole heartedly believe in the principles of the Guidance Code. The only restrictions placed in the Guidance Code by previous Trustee decisions pertain to use of only GA approved and approved GA appropriate literature within a GA meeting. I once asked a Trustee what the Trustees feared when they put restrictions in the Guidance Code to anything but GA literature being permitted in group meetings could happen if some member brought a magazine article or newspaper article pertaining to the illness bringing valuable information that could aid knowledge of this baffling, insidious, compulsive addiction? The Trustees answer was, "What if a member brought a Bible, Torah, Koran, or GOD into the meeting room? My answer was simple: 1- The members of the group would be capable to resolve the issue using the "Ultimate Authority," the "Group Conscience," and 2- God, of our understanding was already in the room.

One of the new Trustees in his posting claimed he was not a "curmudgeon" (a cantankerous person) or a "G.A. policeman" when he stopped a member celebrating his anniversary from reading a poem he wrote at his anniversary meeting.

I'm sorry, but if that is the way that Trustee or some other Trustees view

enforcement of the Guidance Code, it is an insult to the basic principles of the Fellowship. How could anyone believe that reading a poem written by a member as his way of sharing his experience, strength, and hope could ever affect another GA group or GA as a whole? This enforcement mentality cannot become the way Trustees meet their responsibilities. That mentality is destructive to Unity and Recovery. No individual member or group of individual members is more important than the Spiritual Principles of Recovery and Unity.

ARTICLE VI MEMBERS

Section 1.

“There is no one more important in this Fellowship than the individual member. He or she has no ruler or superior, but he or she may elect a person or group of persons to represent him or her and his or her rights in this Fellowship.”

My Comment; This is the clearest statement of freedom and equality in the entire Guidance Code. We, the membership, elect other members to represent our rights within the Fellowship. There is no ambiguity in the pure intent of this Article. To restrict, censor, or give orders to a member without their consent and agreement is a violation of this Article of the Guidance Code.

ARTICLE VIII Board of Trustees

Section 1.

“The Fellowship shall be guided by a Board of Trustees who are members of Gamblers Anonymous.” Section 7.

“The Board of Trustees primary function shall be to insure the most effective exchange of thoughts and ideas between all Gamblers Anonymous groups and to act for our Fellowship in an official and executive capacity on all matters affecting Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.” Section 8.

“The Board of Trustees shall act as guardians of the Twelve Steps of RECOVERY and the Twelve Steps of UNITY and must be guided by those precepts in all their decisions.”

My Comment: The key ideas in these 3 sections are guided, primary function, guardians, and must be guided by those precepts in all their decisions. Guardians means defenders, protectors, and keepers...says nothing about changers...yet, some past trustees at some point in time used what they thought was reason and logic to inject sections 9 & 13 of Article VIII giving them the right to change the recovery and unity steps as they see fit. I believe that to be a violation of Article VIII, Board of Trustees, Section 8. We must stand for something or we will fall for anything!

Yes, I agree those articles and sections of the Guidance Code are a “small percentage” of the total guidance code but to me are the most important principles that have been overlooked or put aside for too long. Gamblers Anonymous, as a Spiritual Fellowship has no place for police or enforcers who could ever claim authority over any other member, including me. Part II to follow.

Yours in recovery,

George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee, Area 12

12/18/10 - 11:37 AM

Hi All,

First and foremost, I did not stop somebody from reading a poem that they wrote for their anniversary.

The person distributed a poem and I informed them (and the Trusted Servants after the meeting) to be mindful of the Guidance Code. The Room Secretary was new and did not know Gamblers Anonymous even had a Guidance Code. He was grateful for the information.

Article VII - Groups

Section 1:

Whenever two or more persons with a desire to stop gambling meet together on a regular, weekly scheduled basis to discuss their gambling problem, they will be known as a group, only if they commit themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature. They are also to notify the International Service Office (I.S.O.) of

their existence.

Article VII of the Guidance Code says it all and I am not doing my job as a Trustee if I don't make them aware of that.

Regards,
Tom Z. - Long Island, Area 14

12/20/10 - 3:44 PM
To: Tom Z. Area 14.
From: George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee Area 12.
Subject: Apology.

Tom, I owe you an apology for not fully understanding your posting on how you alerted the trusted servants at a member's anniversary after the meeting, I am truly sorry for misstating your words. The interesting comment you made was the inspirational aspect of the written poem. More sharing of experience, strength, and hope with inspirational themes delivered by fellow members for fellow members might help the retention of all GA members. .

Yours in recovery,
George W. - Area 16, Upstate New York, Past Trustee Area 12.

Term Limits For Trustees

12/21/10 - 11:40 PM
I posted this question on the "trustee poll" section and have been surprised at the outcome

Item: Effective 6/12, Trustees can serve for two consecutive terms
Reasoning: Rotating positions in the fellowship. Trusted Servants at the room, intergroup level hold positions for a set amount of time. Rotation principle will bring new people, ideas etc.

As previously quoted in a different subject earlier this month

"Gamblers Anonymous relies primarily on group conscience to keep functioning. Leaders within the Fellowship are entrusted to carry out the will and the conscience of the group. They have assigned responsibilities, but they act only within the authority granted to them by the group to serve the group. We shall be held responsible if we elect irresponsible Trusted Servants who cannot serve the group in the manner determined by the "Ultimate Authority" which is the spiritual concept of the "Group Conscience." They are not elected to command, order, demand, change, or alter but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by all members of the group. Trusted Servants in each group are rotated, so that each of us is reminded to remember that we serve for the good of all, without authority over anyone.

To my knowledge, every other position in the fellowship has term limits from the board of regents, intergroup officers to the room level. Out of the nine (9) people that voted so far, not one was in favor of having term limits. I would like to receive comments/feedback from current and past trustees in regards to this item. In my opinion the gamblers anonymous literature is clear that all positions rotate within the fellowship.

Have a joyous holiday season and a safe, healthy and happy new year

In Unity
Mike A. - past trustee, Area 14 - Long Island

Literature to CD Committee

12/28/10 - 4:36 PM
Hi all, hope everyone is well, I am recovering from kidney surgery & doing well.

I would like anyone to respond to the following item that I just submitted to the cherry hill agenda. The item is to reestablish literature to compact disc (cd) committee. This committee was established between 2000 & 2001 BOT meeting. Since that time we successfully created the following cd's

- 1: towards 90 days
- 2: beyond 90 days

3: combo book

We have two versions of new member packet ready for BOR to set pricing and for production.

The current members of the committee are as follows:

Jimmy D.

Cliff H.

Steve K.

Jerlene D.

We are looking for additional volunteers to assist with recording other pertinent literature to cd. Look forward to hearing from you

Thanks

Jimmy D. - Area 1A, Orange County, CA

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

Should the link above not work, copy and paste this email address into a blank email: trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com

Contact the [Trustee Website Administrator](#)

Should the link above not work, copy and paste this email address into a blank email: trustee.site.admin@trusteewebsite.com
