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Trustee Line for May 2009

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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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Thoughts from the Outgoing Executive Board

5/4/09 - 1:21 PM

I have written many times to the trustee line. None of the others is more important than this one.

First I would like to say to ALL the volunteers of the Kansas City Conference, Job Well Done!!!! All who worked on the conference showed the true meaning of fellowship.

Next, I would like to express my heartfelt THANKS to Tom, Karen and Herb. Each one of you have truly helped me the past two years. And the maturity and growth I have gained by your patience and knowledge are immeasurable.

Now I would like to say THANKS to the BOT for allowing me to co-chair the past 2 years. I know my recovery is better off, and the experience I have encountered was nothing short of positive on so many levels. I am extremely grateful and honored for the opportunity.

Also my Thanks to ALL the trustees for working so diligently in Kansas City. Your dedication and effort was noticed by the front table, and it certainly made our job easier. You came prepared and ready to do your service. You participated eagerly and the work that needed to get done for Gamblers Anonymous got done in a timely manner. The past agenda was ambitious to say the least and your passion and dedication showed through with each passing session. This past trustee meeting was also a historic one and one that will not be forgotten for a long time.

I also want to pass on my good wishes for the newly elected chairs of the BOT. It is with great pleasure to say that I have had a meaningful relationship with each one them. And my cooperation with your transition is only a phone call

or e mail away. I know that ALL of you will do a terrific job in safeguarding the Fellowship..

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

5/5/09 - 12:00 PM
My Dear Brothers and Sisters

Well I hardly know where to begin but let me first start by thanking the Kansas City area for a great conference. I am sure all that attended had a great time and walked away from there with a mind full of recovery and a belly full of great food.

I want to thank each of you for allowing me to serve as your Chair for the last two years. I am sure you all know it was with mixed feelings that I did not run again but at this time in my life I need to work on a few things that are of the utmost importance in my life. I will say that this group of Trustees is one of the best groups I have ever worked with. Your dedication and common sense are what allowed us to complete a very large agenda giving the items submitted the attention they needed.

I believe it is the responsibility of the people who put items on the agenda to sit back and think is this change something that is positive for G. A. as a whole or is it just me wanting to be able to show I can put on many items.

I want to thank David M. for the last two years of putting together the agendas but most of all for being a true friend. We have surely come a long way from stuffing those envelopes and sending them by mail. I also want to thank David and the I.R.C. for assisting in bringing this fellowship to the level of an inclusive international board. As you all saw there were many tears spread when we thought just how far our brothers traveled to come and share with us.

I want to personally thank Natasha the interpreter for her dedication to a program she does not even belong to. This just proves that good people do good things.

I want to thank Richie and Herb for being the best of Co-Chairs during the last two years and for their dedication and service to this fellowship.

I would be remiss if I did not thank John C. Chairman of the Board of Regents for his many hours of hard work in guiding the Board of Regents and I would like to thank the BOR members for their service to the fellowship.

I of course want to thank Karen, Israel, Lisa and Jason for their daily dedication at the International Service Office. I am not sure we will ever be able to afford to pay them what they really deserve. If you ever have the chance to go to the ISO office and see what is accomplished by these people you will be amazed.

I especially want to single out Karen and thank her for all she does for this fellowship and for being such a good friend. Karen lives this program everyday of her life not only in her recovery but as her employment and she does a great job. Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

To the incoming Chairs I know you will work well together to foster unity in this program and I want to congratulate Denis, Chuck and Steve for stepping up and agreeing to spend hours of their lives helping all of us. I am sure you know that anything I can do to assist you will only require an email or phone call.

As I close I will leave you with this. I pray that each of you is blessed with all recovery has to offer. The peace and serenity of recovery is the gift we are given when we work the program. Thanks again to all of you for your assistance and friendship over the years.

All my love,

Tom M. - Chairman, Board of Trustees
Area 2 Northern California

5/7/09 - 3:05 PM
Thoughts.

I would like to add my feelings of gratitude along with Tom's and Richie's, who were extremely helpful and co-operative to me during the last 2 years that I served as 2nd. co-chair of the BOT. There were a few trying moments during

the last 4 Trustee Meetings, but, with the co-operation of all the trustees, the 2 years were my most satisfying and rewarding years since I became a member of Gamblers Anonymous.

I was warned that serving the board as co-chair would possibly effect my serenity, but, I experienced just the opposite. I met many trustees who have the same passion as I do for our fellowship and my experience has been only positive. The most enjoyable and positive experience has been working with the various committees and conferences that I had the privilege of overseeing.

I am very confident that the new slate of chairs, Dennis, Chuck and Steve have the desire and the experience to continue with the committee work and facilitate the functioning of the BOT and that we will only continue to grow and evolve world-wide. I still have the goosebumps when I think of the participation of the new eastern european trustees. My sincere thanks to David M for his efforts and dedication to the ever expansion of Gamblers Anonymous throughout the world.

Kansas City did an admirable job hosting on the conference and have set the bar very high for us in Montreal. I only wish and hope that our membership in Quebec will be equally dedicated and enthusiastic and that everyone who attends the upcoming conference in Montreal will be happy with the results.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Montreal.

Herb B - Area 2 Montreal
outgoing 2nd. co-chair of the Board of Trustees.

Thoughts from the Incoming Executive Board

5/14/09 - 7:18 PM
Dear Fellow Trustees,

I really enjoyed myself in KC. It was wonderful to see all of you and I sincerely thank you for your confidence in electing me a Co-Chair. I've been there before and I look forward to working with Steve and Denis this time around.

Please feel free to e-mail or call with any questions or issues. Until the new Confidential Trustee Listing is published, you can find my contact information in Area 15.

Also, I will retain my chairmanship of the Literature Committee. If I feel that it becomes overwhelming, I will ask someone to step in as Literature Chair, but for now I believe I can do both jobs comfortably.

Lets all do our best to remember why we exist...to help the still suffering compulsive gambler.

Sincerely,
Chuck R. - Area 15
Incoming 1st Co-Chair

5/15/09 - 9:08 AM
Fellow BOT Members,

As I look back at Kansas City's BOT Meeting on a couple of occasions I mentioned that I felt a revived atmosphere in there. A kind of electrical thing shooting through the room. I believed that to be present because there are many new trustees on this board. Many new trustees that are not acting like passive rookies. They are here to make a difference and that is very encouraging going forward over the next two years. Kudos to the outgoing board of Tom, Richie and Herb they served well.

Many of you placed "Steve R." on more small pieces of paper than you care to mention on Thursday night into early Friday morning. I thank you for your show of support and I'll do everything I can to justify that support. Over the years I've submitted a few pieces of literature, been involved in many positions but none can match the passion I've encountered since the IRC started. I will retain my spot on that committee as well as the duties of Second Co-Chair. Some of you questioned if I was taking on to much. I think I can handle it and I owe twenty two years of abstinence to giving service to this fellowship.

Experience up at the front table, I have none. I am the rookie in this trio of servants with Denis and Chuck. I plan on being prepared, doing my best to keep things moving smooth using tact and respect for all of you. As each conference passes we iron out a few more wrinkles that have slowed us down and I hope that trend continues.

I always like to have at least one more bit of good news to send you along.....Romania has just started its first meeting after 2 years of gathering over 12 names on the loner list from there. Yet one more country to our International family.

See you in Montreal

Steve R. - Area 2B, Greater Sacramento, CA
Incoming 2nd Co-Chairman

Good and Welfare from Kansas City
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5/5/09 - 12:51 AM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past weekend in Kansas City at the International Conference I found peace, serenity and information that reinforces my program, while I had the chance of renewing old friendships and making new ones. The conference was marvelous, entertaining and enjoyable, besides being delicious (food). There of course was a lot of work involved to make it successful by all the committee members and the Board of Trustees for the business side.

The workshops were fantastic while educating for all of the Brothers and Sisters who attended and had at least 3 days clean time to those who have 40 some years in the program. That's the magic of our wonderful fellowship, it works for everyone.

The BOT meeting was long and tedious, but had to be, for this is the business end of keeping of the program save and sound for us and those that follow. I do understand that this is necessary, but sometimes it gets out of hand and much too lengthy. I do believe that the agenda must be controlled better and limited to business items and changes that are for the betterment of program all around the world. We seem to be growing very rapidly around the globe and it suggests that we may have to look at doing some things differently. The Chairperson, Co-Chair and Second Chair did the best they could and I have enjoyed working with them during the last 4 conferences. I give them a lot of credit for keeping their cool heads and facilitating the meetings while sometimes the rest of us did not keep that same cool head. I know that some items are more debatable than others and sometimes more necessary, but we should all act like adults and conduct the order of business with a little more peace and serenity. Lets stay focused in the future.

Again, thanks to the Kansas City Committee for all their hard work and inspiration to produce a great and wonderful conference. Let's do it again and again and again.

See all of you in Montreal in the fall,

Arnie B. - Area 8, Chicago, Illinois

5/5/09 - 12:54 AM

Hello to All,

It was great seeing those of you that I know and meeting those of you that I haven't, in Kansas City.

First thing that I did this morning was to write the Kansas City GA and express my thoughts on the conference. The fellowship in that area should feel proud of the fantastic conference that they pulled off. The message they conveyed to me was one of an incredibly strong fellowship. Not one with an assortment of personal agendas but a unified group with the same goal.

The election (chair and co-chairs) process was quite interesting.

The fact that 3 of our newest areas were represented at the trustee meeting is beyond words, at least in my vocabulary. As I was sharing some conference highlights with my group tonight one member said "You mean they have Gamblers Anonymous in other countries?" The look of hope on his face when I said yes was priceless. To me this is what a conference is about...the miracles of recovery.

Debb W. - Area 2G, Oregon

"There's no place like home" !

5/5/09 - 9:28 AM

GOOD & WELFARE SHOULD BE PART THE TRUSTEE SESSION, I ALSO THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A GA MEETING AT ALL CONFERENCES.

THANKS,
MATTY C. - Area 12, New Jersey

5/5/09 - 12:42 PM

My name is Ed K. I am a compulsive gambler and a Trustee from Area 1. I placed my very last bet December 29th, 2002.

I thought the mechanics of the Trustee Meeting in Kansas City went very well. I enjoyed hearing from many of the Trustees on the issues that are important to them. Whether I agree or not I've been taught, and I take it seriously, to listen to what each person has to say.

I thought the election process could have been handled better and I will be submitting an agenda item for Montreal to streamline the election process. Essentially the idea will be that the bottom accumulated 25% of votes counted is the dividing line where the candidates would be dropped off. Of course the exception will be when we are down to three candidates and the two bottom candidates are tied. Then a runoff of the bottom two is still in order.

The most distressing part of the Trustee meetings, in general, is the slowness to accept change in our Combo Book. Especially when the basis is "back when I came in [20+ years ago] this worked for me, it's what I like and it should not be changed". The reality is the world is changing. Younger and younger new members appear every day. Our retention rate has not improved in the last six years (or in 20 plus years by some accounts). I was taught in recovery if something is not working, make a change. I hope to live to see the day that the most commonly read piece of literature (our Combo Book) is viewed as a living document rather than a static piece of literature. I also hope to see more new literature: especially in the area of steps and sponsorship. We need to attract and retain new members by giving them something they can relate to.

Ek K. - Area 1 Los Angeles

5/5/09 - 4:59 PM

Ed K - I LOVE you - (don't take that personally). In the March and April Trustee Lines, I must have made the same statement 20 times (I tend to exaggerate). There is no woman in San Diego who wears a mink coat any longer - that's been out of style for YEARS. Why must that continue to be in the Combo Book to irritate women? I also got a great kick out of the "he/she" issue - how old fashioned is that? Why not simply say "the chair?" That covers ALL sexual identities - some of which we have not addressed yet. And, I was glad to learn that I CAN BE responsible FOR someone else in the program - I missed that in some of my earlier teachings. How silly of me to not be responsible for people, places and things.

Some of our young people are threatening to "break off" and form their own Gamblers Anonymous group which DOES address their issues; because our feet in cement and head in the sand attitudes are affecting the unity of GA as a "whole," not just one or two generations. I wonder how many Trustees will be sitting at a meeting in 2020 or 2057 still clinging to "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." You are not listening.....it is broken in some areas.....we do need to fix it.

With love, respect and faith in the Fellowship,

Linda S. - Trustee, Area 3A San Diego

5/5/09 - 7:27 PM

I would like to take a moment and mention what a great conference we just experienced. The Kansas City committee did a great job on putting on this conference. Everyone was so helpful and the hotel staff was accommodating as much as possible.

The trustee meeting went smoothly, I was afraid we would be there for five or six sessions into Saturday. But the chairs did a great job facilitating a great conference. The agenda was very long and I do understand some items were tabled, but we did tackle most of them. All the trustees were working together in a great, cooperative matter. We were able to discuss items that needed to be discussed and both sides were given respect and time to present their side.

I would also like to thank Tom M, Richie S and Herb B for doing a great job on the Board for the last two years. They worked great as a team and I feel

honored to have been a part of the BOT during their term. Again congrats to all of you.

As per the discussion on "Good and Welfare", I think it is a great idea, I would love to hear each trustee come up to the mike and say something, their impressions, etc.

I am already looking forward to Montreal,

Ara H. - Area 1 Trustee

5/6/09 - 1:03 AM,br> Hi everyone,

I just wanted to say that I have attended many National Conferences through the years. I feel Kansas City had it all together. It was a great experience. I love the theme, entertainment, food, workshops and fellowship. It was wonderful to meet new people from other countries. I had a great time. I want to thank the Kansas City group for all their hard work. It was really appreciated. I'll be back.

God Bless You All.

Jan A. - Area 3 Las Vegas, NV

5/6/09 - 11:20 AM

Hi Guys, Joe B here from Area 6 C(North & South Carolina)

With regards to the postings from the Trustees from Area 1 & Area 3A...for me all I can give you is what the Program has taught me, and that is my experience, strength and hope. It did work for me "back when I came in" and yes, the younger and younger members that appear every day are not straying because they still want to do it their way.

*They are not making more than one meeting

*They may make just enough meetings to qualify for a pinning

*They don't have the time to make phone calls

*They don't make anniversary meetings as it may be too far to travel

*They don't attend intergroup meetings, or social events, etc.

Now I'm also being told that we irritate women by having in our Combo Book, "MINK COAT", because it is out of style, what BS. Also they want to start their own meetings because we use HE/SHE and that it is old fashioned. They don't want to do it as our literature states, as to have a Pressure Relief Group Meeting, they don't want a Sponsor, and again they don't attend extra meetings. I have listed a few items of what I hear and see. I would like to hear what NEEDS to be changed, and not just words or threats. We are Trustees to help as a whole not just some areas. Tally-ho for now, talk with you soon

Joe B. - Area 6 C North Carolina

Hi, from Ron C. trustee (area 13)

I thought the trustee board meetings went very smooth and a lot was accomplished to benefit GA as a whole. The only thing that I did not agree with was the voting process for the new officers of the board of trustees. I think the board should look into a much quicker process, it definitely took too much time. One suggestion shared by me and a few other trustees is to let the new elected chairman of the board of trustees to choose from the nominations his 1st chair and 2nd chair to serve with him during his term as chairman of the board of trustees. On another note I would like to thank the Kansas City conference committee for doing such a great job in putting this conference together. The work shops, the hospitality room, the hotel accommodations, the meals, the entertainment was just great this conference is at the top of my list of all the conferences I attended and I went to a lot of these great events. Thank you for allowing me to share my good and welfare with you.

Your friend in GA always,

Ron C. - Area 12 Philadelphia

5/7/09 - 9:39 PM

Hello All,

I would like to first say, wonderful job, Kansas City!!!! It seemed to me that the conference went exceptionally well. Thank you all again for the hard work and a wonderful time. Now I know why Dorothy wanted to get back:) I must make a response to some of the dialogue posted in this issue.

During the discussion of removing the words, "mink coat," I almost had to ask

for a point of information. I'm not so sure that those of my generation and those after know what a mink coat is. All kidding aside, I perfectly understand both arguments in regards to some of the updating of terminology. However, I must say, I don't believe that because we use mink coat instead of private jet, that members my age and younger don't get the message being delivered. We may have some younger members coming into the program, but we are not completely idiotic.

What happen to sharing our experiences??? I have never had any person in the room ask me what a mink coat is. Maybe that means regardless of age, we get it. I also believe in sharing our experiences, that if we find ourselves in a position that a newer, maybe younger member doesn't quite understand mink coat or philanthropic, we share with them how those words relate to our experience and maybe a similarity to what they might be experiencing. There is nothing wrong with saying to someone, "I use to want to wear only mink, very similar to the way you would only want to fly in your private jet."

I must say that I have a lot of passion on this topic of older/younger members. I've had many of discussion on this topic, here and in my rooms. I too could not relate in the beginning of my program. I kept saying to myself, "what do these older people know about my gambling." I was told, I could never gamble again one day at a time." Well, I looked at these people telling me I could never gamble again...did they realize I was 26? I had a lot of life ahead of me compared to the few years left that they had. I thought, "well of course this is easy for them, how much longer could they possibly have?"

I bring this up only because, I was younger and not very wise. I think people wanted to teach me, but they weren't going to change everything to baby me. They weren't going to find ways to dumb down the program for me. It was time for me to decide if I wanted to grow up. After making that decision, I became a sponge off the members in my area. If I didn't know something in a piece of our literature, I simply asked. This is what helped me to understand that despite the age differences or materials that we desired, gambling was completely destroying my life the same way it destroyed theirs many years before me. I then realized that if I could listen to the experiences and ask when I wasn't sure, that maybe just maybe I wouldn't have to go through the same devastation as the elder members in my area.

Thank goodness I learned this a while ago because many of these members in my area continue to help me live life without gambling despite the blows that continue to come.

I believe that like most people that don't continue to come, the young person that doesn't come back is not staying away because of the verbage in our literature, but because they are just not ready to grow up and face life.

Just two cents from a younger member...at least I use to be:)

Dina P. Area 6B Trustee, West Coast Florida

PS.Get ready...this is just the first of a few from me!!!

5/8/09 - 5:17 PM
Hope you're all well.

At the Kansas City Conference (and kudos to KC for an awesome time), a number of trustees made reference to Intergroup By-Laws. We currently don't have any, and I'd like to take the idea to our Intergroup here in Toronto.

If anybody has By-Laws that they'd like to share with me, I'd greatly appreciate it. My email is ----

Thanks in advance.
Richard F. - Trustee Area 4 Ontario Canada

[Note from Trustee website admin: Richard's submission included his email address at the end. Website guidelines prohibit the displaying of personal email addresses, since this is a site that is accessible by the public. If you wish to respond to Richard directly, please refer to his contact information in the Confidential Trustee Listing.](#)

5/8/09 - 7:02 PM
I had a positive experience at the BOT meeting. I was not crazy about those Trustees who seemed to use procedures or questions to prolong an already full agenda. A few points of order (including one I made) were possibly unnessecary.

I appreciated the polite way that the chairs kept speakers on the agenda item being discussed. In addition, I appreciated the way each member tried to

politely disagree on certain discussion points. I apologize to anyone who may be offended by the above.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve my area and GA as a whole.

Allen H. - Area 8 Chicago, Illinois

5/8/09 - 7:57 PM

Hi Everyone

What a great trustees meeting! I never expected it to be finished as early as it did. I was expecting at the start to hear that trustees would have to go into extra session. Good work everyone. I guess it helped at the start of the meeting when Tom said that Past Trustees could not raise points of information, points of order or challenges to the chair. I will have to think about making a change to the rules and procedures on this issue.

I was just reading the Board of Regents April minutes and noticed that someone wants to make changes to the Board of Regents BYLAWS....Regents should be elected for 2 years terms with about half of the 9 regents being elected each year. I would like to see the Board of Regents have a spot designated for a Regent residing outside of the United States. Have 6 from LA area, 2 from outside of 200 miles and 1 from outside of the USA. We are an international fellowship as I witnessed in the last number of trustee meetings I have attended.

I want to thank Herb, Rich and Tom for their hard work these past 2 years! I look forward to watching Dennis, Steve and Chuck as Chairs. Congrats to Karen on her re-election and to the new board of regents on their election!! I thought about running for the Board of Regents this year, but figured I would have to buy a home in Los Angeles and start going to meetings in LA and Calgary to get elected as there would be a lot of good candidates outside of the LA area and there were.

Those are my thoughts and if any of you want to spend your Memorial weekend in Calgary, we are having a mini conference. Your experiences, thoughts and fellowship about this program would be much appreciated.

Thanks

Richard C. - Area 2K, Past Trustee Calgary, Alberta

5/12/09 - 7:07 PM

Hello Fellow Trustees,

I thought the conference committee in Kansas City did an incredible job! The workshops were great, the food was fantastic, and the entertainment was well thought out, and was quite enjoyable. Looking back at past conferences, this is one that will stand out.

I would like to say thank you to the past chair and co-chairs, Tom, Richie and Herb for their dedication and service, and welcome in the new board, Dennis, Steve, and Chuck. Also, congratulations to Karen for being re-elected.

When I looked at the agenda items for this conference, I thought for sure we would be well into Friday night and perhaps later. I thought the current board was diligent in getting through what we needed to finish in Kansas City. I think if you looked around the room at midnight on Thursday night, and saw how many trustees were still there, that showed a lot of dedication in working together for a common goal.

Being a new trustee, I think it would be nice to have "Good and Welfare" . It's a good way to end a meeting, and also a chance for people to meet those who haven't spoken.

In closing, I am looking forward to Montreal, and continue to be of service. I feel as though I am forever in debt to a program that has given me my life back, one day at a time.

Steve F.- Area 1, Los Angeles, CA

5/17/09 - 7:35 PM

Hi all,

This is Howie C. from Las Vegas, and as you can see, I haven't put anything on the agenda yet. As a special courtesy to our eldest (in abstinence) member, Bill B. of the Bronx, I "might not" put anything on for Laval. To let you guys and gals know, all of the items I put on the agenda are not mine. Most of them

are, but not all of them. When a member wants something on the agenda for discussion, or for a vote, and I can't explain any good reason why it shouldn't be put on, even if I feel that it hasn't a chance of passing, I still put it on. I don't feel I have a right to tell any member who has a "reasonable" item for the agenda that I won't put it on, for the reason that I feel that it won't pass. But for this next agenda, if any other member has an item for the agenda, I'm going to refer them to one of our Trustee's, and NOT put it on myself.

If I have an item that I do feel is very good, I will put it on.

Just a couple of quick notes for this writing to the Trustee line, and I'll write more later, because I do have many comments on what's been written so far, but I don't want to make this extra long.

As I said in my comments at the mic on Sunday in K.C., I did feel that this was one of our top conventions that we've had. The committee did a good job, the hotel staff was absolutely wonderful, and the food (and service) was great.

My only Trustee item (at this time) I'm going to comment on is: I was real disappointed that the different colors for the combo book was not approved. Many meetings in the country that I have visited are using 3 to 5 year old combo books. I'm wondering if all the Trustee's who voted understood what they were voting against. Personally, I can't see why anyone would be against it. What harm would it do to have voted it in? If Andy doesn't put this back on in 2 years, I will, because I feel that it was a great idea.

That's all for now, but as I said, I'll be getting back here to make some additional comments on what's been written.

Great seeing everyone again. The conventions and Trustee meetings are the highlight for my personal G.A. recovery. I'm already looking forward to our next one.

Sincerely, your brother through G.A.,
Howie C. - Area 3, Las Vegas

5/28/09 - 1:43 PM
Hi all,

Howie C. again, getting back to make comments on what some of you wrote. Matty saying we should have a G.A. meeting at the conferences: I'm "assuming" that he's referring to an "official" meeting, such as we have in most parts of the U.S. and Canada. They do have what is called a therapy room at the conventions, but it's not run like a regular G.A. meeting. Matty, for the past few years, this has changed at the conventions. We used to have the traditional type of G.A. run, with different people in charge for an hour at a time. I would guess that about 4 or 5 years ago that changed. My guess as to why it changed is because in some parts of the country, G.A. members just sit around and talk, they don't have what most of us are used to. The way to get it back is very simple as far as I'm concerned. All the convention committee needs to do is to incorporate it into their program, but it must be done with people who will comply and be responsible. To have an obligation from certain people to be there for an hour (or two) at 3 or 4 times during the course of the weekend. These peoples obligation would be the exact same as it is for people doing workshops. So, if it's to be, it's up to the convention committee to make sure that it gets done. I agree with you about the Good and Welfare, but it has to be controlled in the same manner as the rest of the Trustee meeting. But for the Good & Welfare, no more than 2 minutes per person.

Ed K.-- You said that you'd like to see more literature on the steps and on Sponsorship. I agree with you about the literature for the Steps, but I think we have a couple of wonderful pieces of literature for Sponsorship. I use the Sponsorship literature twice every 6 weeks where I work, and I think that if people would just utilize what we have now, it would be great. One of my biggest complaints is that (Estimate) 90% of our membership does NOT read our literature. Even many of our Trustee's are not up on all of our literature. I hear a lot of compliments about my knowledge of the G.A. program. If I have more knowledge than any other member, it's ONLY because I read the literature that we have. I have done this since I was very new in the program, because I was "forced" into involvement, or G.A. in my area would have died again, like it did for the 12 years off and on, prior to my first attendance. And I wanted to always do it the "G.A." way. Also with the new addition that Richie S. got passed in Kansas City, it will enhance what we have now. But personally, I don't think we need anything more that what we have at this time. Maybe someone will write something that's real good, and I would be all for it. We can't have too much literature available, and we really have very little on the Steps, as well as other things.

Dina: I love your openmindedness about the program. You have had the benefit of coming into the program as a very young woman, and now you're progressing to becoming an "elder statesman". Your experience on both levels is very important to both the newer and "older" members. I hope you continue to express yourself as you do. And thank you again for jumping up at the Trustee meeting to make my point of information for me. Due to the fact that I feel it's not right for a past trustee not to be able to make a point of information, I'm going to have to run for Trustee again. I like to let others be involved, since I'm going to be there anyway, but I guess (if I get elected) that one less person will be involved at the Trustee level.

Howie C. - Area 3, Las Vegas

Rules and Procedures - A Way of Life in Trustee meetings

5/4/09 - 1:21 PM

So, another 2-year term is in the record books for our soon to be retired Executive Board. Before I forget, let me extend my thanks to Tom, Richie and Herb for the effort they put in over the last 4 Trustee meetings. Having been up there myself, I know how the Trustees can be a pack of rabid dogs at times, and any Chair of Co-Chair walks a fine line as far as trying to maintain order while trying to not leave any openings for problems that might arise from the floor and turn tranquility into insurrection.

I learned a long time ago, that the room, Intergroup and Trustee meetings are all about 'the process'. Uniformity is paramount as far as extending confidence to the bodies. Only then can we escape the personalities before principles abyss. Nowhere is this more needed than at the Board of Trustee level. Many of us remember the old Trustee meetings that were overflowing with different rulings between Trustee meetings, which translated into different rulings from Chair to Co-Chairs in the same meeting, not to mention different rulings from session to session.

No doubt there are many of you who when looking back at the Trustee meetings from years ago, can see that the recent meetings have been rather docile by comparison. In point of fact, they have been. I don't believe this is purely coincidental. It's a direct function of the advent of the Rules & Procedures Manual.

Now, we don't have to recollect about who said what during which Trustee meeting. That was the cause for much chaos and confusion on all parts. What we have now is a living document that clearly outlines what we do through group conscience. Yes, it can change on the spot, but it is with the understanding and consent of the group.

The structure that this manual gives us allows us to concentrate more on the agenda items rather than procedure. Points of order should result in fewer challenges and yield to the wonderfully high degree of efficiency we say in Kansas City, irrespective of the overly tedious election process. By the way, I am submitting a greatly abbreviated procedure for approval in the Quebec. We can have 40 people who want to run for office and most likely it will take just 2 votes to elect each one, with a possibility of 3 votes, if my item is passes.

Denis and Chuck are 2 seasoned Executive Board members and will be able to help us navigate any choppy waters over the next 2 years. I admire Steve's passion to want to step in front of a train by taking the 2nd Co-Chair position. I believe he will be a very positive force at the front table who might submit his own agenda item to allow the Chairs to put down the microphone and come down to the floor and choke the hell out of any Trustee when they get 'GA-stupid'. I'm sure he doesn't expect anyone to make it easy for him, but he deserves the respect that any officer at the front table is afforded, even when they screw things up - just like I did.

David - M. Area 12, New Jersey

How to survive the next election of BOT Chairs

5/9/09 - 5:03 PM

Last night, I woke up in a sweat thinking that I was stuck in the Kansas City Trustee meeting but only having elections for 2 days like we did this time. Nightmares like that could be hazardous to anyone's health. So we are now looking at a spaghetti western similar to 'The Good, The Bad and the Ugly'.

The Good is that is was glorious that 14 people wanted to run for the 1st Co-Chair.

The Bad is that we can only elect 1 person for that position and the other 2 of Chair and 2nd Co- Chair.

The Ugly is the unmistakably flawed election process.

In 2011, we get to do it again. Who knows, maybe 20 people will accept the nomination for any one of those positions. It's time to take 'the ugly' and send it to charm school. In short, we need to fix this. I have put an item on the agenda to detail everything about the election process and am hoping that someone has a better way of doing some of the 15 steps I outlined. I will be very glad to consider the suggestions and change them with an updated agenda item, which can be done at any time up until the 60 day deadline for agenda item submissions, which by the way is coming up in 3 months from today.

Please be sure to look at the detail, but realize that with the detail comes the mechanical aspect of how all the elections would run and not be subject to the whim of the Chairman, whomever that may be in the future. You all have my contact information...let me know if you think any part of it needs improvement. Let me handle the objections now and make the necessary changes so we don't argue on the floor in Quebec. I am quite sure that everyone is convinced the election process is broken. Let's all work to make this agenda item stronger and not be a big load in Quebec.

Here is the new procedure listing I am hoping to have approved:
Rules and Procedures - Executive Board - Procedure For Elections

Remove current procedures for election of the Chairman and Co-Chairs and replace with the following:

Election Procedures

- 1) - The Chair will open up the floor for nominations for each office individually as each office is filled. A person can nominate him/herself. No seconds will be required. There will be no limit to the number of nominations that will be accepted.
- 2) - When there are no more nominations, the Chair will close the nominations.
- 3) - The Chair will read the nominations to the room
- 4) - The Chair will ask each nominee to declare their intention from the nomination process.
- 5) - The Chair will read the list of those nominees who have accepted the nomination and become part of the ballot.
- 6) - Each current Trustee will select one person out of the candidates' names to write on a ballot. If more than one name is written on any ballot, the ballot will be invalid and not counted.
- 7) - The ballots will be counted by 3 GA members, selected by the Chair, (added after Herb's remarks) who are not Current Trustees or listed on the ballot.
- 8) - If any one candidate receives more than 50.0% of any votes, that person will be the elected individual for that position, if not,
- 9) - The Chair, or a designated person if the Chair is running for office and still in contention for office, will announce the top 3 names of those candidates who received the most votes and who will be on the 3-candidate ballot.
- 10) - If there are candidates that are tied in any one of the top 3 positions, so as to increase the total number of candidates in excess of 3, a qualifying ballot will be taken to reduce the number of candidates to 3, where the remaining procedures will take effect.
- 11) - Each current Trustee will once again select one name out of the 3 remaining names for the ballot.
- 12) - If no one candidate has received more than 50.0% of the vote, the candidate receiving the lowest vote will be eliminated and a final vote will be taken.
- 13) - A final vote between the 2 remaining candidates will decide the winner for that position.
- 14) - Any vote resulting in a tie will be redone until such time as there is no tie.
- 15) - If after the 3-candidate ballot, there are 2 candidates with a tied number of votes and 1 candidate with less than that amount. The 2 candidates receiving the tied number of votes will comprise the final ballot.
- 16) - If after the 3-candidate ballot there is 1 candidate with the most votes, but not a majority and 2 candidates with a tied number of votes, a runoff ballot only between the tied votes will be taken to ensure a 2nd candidate to be listed for the final ballot vote against the candidate who received the highest number of votes. David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

Election Process:

David's procedures for the election of the Chairman and the 2 co-chairs of the BOT look good. The procedures should specify who will appoint the 3 members who will count the ballots. Either the current Chairman or perhaps the Executive Secretary or even perhaps the Chairman of the BOR.

The executive Secretary should bring prepared blank ballots for the election instead of torn paper of different sizes and colors.

Herb B. - Trustee Area 5, Quebec, Canada

Looking for some experience, strength and hope

5/11/09 - 1:53 PM

I continually bring up sponsorship with new members especially when we are chatting and they are looking for answers and guidance. I ask members all the time if they have a sponsor, most don't. I have share that I couldn't have done it without the sponsors I have had over the years and why they have changed. I keep hearing I am too new, too sick, or I am not new anymore. The combo book is great and I get different messages from it every time I read it. The towards 90 Days book literally got me through my first 90 days, which I read daily, and I share that too. How do you express the need for sponsorship? Why does our literature stress that sponsorship is for the new person? I still need a sponsor with almost 9 years clean. Am I just sicker than everyone else?

I think the combo book is really lacking on the topic of sponsorship. I can't tell you how many times I have heard "if it was important it would be in the combo book (well, more than a couple words on page 17)." I brought it up to our Inter-group a few months ago and they agreed. We started working on an agenda item but it wasn't ready for Kansas City. The one member that didn't like what we had said it should be a whole page but didn't have any suggestions as to what it should say. I haven't forgotten the item. Looking for some input. I tried to convey the message to a member at the meeting have the meeting last Friday and just wasn't getting through.

Carol K. - Area 9

5/11/09 - 4:40 PM

Sponsorship:

Why must we place more in the Combo-Book, we have two separate pieces of literature on Sponsorship, the short Term Sponsorship, and the Sponsorship Manual, That's why we have them so as not to place ever thing we have in the combo Book. I have chaired meetings and the topic was Sponsorship, using both packets. It works try it

Joe B. - Area 6C North Carolina

5/14/09 - 1:28 PM

Good morning, Carol -

I hear your frustration and understand what you are attempting to say and do. I am amazed and thankful we were able to add a new #6 to page 17 to; GET A SPONSOR. IT IS DIFFICULT TO RECOVER ON YOUR OWN.

Since there appears such aversion to adding anything to the Combo Book, perhaps after reading our Combo Book, the secretary or chair could go around the room and ask each person what sponsorship means to them. I know some of our meetings do that with the 20 questions which allows each person to recall what those feelings meant when they first entered the room; thereby "continually reviewing the 20 questions."

Like you, I believe sponsorship is one of those critical ideas to our recovery that remains an unknown to many members, both new and senior. I've heard some say that sponsors "only" work the Steps with a member (I think that's an old AA tradition); some say a sponsor becomes your best friend (more of a GA concept); but I think the relationship has to be agreed upon between what the sponsee wants and what the sponsor is willing to provide.

The "Gamblers Anonymous Sponsorship Manual" and the "Short Term Group Sponsorship Approach to Helping the New Member," which contain some information are nonetheless weak in some areas. After having gone through these in depth at a workshop on sponsorship, I was asked by an attendee (not a new member), "but what DOES a sponsor actually DO?"

At some meetings in San Diego, groups read from other literature: "Toward 90

Days," a page from a step in the red book, "A New Beginning." If sponsorship is one of your community goals, then perhaps at every meeting, someone should read a paragraph or a page from the "Sponsorship Manual" to remind everyone (both new and senior) what sponsorship could mean to their recovery?

I offer these only as suggestions - and I hope you get many more positive suggestions on what you can do to assist your area in the importance of sponsorship.

With love, faith and respect in the Fellowship

Linda S, Area 3A San Diego Trustee

5/14/09 - 5:45 PM

Carol,

I take a completely different posture on what you have written. First of all, the centers of wisdom in your rooms need to understand the word 'axiom'. Just to help out, it is a statement that is regarded as being established, accepted, or self-evidently true. So you can tell these 'GA Gurus' to put that statement of 'if it was important it would be in the combo book' where the sun doesn't shine. I don't think I have heard a more ignorant statement in my years in the program. I've heard many other statements that compete for equal billing, but that speaks volumes for the recovery of those who live by it.

Okay, I feel better now having gotten that out. My belief is that the Combo Book is like daily medication someone would take to maintain a condition. It's like the eye drops for glaucoma. You take them everyday to keep from going blind, but taking them doesn't make the condition go away. We are compulsive gamblers. The Combo Book is the tie that binds us. It is constant reinforcement. Sponsorship can be mentioned, but that is a subject of a more personal basis.

We read our other literature to widen our once narrow minds to life and certainly to recovery. The entire sponsorship issue is a fault of your room(s). We have our vice-secretary assign sponsors. Anyone with 1 year of abstinence gets put on the list for availability and the list is evenly disbursed. The booklets should be topics for meetings. Force the issue and it will gain some traction, but I repeat, it must be forced, because many do not want to do this. It is a necessary part of recovery, and those who resist sponsoring others, need to do a Step 4...BIG TIME.

Everyone needs a sponsor. You have 9 years and you need a sponsor...without question. The role of a sponsor changes with more time in the program for the person he/she sponsors. At some point, the choices we have in our lives and recovery need to be run past some other GA member, irrespective of how much time there is for either party. Look at this as a 'gut check'. There isn't a single time that I don't feel better after speaking with another GA member. I suppose I could even benefit from those who only look at the Combo Book, as you say is the case in your area, Carol. It would be of tremendous help for me, because I would know with a great degree of certainty that I would NOT want to be like them.

The more time I have in the program, the more I need to bounce things off others. There is no ruling that a Sponsor MUST have more time in abstinence than the person being sponsored. I personally would want more years of experience, strength and hope, but not finding someone like that would not turn me away from latching on to others who could also provide me with such benefits.

Carol...remember, your relationship with other GA members may be equally as important as that of a Sponsor. Maybe you should stop trying to compartmentalize specific people as sponsors and just have a healthy relationship with another GA brother or sister for the feedback and support you and many other people desperately want and need.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey
