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**Trustee Line for October 2007**

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

**Attraction vs. Promotion - Looking for Clarity**

10/8/07 - 2:31 AM

Hello everyone,

Matt H. from area 16 here. This is my first time using this Trustee line, but I promised David I would get into using it so here goes. I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to all of you for all that each and everyone of you do for our program. I also wanted to say that I realize, partially through input from other trustees, That I get a little excited at times and my passion comes out a little hostile at moments. This is one of my character defects which definitely needs working on so..... if I offended or upset anyone in any way I wanted to say I'm going to work on that and I'm sorry.

On another subject, I am working on the public relations committee and I asked several Trustees what the differences between attraction and promotion were specifically as it relates to P. R. work and if they could give me specific examples. Unfortunately, this seems to draw a lot of blank stares and unsure answers from most of the people I ask. On the plane ride home I read what the New Beginning book had in it both under the

public relations section on pages 23 & 24 as well as the Unity Step 11 section on pages 60 & 61. This did clarify it some but, as I sat down to try to write out a clear explanation to put into so sort of pamphlet we are going to try to develop in the P. R. committee it seems to be a daunting task. I want to be able to have a very laymen term explanation and am asking for your input.

Matt H. - Area 16

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10/8/07 - 6:57 PM

Matt H, please find the following that has been put together here in Area 18 to clarify the attraction v's promotion discussion. Had beenthinking of submitting through the Literature committee what are your thoughts?

#### Anonymity v's Secrecy

In Gamblers Anonymous, anonymity ensures confidentiality and privacy. It does not mean secrecy, which suggests hidden. The following comments on anonymity are from the approved literature, GA's Sharing Recovery Through Gamblers Anonymous: "Gamblers Anonymous does not compare itself to any other group, nor does it boast of its accomplishments and abilities to the public. However, Gamblers Anonymous does make itself available to anyone interested in the fellowship or in the gambling problem.'

At the level of press, radio, films and television, 'anonymity is carefully preserved because the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is more important than any one member. By maintaining this policy, any problems that accrue to an individual member cannot harm the fellowship. Similarly, any achievements attained by individuals working in the program benefit the group as a whole. This step is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place within the fellowship's public relation's program.'

To this end, when speaking as a GA member at the level of the media only first names and pseudonyms are used. In photographs for publication and TV appearances, faces are profiled or backlit.

Also remember that 'the fellowship does not glorify the name of Gamblers Anonymous or its merit as a group, rather it works to encourage compulsive gamblers to attend the fellowship's meetings.'

#### Attraction and Co-operation v's Promotion and Affiliation

For Gamblers Anonymous to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. If the fellowship is continuing to grow, it is fulfilling its primary purpose to carry the message to suffering compulsive gamblers who need our help. There are many compulsive gamblers unaware of our existence who need to know help is available through Gamblers Anonymous. The fellowship's principles suggest we must achieve our purposes by attraction not promotion and co-operation not affiliation. What does this mean?

To *attract* is to invite, to draw to, to cause to approach without any sense of coercion or compulsion.

To *promote* is to push forward, to advance in the sense of a business venture. It implies 'hard sell'.

To *co-operate* implies the coming together of two or more entities to work together for a common benefit or to deal with a common problem.

To *affiliate* suggests a close connection or union. It implies some form of nominal legal or financial association.

Gamblers Anonymous **attracts** when it tells the community why and who we are, what we do and how, and when and where we are available, if and when help is needed. Gamblers Anonymous **co-operates** when it works with others to get the fellowship's message across. In cooperation with others, our scope is increased and we reach more of those in need.

#### Facts v's Opinions

Most people have opinions, but Gamblers anonymous, as a whole, does not. Individual members may have opinions, but they are the individual's opinions not the opinions of Gamblers Anonymous. When it comes to Public Relations or community co-operation, individuals should never confuse the two.

**A fact** is something that has actually happened or a truth known by some form of authentic experience.

**An opinion** is a judgement, impression or belief that is less than positive knowledge.

In dealing with outside organizations, or individuals, members should stick to the facts as expressed in GA approved literature. We need always remember 'we are neither reformers nor do-gooders. We have no axe to grind. Traditionally, we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. The world of gambling in general is no concern of ours.' In addition, 'the work of Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship is with people who want to stop gambling, not with those who should.' Gamblers Anonymous, 3rd Edition.

### Appropriateness of Guest Speakers

10/12/07 - 12:25 AM

When I was in L.A. I asked a past Trustee if he planned to come to the area 16 mini-conference. I had met him at one of our previous conferences when he was our guest speaker. I really liked what he had to say and was looking to spending some time picking his brain. He told me that the speaker we were having was inappropriate and having her speak would be against Unity Step 10. The woman that is speaking works for a compulsive gambling treatment center and is not a member of Gamblers Anonymous. The man proceeded to tell me that as a Trustee it is my job and duty to uphold the principles of the program and protect the guidance code. I understand that. I just wondered what the feeling was about this issue. Is it against the Unity Program and if it is, what am I supposed to do about it. Do I become the GA police in doing my job????? I have run across stuff like this already. When I went into a room and they had all kinds of non-GA approved literature they were using and passing out, I said something and was almost thrown out of the room. Now when I go to that room I'm the GA ass#\$%. I know its principles before personalities but if only one side understands that and lives 'in that' then how do we move forward?

Matt H. - Area 16

10/31/07 - 2:36 PM

Hi there,

This entry to the trustee line is to try and clarify Matt's question about the appropriateness of guest speakers at a mini-conference. I was waiting for someone to answer and since no one did let me give it a try.

First Matt I would like to know the topic of what the speaker is speaking about, you did not mention it.

Second this is the reason we look for an outline first from a guest speaker, or a workshop presenter. So we as an inter-group, conference committee etc can determine if the subject matter is in accord with the unity program.

But let me assure you that guest speakers and presenters are welcome at G.A. mini and national, and international conferences. I know Monsignor Dunne has been a guest speaker, so has Father Shannon. Along with many others.

There are many good speakers from other 12 step programs, and some terrific workshops on recovery that does not go against the Unity Program. And then again, there are some blatant and marginal subjects that maybe inappropriate at a mini or national conference, and can cause an uproar!

So please make sure you get an outline from the speaker, then ask to see if any handouts are being given out. Some presenters want to increase their business and want to hand out cards and flyers, this of course is out of line, so we need to beware, but we do not want to ban everyone, and everything. Hope this makes things clearer for you.

Your brother,

Richie S. - Area 6

### Structure that Allows for Healthy Growth in the Fellowship

10/16/07 - 6:53 PM

If ever there was a need for more structure in the fellowship, it is now. The LA Trustee meeting was a clear indicator for this by virtue of numerous 'questionable' decisions that were made from many different areas. Of course it is always easy to criticize the 3 Chairs because the path and demeanor of the meeting is dictated by the decisions they make during the airing of each item. Take it from someone who has been up there, the pressure comes very quickly and generally out of what seems to be thin air. The chairs are forced to make their decisions with only half a second to think about it. So big deal, they all made mistakes. Let's not re-live it and lets focus on the process.

I personally disagreed with a number of front table decisions, but the choices were always in the control of the body through the use of points of order and challenges. Besides, when everyone agrees with me, then we are all in trouble. In all seriousness, this submission really came about because of what happened with the 90-day room literature vote that was called out of order.

In the beginning, I was not a fan of what was originally produced by the committee for the up and down vote that sent the piece to the literature committee. In this process, the literature committee greatly improved the piece and I was turned into a believer of the final version. The problem came about when Joe B. discovered that the literature

committee had taken the pamphlet it was given and submitted it as an insert into existing literature. The objection, if my failing memory serves me correctly, was that the literature committee did not have the right to change the literature like that. Joe knows that I think he can be a pain in the butt some times, as I tell him that frequently, but when it comes to procedures, I have seldom found that he is anything but right. In the final outcome, the motion to accept the 90-day room piece was called out of order, and the piece of proposed literature will now have to wait until Portland for a vote to accept it as approved literature.

The moaning and groaning was very apparent after that decision, because it was felt that a technicality should not stop this item from passage. My heart goes out to Andy D and his committee and to the great work that was done in conjunction with the literature committee, but if we don't have specific rules to follow as Trustees, then we are setting the stage for anarchy in our Trustee meetings and that quickly rolls down to the Intergroups and individual rooms. Unfortunately, too many procedures are being done in a 'seat of the pants' mode and that just naturally brings out all the tempers and passions through points of information, order and challenges. For those who remember, there was a Trustee that was completely disgusted by what she had witnessed with the attitudes of some of the Trustees, and she was very vocal about that. I may have been one of those people, who knows.

During the meeting, there was a very evident vein of Trustees who felt that the walls were closing in on GA because of Guidance Code votes that outlined a clearer definition of what a GA meeting is. Additionally, the fact that we now have for the first time, definitions of what GA approved literature is and more important, what constitutes GA appropriate literature. What became clear from the protests to passing these definitions is that there are Trustees who feel that anything goes and that we need to concentrate on recovery, not rules. The comments came very close to making illustrations of GA turning into a Police State.

Well, my friends, that couldn't be further from the truth. We are growing as a fellowship in leaps and bounds, and people are starting new rooms with their own ideas of what is good for GA. We as individuals in the program do not get the luxury of what we think is good for GA. Lou W. was on the money when he said in LA that when he doesn't follow the body and makes his own decisions on behalf of GA, then not only is he in trouble, but so is the fellowship. In addition to the rules and procedures committee coming up with a living document of what the protocol for running a Trustee meeting should be, we need to know that some basic foundations must be made solid by the fellowship as a whole. We cannot be allowed to justify someone's protestations about using whatever people want to use for literature in the room under the guise of 'Who is it really hurting?'

I for one am not interested in someone bringing in some literature from their local house of worship and talking to the room about how it has helped them in their recovery. I don't want to hear about any retreats and the benefits of attending them. The list continues. We need the structure, otherwise rooms that get started in the future may think it is fine to combine our efforts with those of the local Council on Compulsive Gambling, because after all, they are all about helping the compulsive gambler too, right? So if it helps just one person, shouldn't we do everything we can? Obviously, the answer has to be 'No', unless it is GA approved or GA appropriate literature. The mystery of that concept that has been clouded by those who have their own ideas and agendas of what works in GA has now been dispelled as of votes that passed in the affirmative by margins of 5:1 on what constitutes a GA room, 52:1 on what GA approved literature is, and 5:1 on what constitutes GA appropriate literature. The group conscience has spoken. Now it's time to see if those rebel Trustees will follow the Guidelines of being a Trustee, which include item 3 from the Information Packet. Uphold and try to implement the Guidance Code and all decisions made by the Board of Trustees (not fulfilling this affects GA as a whole).

Every room is covered by Unity Step 4, but remember that this step is not just about the headline you see in the Combo Book. It is more about the explanations you see in the Red Book and other areas of our GA approved literature, not what other self-help programs say or what other written opinions are from any other source. Structure keeps us focused, which naturally allows the fellowship to flourish with uniformity and without the unbridled jaunts into what we think is right for GA individually at the expense of what the fellowship has decided as a whole.

David M. - Area 12

#### Why it has to be GA approved literature only

10/18/07 - 4:20 PM

I hate doing it to a meeting these days, but it just grinds my gears when I go to a meeting of Gamblers Anonymous and find a pile of "Quotations of Brainy Smurf" as I call them.

I've said over and over again at group meetings and Trustee meetings that it never ceases to amaze me how many times a member(s) perceives that what is good for their recovery must be right for the group or fellowship without asking anyone.

Let me provide you with this example: Many years ago a group in my area starts putting sheets of "Quotations from Brainy Smurf" out on the tables because someone thought it was good...It's not going to hurt anyone. That's not the point. They never get the point do they? I feel you brother. To the best of my knowledge and GA policing, I've been accused with talking around in circles to explain principles before personalities. All members need understand that it's nothing personal when we remove outside literature from GA meetings.

We are the trusted servants and the groups elected us to respect the principles and literature laid before us in the Unity Program. There is always someone new in the program that doesn't get the point and then the problem becomes like a virus. Back to my story....All it took was one person to yell and scream and cry at me and everyone wanted me to stop picking on the one person for putting "Quotations from Brainy Smurf" out on the tables.

I made a critical error....

I gave leeway to a single sheet. Next thing you know the sheet is at ten other meetings and new members start picking it up and sticking it into their new member packets. Now you have a real problem because you have non-approved GA literature floating around construed by the new member as approved material and next thing you see are new members in the rooms referring back to the sheet now quoting it verbatim Well that not what the "Quotations from Brainy Smurf" says. It says "Papa Smurf always says..."

Always be vigilant. I had huge amounts of damage control with these sheets and then "Quotations of Jokey Smurf" and then "Quotations for Smurfettes" because we all think we're doing something good for G.A. It never ends. Just because I think something is good doesn't mean it's right.

If they feel so confident that their literature is so compelling to use at GA meetings then let them put it to test as a new piece of literature on an agenda item at the Trustee meetings and let them decide whether we should reproduce it.

Alan S - Area 2E

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<b>Trustee agenda discussion items handled through the Trustee Line</b>
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10/18/07 - 10:21 PM  
Fellow Trustees,

This may sound like a crazy idea, but I'll throw it out there anyway. I wonder what it would look like if any "discussion" item from the agenda, at the trustee meeting, was to be handled through the trustee line. In other words, all discussion items would not be put on the agenda, and would instead be posted on the trustee line for all to view and comment on.

It just seems like this forum is so perfect for discussion as the months go by, and so much time is spent discussing these items at the conference meetings. This could save valuable time at the trustee meeting and not put as much pressure on trustees to rush through other items.

The "discussion" items are important and should be given a chance to be discussed, possibly on the trustee line. Likewise, I wonder if the items that need to be voted on should be given priority and more attention at the actual trustee meeting.

I would love to hear feedback on this, just a thought I have had over the past 3 conventions.

All the best, Tom S. - Area 7A - Houston, TX

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10/20/07 - 1:59 AM  
In response to Tom S of Area 7A.

Tom I couldn't agree more!!!! Although I do enjoy the time spent with other Trustees I feel our time could be much more effectively spent. I want to smash my head into the table when we start babbling about something that is 'discussion only' what's the point? Can't we use the phone, emails, Trustee Line or something else as to not waste all of our time in session to find out what the pulse is? After all what is the Trustee Line here for? It is my understanding that it is here to eliminate the wasting of valuable time. I guess it is much like some comment meetings here in my area, some individuals just like to hear themselves talk and talk and talk. So please fellow Trustees, let's take Tom's advice and air our discussions on/in this Trustee Line.

Thanks for reading my little rant.  
Matt H. - Area 16

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10/20/07 - 12:26 PM  
Tom,

I too want to say that this is an excellent idea. In fact, I have just submitted an agenda item for Portland to that effect.

Ed K. - Area 1 Trustee

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10/22/07 - 12:54 PM

This submission is my opinion on a new agenda item requesting to abolish 'discussion only items'.

Although I agree with the idea in principal, I feel that the BOT is not yet ready to proceed as Ed suggests. There are still many trustees who do not have access to the internet and many others who are not taking advantage of the Trustee Line and using it the way it should be used. Occasionally there are areas that have questions for the BOT that do not necessarily need a motion or a vote. Just opinions and experience from other trustees. I think that somewhere in the near futur, when we are all used to the new electronic age, we should be able to find a proceedure that all trustees (and past trustees) could use to communicate the discussion items that are so important to the areas asking for opinions. The trustee line affords us the opportunity to discuss agenda items well before the upcoming trustee meeting and if we all read the trustee line and replied with our opinions to the agenda items we would succeed in speeding up the BOT process without eliminating anyones opinions.I am glad that Ed put this item on the agenda, because we will be able to see the opinion of the whole body and proceed accordingly.Long live our ability and desire to communicate.

Herb B. - 2nd Co-Chair of the BOT  
Area 5

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<b>LA conference afterthoughts</b>
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10/19/07 - 12:45 AM  
My fellow GA members,

Wow, is has only been a short time since the LA conference and I am still on an upswing thinking about the workshops, fellowship, hospitality room and the trustee meeting. As a past trustee and present assistant-chair of the BOR it was my good fortune to see many of my friends and to meet so many new ones from all over the world. This a truly a reason why I can say that I am so great full for the people who came before me and kept the doors open so that I no longer wish that I was dead. For me at first my gambling was fun and controlled. Then something happened and I could not stop. It took me 3 ones to finally admit that I am truly a compulsive gambler. Next month ,if everything works the way that I feel it will, I will celebrate 20 years without making a bet. I was a trustee and voted to add on page 17 get involved and be of service. Boy, does that make even more sense to me. I look forward to seeing everyone in Portland next spring.

Your fellow GA brother.  
Lanny R. - Area 1

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10/20/07 - 6:32 PM  
My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to start out by again thanking you all for the hard work you each do everyday to foster a better understanding of this fellowship. I felt we accomplished much in Los Angeles and while I am sure everyone can find some fault with something that was done it is my hope that we concentrate on the future.

See it took me sometime in this program to realized that is okay for everything not to be perfect and that it is okay for things to go differently that I think is right, when I was gambling there was only one way to do things and it was my way, for me this is a much better place to be.

As we approach Portland in just a few months I hope that we can keep the momentum from Los Angeles and be positive. For some of you I am sure you do not understand the stress that is associated with chairing the board meeting and I felt Herb and Richie did an excellent job in keeping things moving forward.

Los Angeles was a great conference for me, I was able to meet brother's and sister's from all over the world and to learn there are many ways to accomplish things in life. Early in my recovery I felt there was only one way and that was the way we did it in my

room, but as the years moved on I found there were many ways to achieve our goal. See we always have to remember what the goal is, "To help the compulsive gambler who still suffers". It does not matter how many points of information or points of order we have in life if we loose track of the real goal.

Well with all that being said I would like to ask each of you to keep your comments in the trustee line positive, I do not feel this is a place to vent but more a place to express and learn.

Thanks again for all you do and thanks for allowing me to be of service.

Tom M. - Chairman Board of Trustees Area 2

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10/22/07 - 10:36 AM

Thoughts on the 50th Anniversary Conference and Trustee Meeting:

First and foremost the L.A. Conference was one very special Conference! All Conferences are good, this one was just special. My sincerest thanks to all who worked and gave service on this conference, I know the mammoth effort it took and I want to thank you for doing a TERRIFIC job!

Now the Trustee meeting: This was also a very special event for me as it was my first time co-chairing a trustee meeting. First of all, it is more difficult than it looks. Second I know I tried my best to keep the agenda moving, and facilitating the meeting. I know I may have made some procedural errors, and if it affected anyone's item negatively I want to sincerely apologize, because that was NEVER my intention. I am in a program of Progress not Perfection. And I for one am always learning. And this was one great learning experience for Richie S.

I also want to thank the Trustees for allowing me to serve the board . I for one thoroughly enjoyed the experience and truly believe in the process of group conscience. And I thought you all did a very commendable job, on the agenda items and the committee reports.

I also want to thank all of you who offered kind words and thoughts, they were very helpful. And on a personal note, I am pleased with my behavior, and keeping my opinions to myself. I am learning that this program and this process is NOT about me! It is about the 'good of the fellowship'. As long as we all remember that we will all recover together. I am also pleased In my curtailing my leaving the room for the sake of a 'smoke' LOL.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Portland and another terrific conference and trustee meeting.

Peace in recovery,  
Richie S. - 1st Co-Chair, Board of Trustees  
Area 6

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10/22/07 - 1:14 PM

I would like to start by stating that the 50th Anniversary conference in LA was one of the best I have attended in the past 9 years. For me all our conferences are great, but, this one was really special. We all know how complicated it is to organize a conference for 500 people, so imagine the effort it took for 1,100 people. I would like to thank the conference organizers and congratulate the committee for a magnificent job.

For myself, I would like to admit that for my first Trustee Meeting as 2nd Co-Chair, I was very nervous. It wasn't the lack of self confidence as much as the intimidation of facing over 100 Trustees and past Trustees and having to answer questions very quickly and decisively. I must thank Tom for his confidence and support. He really calmed me down and helped me to concentrate. I am sure I made a few mistakes and I know that I could have been more decisive. I hope I have learned from my mistakes and that I will do a better job in Portland. One thing I learned is that it is OK for me to change my opinion after listening to the wisdom of the BOT and that it is OK for me to be wrong in making a decision. The will of the body usually prevails. I look forward to seeing you all in Portland, or perhaps sooner, and encourage everyone to use the Trustee Line to tell us how you feel on any item that is important to Gamblers Anonymous and recovery.

Herb B. - 2nd Co-Chair of the BOT  
Area 5

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10/24/07 - 10:12 AM

< First, let me say what a great conference L.A. was. Kudos to the members who put it all together, especially Bob W. & Tom M. for co-chairing. I thought the B.O.T. meeting was especially interesting because we had Trustees from all over the world. I think it was a great idea to begin the B.O.T. meeting at 10:00 AM on Thursday taking the pressure off of rushing the meeting to get finished by Friday at 5:00PM. At first when I saw that the seating was assigned at the dinners, I was turned off. But I experienced

meeting new people I never would have met unless we had assigned seating - so in the future I would be all for it.

The 50-year book that Steve R. put together was fabulous! Seeing all the comments in the book and all the conferences mentioned was terrific.

The choice of Mark L. to emcee on Saturday night was great as was Larry B. for being the speaker. The fact that you could not hear a pin drop said it all!

The hospitality room was in a class by itself. Whoever was responsible for the nova scotia salmon gets a gold star. Me being from New York and raving about it says it all.

The band on Friday night was spectacular. What a great night! Paul from Boston looked the coolest as 'Elvis'.

Here are some ideas for future B.O.T. meetings:

- 1- Have changes in the combo book only once a year at the B.O.T. meeting
- 2- Have Guidance Code changes only once a year at the B.O.T. meeting
- 3- Have the agenda closed 90 days before the B.O.T. meeting so that we can communicate our ideas through the Trustee Line prior to the B.O.T. meeting and not take up unnecessary time at the B.O.T. meeting.
4. Put a time limit on the agenda item comments that are made at the B.O.T. meeting.
5. In the future, I think that the people running the conference should not also be chairing the B.O.T. meeting. Because of their conference responsibilities they are constantly being called out of the room to attend to conference issues which is distracting to the progress of the B.O.T. meeting.

I'm signing off now but I'll see you all in Portland.

JUST A REMINDER: December 2nd N.Y. INTERGROUP IS HAVING OUR MINI CONFERENCE. All trustees in the Tri State area come on down and have a great time!

Mike R. - Area 15

#### Trustee meeting procedures and decisions of the Chair

10/19/07 - 12:54 AM

Hello all,

Now that the Los Angeles trustees meeting is over since a couple of weeks and that I have reviewed my notes and thoughts on this meeting, it is time that I write what has bugged me all along the meeting. It started during the Chair opening statement and word of welcome. It was said by the Chair that, during discussion on any agenda item, after two consecutive speakers either in favor or not in favor of the point or motion under discussion, he will be looking for any other speaker with an opposing view. If there were none, he will then proceed with the vote. I immediately raised a point of information as to why this new procedure was now introduced and I was told that it made no difference for other speakers to add anything in the same fashion and that it would save time. Although I disagreed, the meeting went on, with this procedure being followed all the way through the entire meeting. I am sure I missed some valuable points of view not hearing speaker number 3 or 4 or 5.

After speaking with other trustees and reviewing the Minutes of previous trustees meetings, I saw that at Farmington, in May 2005, we voted on and passed a procedure that said :

'Motion that upon introduction of a discussion item or motion on the floor and after there have been two (2) consecutive speakers either in favor or not in favor of the item, the Chair should query if there is any other speaker on the speaker list with an opposing view. If there is, that speaker should then be moved up on the speaker list. This procedure will ensure that at least one (1) opposing view would be heard before the end of the discussion period.'

It says nowhere that the vote will be called after 2 consecutive speakers of the same opinion and no speaker with an opposing view. In the meeting agenda itself, it also says, in the "Meeting format" section : " The Chair directs the meeting but the group is always the ultimate authority." I believe that the group had made a decision on this point in Farmington and I think the Chair was not right to change what the group had decided. There is but one way to change the procedures in place, which is by a motion at a trustees meeting, not otherwise. I should probably have challenged the Chair on this change but it did not cross my mind at the time.

I am not saying that this decision has changed the course of the trustees meeting but I truly believe that procedures put in place by the Body can only be changed by that same Body, not by the Chair or co-Chairs, with all due respect. The Chair would not be able to decide that Past trustees cannot speak at the meeting because the Group Conscience

has decided they are allowed to. Then, why was the Chair allowed to change another procedure without the consent of the Group conscience ?

In Portland, I expect that we either go back to what we have decided as a group conscience in Farmington or that we change it using the correct procedure.

Be well everyone  
André G. - Area 5B

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10/19/07 - 11:35 AM

I am in agreement with Andre about this subject. Before giving my reasons, I think it is important to start with the process. When this items originally came up for a vote in Connecticut, it seemed that it could have been changed for a much better outcome and now certainly emphasizes that we need a more effective procedure for airing our opinions.

We should have alternating opinions instead of 2 in favor and then anyone against. Since the Chair has reverted back to a list of speakers based on who raises their hands, we should give all eligible speakers 2 pieces of colored paper - 1 green and 1 red. When an item is presented, a person who wishes to speak on the item should hold up the respective colored paper - green for, or red against. The chairs can keep a two column list and truly give the room a balanced perspective. If there is an imbalance of people who wish to speak on one side, they should; however, if someone with an opposing position raises their hand, they would take priority to re- establish the alternating theme until the time limit has expired or nobody is left on the list to speak.

You should know that I am not in favor of past Trustees having a voice at the Trustee meetings. Yes, I understand that there is a lot of wisdom within the universe of past Trustees, and I also know that many people work on the rotation principle to give others a chance to serve. The members of the area have a good sense of who they want in the position of Trustee to represent them. Right now, past Trustees can say whatever they want as if they were current Trustees, only they don't have the responsibilities of current Trustees. If only the current Trustees could speak, we might have a bit more interest in people trying to be elected for their respective areas.

Having said that, past Trustees could indicate to their current Trustees exactly what their opinions are for presentation on the floor. Think about how many speakers just sat in their chairs and never got up to say how they felt about anything. It certainly would put more people in play with more ideas that could change the way the discussions progress before any vote.

That brings me up to the point of this response. Anyone who is eligible to speak on an issue should be allowed to speak, irrespective of whether or not 2, 3, 5 or any number or speakers have spoken on the same side. Issues get aired twice a year and everyone should be heard. If we are assured that the vote will be unanimously in the direction of the number of people who speak with the 2 similar opinion cutoff that has been arbitrarily imposed by the Chair, then I would have no objection to the new procedure. As we all know, that is anything but the case.

I submit that the chairs need to be extra diligent in the discussion process. They should be firmer and not allow discussion of a similar point with the same opinion. By that I mean that people who are for an item must bring up a different perspective on the issue. We should not handicap any discussion because the votes are never unanimous, as mentioned above. Someone may make a presentation that is different enough to change a person's mind who might have been ready to vote against the item. I know that this has happened to me. We speak about H- O-W in the Combo Book. Shouldn't we be willing to be openminded about items we vote on by hearing what everyone wants to say, so that we can honestly give each item a fair chance?

David M. - Area 12

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10/19/07 - 1:19 PM

Let me start off by saying the L.A. Conference was magnificent, from start to finish. However I was personally very disappointed with sections of the Trustee Meeting, especially the 'Out of Order' discussion on the 90 day room. I worked very hard putting together the information offered and I don't think people even looked at it. I was told at the last conference that I had to submit it to the Literature Committee, which I did. They recommended that it should be added to the 'Group Handbook'. How is it out of order?

I must say I had my serenity tested at that point. I will not quit. I will see this committee effort to a vote. It is a strong and positive way to help us keep our members. I will talk to the Literature Committee again and ask the best way to get this done correctly. If anyone has any suggestions please respond.

Andy D. - Area 12

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10/21/07 - 4:07 AM

Hello all,

I am still in awe of the LA Conference, I will take those memories with me forever. Words cannot express my gratitude to be apart of something so special. I thank my area for sending me and have tried in my report back to them, to be their eyes and ears and give the members of 8C a picture of what it was like to be apart that experience!

I wanted to talk about the end of the Trustee portion of the conference. I am not even sure what agenda item we were on, but it was one of the most grueling items that we worked on. The chair had no idea what they were doing...and then in turn, neither did I. I got so confused that I just kind of shut off. I just wanted the agenda item to be over and lost the whole point of what the party who put the item on the agenda was trying to convey. If anyone can help me out, it was when the chair was challenged, I believe it was Ritchie..not that I am trying to point fingers...I am trying to give a reference point..I believe that he admitted he was wrong..then went and did the same thing again.

My point is...I have a hard enough time trying to understand Roberts Rules and the protocol that comes in to play. This was my second Trustee conference and had a hard time following sometimes. I believe that the Chairman and Co-Chairs should maybe be given a crash course with the protocol to run the meeting or do they just learn by just jumping in?

All in all, I felt that I had done the job that my area sent me to do. I felt that I was a part of something that was wonderful and walked away with a sense of accomplishment. I do have to say that my hat is off to the Chairman and Co-chairs, I wanted to let you know that you did a great job and I certainly would not want that job!!

Deni M - Area 8C

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Hello To All,

It was great to see everyone in LA. I want to send a big thank you to those people on that conference committee for a superior job.

I have an issue that I would like to discuss in regards to the meeting format. I am thinking about placing it as an agenda item for the Portland conference. My issue is in regards to the way the chairs ran the meeting. (No hard feelings Tom, Richie, or Herb...I told you all how I felt)

I really thought that it was very unfair to vote on an agenda item when there were still people left wanting to discuss the item at hand. I was there when we established the rule that if two people speak either for or in opposition of an item then the third speaker must take the opposite stance of the first two. Ok...that seems to be fair. I also feel that if at this point in time there is no one that wants to speak in opposition to the first two speakers then it is ok to take a vote. Obviously if no one wants to speak up differently then I guess we could assume that the majority of the body thinks the same as the first two speakers.

However, and I believe this is extremely important, when there is a discussion and we have two speakers speak for and then one against and it goes back and forth for a bit...at this point I think it would be fair to assume that the body may not be completely split, but has some differing opinions. If the agenda item that is being discussed is a guidance code change, then we need a 2/3 vote. If two more speakers speak for and there is no one else that wants to speak against (after there has been some debate) then the chairperson would call the vote. The problem is, if the chairs would allow in these scenarios trustees that were still waiting to speak in favor to get up and speak, they could possibly change the opinions of some members that were going to vote the item down. This then may create a two thirds vote. However, if we do not allow people to continue speaking at times when it can be assumed that the body may have differing opinions, then we may miss a really important view point that may have persuaded someone to change their opinion on the item.

I really hope that reading this makes some sense. I know when I speak about it, it makes a lot of sense to me (I realize that doesn't always mean my opinion is right)! I feel that we are there to help our fellowship continue to grow and by shutting people up because we want to make sure that we are done with business by 5:00 on Friday is not fair to our fellow brothers and sisters that are trusting in us to help this fellowship continue to blossom. I'll be the first to admit that I enjoy the socializing at the conferences, but if I have to sit in the meeting until 6:00am Sunday morning, then so be it...that is why I am there and this program is why I am here today.

I would love to hear back from anyone with the same or differing view points. I would also ask that if there is anyone who strongly agrees with me and has an idea of how to word this to place on the next agenda as a BOT procedure item email me. If everyone thinks I'm absolutely nuts (and I am) then don't email me and I will create my own verbage to put on the agenda and you can all vote me down.

Love To All,  
Dina P. - Area 6B

**Questioning the experience of other groups with the GA HELPS phone line**

10/20/07 - 11:51 AM

Several Intergroup areas in Canada are considering joining the GA HELPS phone line. A question I would like to ask Intergroups in the USA is; why have many of your intergroups chosen not to take advantage of the unified system? and why has one group already tried it and has withdrawn? What difficulties have groups experienced with this system, if any?

Bob C. - Area 2A, Northern Alberta

10/28/07 - 7:57 PM

In Area 6D here in Georgia, we have a viable, inexpensive service that costs less than \$40 a month for everything. When the hotline was first introduced back a couple of years ago, we looked at the economics of it and stated it would make zero sense for us to join something that would potentially quadruple our costs after the first year. Gary S. tried to tell me otherwise through e-mail after e-mail but I had to listen to my members and the result was a loud no! I am not sure what the cost would be to you in Alberta. My advice is to look at the economics very carefully and project out past the first two years before you committ to something that can make your intergroup's life miserable.

Ian S. - Area 6D

**Our literature is getting diluted**

10/22/07 - 2:30 AM

As I prepared to put together an item for the literature committee, a Unity step booklet, I was doing some in depth reading. The more I read the more I realized that as time goes on our literature is getting diluted. The 3rd edition of the big book had a lot of heart to it. The description of the unity steps were a few pages each. I can relate to it, it speaks to me. Although some of the wording is outdated and very gender bias it had meat to it. Then we fast forward to the New Beginning book and cut a lot of it out. In the New Beginning book each unity step is a page or less and starts talking about stuff that really strays from the original meaning of the step. Then we move to the Blue Book (piece of junk) Sharing Through Recovery (with it's fictitious story and all) which barely has one paragraph for each unity step. Why did we do away with our twelve and twelve?

As a newer trustee I would like to know if it was laziness of past trustee that let these substandard pieces of lit out or was there something else? What was wrong with the old stuff. Are these the same trustee that I am told are allowed to speak in our trustee meetings because of their wealth of knowledge and wisdom? Can any trustee tell me truthfully that the working the steps pamphlet is an effective way to work the steps? Selling these pieces of literature is enabling rooms to use outside literature. We NEED TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING FAST!!!!!! If personal recovery depends on group unity then we as the protectors of the recovery and unity steps and the guidance code need to provide something to unify around and for. Where can I learn how to work the steps in GA? Where can anyone? I go to step meetings and wonder sometimes what some of the questions on the backs of the step pages have to do with that particular step. Yet this is what we are supposed to use.

Can I use stuff from the third edition when writing a new piece of literature???????????????

A frustrated Trustee,

Matt H. - Area 16

**Trustee Responsibilities**

10/22/07 - 5:52 PM

There a presently 15 Trustee Guidelines...

I would like to present item 16 for consideration..

A trustee visiting a room should wait for the appropriately designated time to discuss ISO or intergroup business or social activities...The procedure to address the room about business or social activities is very simple....Notify the room in advance that you have a specific purpose for the visit...Arrive early, introduce yourself to the secretary or chairperson, ask for agenda time to talk about the purpose of your visit...

It is insensitive and disrespectful to come late to a meeting, missing the rattle and hum

of the therapies, then to raise one's hand to speak, and include in the therapy an innovative and novel idea regarding NJIG finances...

This is a no brainer...

Bobby P. - Area 12

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10/23/07 - 6:32 PM

Maybe we should put a guideline 17 reminding trustees not to wear white after Labor Day.

No seriously, I hope we are not going to waste time on a international level at a convention discussing an issue that could be handled by talking to the other trustee. I think that trustees, for the most part, understand the proper way to handle themselves at a meeting. Besides that is up to the meeting chair to keep order in the room. There is no need to make a new Trustee guideline because someone ruffled someone else's feathers, is there? I think if we started down this path by the time we get to Portland we could have a hundred guidelines!!! Hopefully this won't become an agenda item. Please. Pretty please. With sugar on top.

This may be harsh, but come on.

Matt H. - Area 16

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<b>Changes to the 20 questions</b>
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10/24/07 - 2:20 AM

I hope everyone enjoyed the just concluded conference as much as I did and the membership in Los Angeles did. I have heard more than one person say that this conference was a life changing experience. I know those of us on the committee did our best to make this one of the best conferences in recent memory. Thank you all for being there and participating any way you did.

Now, I am looking forward to the Portland conference. I have already submitted one combo book change and I am possible thinking about adding up to three more, for now. I am writing to the trustee line to use this as a tool to get some feedback from other trustees about my ideas. You could either respond to the trustee line or email me back if you want it to be more private. Either way works for me and you would find my email address on the Trustee contact list.

First proposed change. Question 9, page 15, change the word often to ever. To correspond with questions, 1,2,4,5,10,11,14,15,16,19 and 20. New version would read 'Did you ever gambled until your last dollar was gone.'

Second and third would be to add the word 'ever' to questions 12 and 13. Now they would read, Were you ever reluctant... and Did gambling ever make you careless...

And also possibly question 17, Did gambling ever cause you to .....

I know these changes are close to David's proposed change from the last agenda #22. But not the same. His changes had many 'Have you' changes. My proposal is concentrating on the word 'ever'.

Any input from any trustee would be helpful and greatly appreciated. Looking forward to Portland...

Ara H. - Area 1

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<b>Displaying room guidelines in addition to being read</b>
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10/26/07 - 8:57 AM

I want to poll my brothers and sisters to see if they think it is 'appropriate' to display a printed version of our room guidelines? Mainly for me the item we announce in our room guidelines is 'Don't give therapy on anything you may be prosecuted for'. Guidelines are read at the beginning of the meeting and if someone comes in late and doesn't hear them they won't know what not to share. What are your thoughts on this?

Kevin M. - Area 6B

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10/26/07 - 10:13 AM

I'm glad that this subject was brought up. My home room has an extensive list of room guidelines that are read before the meeting starts. Every one of the items on the page has been accepted by the group during our format meetings, which we hold every 4 months after room elections. It is not a piece of literature and is an offshoot of what NJ Intergroup has approved for use in the rooms. Additionally, provisions for a 'Suggested

Meeting Format' are articulated in the Group Handbook on page 7.

Many members hear the meeting guidelines in various rooms and don't retain more than 5% of what is said. Few members are worried about conforming to the guidelines that are agreed upon by the group conscience, because they just want to give their therapy and go home. With the guidelines in front of the members as a reference, order and uniformity should improve.

Our room has items on the list such as no profanity, not mentioning amounts of money, no selling or soliciting of any merchandise or services, how many comments are allowed after each therapy, and that members under 90 days are not allowed to give comments, just to name a few.

Of course, it is critical for the Chair of the meeting AND the Secretary of the room to enforce the guidelines as they happen. Having the guidelines in front of the members only helps to eliminate the personalities when items on the list are being enforced. Also, it directly addresses the member that comes into the meeting late and may be in a room that has vastly different guidelines from other rooms All this is covered under Unity Step 4. I suggest the anyone who reads this reply go to the Red Book and read the 2 paragraphs on page 55.

David M. - Area 12

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10/26/07 - 5:06 PM

Here are our Guidelines which are read after reading the 'A Day At A Time' and before the therapy part of the meetings. We have them lamented & are placed in front of very seat along with a Combo book & updated phone each week. Tally-ho for now.

Joe B. - Area 6 C

Raleigh Guidelines

Welcome to the Raleigh Chapter of Gamblers Anonymous. The meeting starts at 8:00 PM with the reading of the entire combo book other than pages 15 & 16 followed by a reading from 'A Day At A Time'. We will have a short break around 9:00 PM.

Whatever is said in the room must remain in the room. Remember: 'Whom you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, let it stay here.'

The Chairperson may ask for speakers, or call on members at his/her discretion. Before starting your therapy, please announce: your first name with the first letter of your last name, and your clean date. Your clean date is the date of your first meeting after the completion of your last bet.

It is suggested that members do not discuss any crime for which they still may be prosecuted. Confidentiality is not necessarily a legal right, and the room itself offers no protection regarding these matters.

If a member demonstrates any inappropriate action, whether physical or verbal, in or outside of the meeting room, please tell a Trusted Servant and/or Sponsor. We all have the right to feel SAFE in the Program.

Confine your therapy to your own feelings, thoughts, and experiences. PLEASE DO NOT DIRECT YOUR THERAPY TO ANY ONE SPECIFIC PERSON, ESPECIALLY NEW MEMBERS. Try to limit your therapy to 8 to 10 minutes.

Other than in your therapy, please refrain from discussing sports betting, stocks, game shows, contests, or anything of a speculative nature.

If anyone offers or asks you for money, refuse and notify a trusted servant and/or sponsor immediately.

We are here to arrest our gambling problem, not to control it.

As stated in our By-Laws which follow the Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous: To chair an anniversary meeting a member must have attended at least 39 GA sanctioned meetings, in the prior 12 months, by self admission, irrespective of room location. For the purchase of a Medallion by the Raleigh room, the member must have attended at least 13 meetings during that 12 month period, at the Raleigh group meetings.

This is a (therapy/comment/step/anniversary/new person/open/combined) meeting.

(Combined meeting): No comments in a combined meeting.

(Other meetings): Comments will be limited to a maximum of 3 per individual therapy. Comments must be constructive, relate to your own experience, and take no more than one minute. As a guideline, if you are using the words 'I think' your comments, you are giving advice rather than relating to your own experience. No cross comments or discussion will be allowed. To make a comment, a member must have 30 days of abstinence.

12. At this time, please switch off all cell phones and pagers or place them in the silent mode.

13. Has anyone gambled since his/her last meeting?

If it's not broke, don't fix it

10/27/07 - 3:23 PM

If it's not broke, don't fix it.

I have heard this expression a few times at the BOT in the last two years. I would like to share my thoughts about this, because I feel that **this way of thinking is opposite to what Gamblers Anonymous is teaching me.**

In the New Beginning, on page 1, it is written:

'As time passes, we will need to continue to share our experiences, strengths, and hope with each other as we work toward making our Fellowship more effective in carrying the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.

New techniques need to be explored, old ones enlarged upon, or even abandoned. It is the willingness to consider change that will keep our Fellowship growing with vigor and strength. Utilizing the principle of unlimited objectives and goals, we can be assured of continued progress.'

The program is teaching me to be Honest, Open-minded and Willing.

G.A. has worked **for me** since my first meeting (it's not broke, it doesn't need fixing **for me**), but also G.A. has not worked for thousands of compulsive gamblers who still suffer.

I think that one of the best ways to be more effective in carrying the message is to improve our literature but the BOT is very reluctant to changes in the literature. In L.A., there was a proposed change for the Combo to replace the entire section of: 'What is the dream world of the compulsive gambler'. I recognized myself in the proposed text. It seemed that it had been written for me. I never identified myself in the present text in the Combo on page 11 and G.A. worked for me anyway, but if the text was improved to reflect the reality of today, maybe G.A. would work for one more compulsive gambler who still suffers. It failed by a vote of 9-79. I respect group conscience but I feel sad because if I remember well, the main argument that I heard against was: 'If it's not broke, don't fix it'.

Another change in literature 'Suggestions for a Successful 90 Day Room' was ruled out of order for the second time. (Just as a reminder, the 90 day room was created to increase new member retention.) In Chicago, it was ruled out of order because a motion cannot be accepted for new literature without going to the Literature Committee for approval first. In L.A. it was ruled out of order because the literature committee had taken the pamphlet it was given and submitted it as an insert into existing literature and that the literature committee did not have the right to change the literature like that.

I am not challenging the procedures. If a procedure exists, it should be followed, but each Committee has a Co-Chair Liaison which knows a lot more than me about the BOT procedure and in both cases the motion would not have been ruled out of order if the Co-Chair Liaison had advised the Committee members of the right way to proceed. I am not pointing fingers here, we all make mistakes, but here we have a new piece of literature which has been postponed twice for procedural reasons which would have been easily avoided.

On the other hand, I would like to thank all the trusted servants of the Organizing Committee. This 50th Anniversary Celebration was my best Conference ever.

Robert I. - Area 5B

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