

Trustee Line – Current Issue

January 2020

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Thoughts From The Trustees – Current and Past

Disclaimer – The Trustee Line is a function of the Board of Trustees of Gamblers Anonymous. It is intended solely as a forum for members of the Board of Trustees to share opinions on issues related to Gamblers Anonymous. Any postings in this or any other edition of the Trustee Line are not to be construed as the opinion of Gamblers Anonymous, as a whole. The publication of any items on the Trustee Line does not constitute an endorsement or statement of approval or acknowledgment by Gamblers Anonymous of what the contents are.

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

Subjects that receive submissions from at least 13 different people, will trigger an email blast to all the current and past Trustees, signifying a 'Hot Topic Alert' on the Trustee Line.

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1. Cell Phone Use During Meetings

Jan 1, 2020 – 9:00am

In one of the rooms I attend, there is a problem with a few people overdoing it with their phones. Specifically, they are watching live sporting events. How do you handle this type of situation?

There are also many people that are texting during the meeting.

The suggestion is read at the beginning of the meeting that phones should be off or silent and kept out of sight.

Stuart B. – Trustee – Area 14, New York

2. Liability Insurance

Jan. 4, 2020 – 10:18am

When a location requires liability insurance how does any inter group or individual meeting handle that?

Ernie N. – Trustee – Area 8A, Minnesota

Jan. 6, 2020 – 9:50pm

We have come across the issue of insurance when searching for a meeting room. There are churches that require it. Unfortunately, since we could not afford that expense, we had to keep on looking. Eventually we were able to find a location. Wish I had a better answer for you.

Nan V. – Trustee – Area 13A, Maryland

Jan. 8, 2020 – 12:35pm

Regarding the insurance question, just this morning, I was able to obtain a quote for a local Gam-Anon Intergroup. The premium for 4 rooms was only \$395 per year.

Stuart B. – Trustee – Area 14, New York

Jan. 8, 2020 – 3:28pm

In Area 2 there were a few rooms that needed insurance and they got together under one policy and split the cost. The increase per location was minimal so it really helps if multiple rooms can share the expense. It is unfortunate that the BOR isn't able to purchase a general policy for the entire country like they do in other programs. It may have something to do with being an international program and not being able to cover areas outside the US. Who knows. I heard this came up at a BOT meeting before but it was before my time.

Beth Z. – Trustee – Area 2, California

Jan. 9, 2020 – 8:40pm

Thanks everyone I feel that there are options now thanks again

Ernie N. – Trustee – Area 8A, Minnesota

Jan. 15, 2020 – 12:50pm

We have three groups meeting at the Burbank Emmanuel Church for about 14 years. In 2015 they came to us and required \$1,000,000 liability insurance to continue meeting there. We had about one month to submit the proof of insurance. We had a choice to find a new location or get insurance. Our group (with the help of other trustees) was able to find the insurance for \$550 a year to cover all three groups. Today we take money out of the collection and pay the rent first, then put money aside for the insurance, and buy literature when needed etc. Since our three groups range from 25 members to 4 at our Tuesday am group, we divide the cost by percentage. It has worked for five years and so far we have had no issues or need to move.

Ara H – Trustee – Area 1, California

Jan. 19, 2020 – 6:00pm

Ernie,

Area 12 intergroup provides a group policy for all the groups should their meeting location require. Our insurance committee also researched to get one of our sister South Jersey Intergroup area 13B included in our policy. Unfortunately, the insurance company underwriting's ruling was because they were outside area 12 geographic area boundary the policy couldn't cover them. If you need any additional information and would like to speak to a member of area 12 insurance committee please email me and I'll put you in touch with the committee.

Walter G. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

In response to Stuart B's comment that there had been a lot of emails sent regarding agenda items: you're correct, Stuart. I sent a few emails to all trustees, using email addresses from the Confidential Trustee Listing (CTL).

I used that method because we've learned that pathetically-few take advantage of the Trustee Line, and even fewer even bother to read it.

I wanted to reach as many trustees as possible regarding certain items, as I consider these particular items especially important, not only to me, but to all of our members.

Whenever I want to contact another trustee on just about any matter, if I don't already have his/her email address in my contacts, I look it up on the "CTL". I wish I didn't have to; I wish I could just post something onto the Trustee Line and know everyone will see it. Maybe someday?

To our Canadian friends, Wonderful conference. Thank you!!

Your friend in recovery,

John B – Trustee – Area 13, Pennsylvania

Jan 8, 2020 – 3:30pm

It is cumbersome to have to research each trustee's email from the CTL in order to communicate. There must be a more efficient way to talk to each other between meetings. Unfortunately, the Trustee Line isn't being used as robustly as it could be so it is hard to know how to proceed.

Beth Z. – Trustee – Area 2, California

Jan 8, 2020 – 4:11pm

John, as chairperson of the Trustee Website Committee, I have made an effort to find ways to make this website more effective to all trustees. One thing our committee has already implemented is a new agenda submission form, with drop downs and better categorization. Advancements like that will help this program survive in the digital age.

As we discussed on the phone, the committee is working on implementing a new feature for the Trustee Line. There are two ideas that would drastically change how the Trustee Line works.

Firstly, we are working to have all current Trustees added as members of the site. There will be no log-in only sections, but this will allow for emails to be sent out en masse, such as when the Trustee Line is updated. Our approach would be to add everyone and then allow for people to "unsubscribe" through clicking a link on an email. Stage two will involve setting up a way for past Trustees and non Trustees to "subscribe" to the emails as well.

The second approach is to turn the Trustee Line into a Blog Style page setup since the website uses WordPress. This would allow us to make dated entries and allow users to make replies that would show, once approved. The approach would require each trustee to manually subscribe to the posts and we are not sure if each blog entry would need to be subscribed to or not. We are testing this out. This method also opens the website to a lot more spam traffic since spam robots love to enter information into "reply boxes".

Either way, I agree that if we want a tool like this to work, we need to bring it into the 21st century. I am not sure if we will have the feature ready by Seattle or not, but we are working on things behind the scenes. This is all volunteer based, as is every committee, so we can only work as fast as schedules allow.

In regards to the CTL and contacting all Trustees about topics, I propose an alternate idea. Perhaps you can submit an agenda item (not sure what it would fall under) that would allow for a current Trustee to request a mass email be sent in regards to agenda items. This can be something that gets requested and then vetted by the executive board, the trustee website, etc for relevance and appropriateness before sending out. I think the idea of making the trustee line more prominent is better, but there is more than one way to skin a cat.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

4. Seattle Conference/BOT Meeting

Jan. 8, 2020 – 4:09pm

Having never been to the Pacific Northwest, I will be getting to Seattle on Tuesday 4/21 in order to have Wednesday free for sightseeing. Is anyone else doing the same? Maybe we can get together to take a short tour. Perhaps rent a car?

Please respond here, or find me on the confidential trustee listing and call/text me.

Stuart B. – Trustee – Area 14, New York

5. Pressure Relief Group Committee

Jan. 11, 2020 – 10:04am

The Pressure Relief Group Committee is looking for members. If you are interested please email me [alanj5994 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:alanj5994@gmail.com).

Alan J. – Trustee – Area 15, New York

6. Quick Response Meeting

Jan. 12, 2020 – 9:16am

In response to the Quick Response Meeting, why was this necessary? At what point did communication and unity breakdown to result in this situation?

Firstly, if a room or intergroup makes changes that are in violation of our Guidance Code, and we, as a Board, vote that the changes are a violation, why did the individual room or intergroup not go back to the previous version of their own guidelines? No new meeting or vote would need to take place to remove those items, they should have just been stricken, as if never placed in the first place, and we move on. Why did this not happen?

Second, and this goes back to Louisville, but a similar issue came up when Trustees were elected to an area under these same conflicting guidelines. In Louisville, the board had not explicitly voted that the changes made were in violation of the Guidance Code. I can understand, without the explicit classification at the time, that some Trustees voted against removing them at the time, however, to those Trustees, and to any new Trustees, just because a vote happened that way in Louisville, does not equate to now. We now have explicit direction from our very own Board that the Election Guidelines used were in violation.

Third, I always remind people, when we speak on topics, we need to always adhere to the Principles of Gamblers Anonymous that have helped this Fellowship grow and continue into 2020. The principles are clear on this topic.

1) Our Trustee Guidelines tell us in number 3 that we are responsible to “Uphold the Guidance Code, and all decisions made by the Board of Trustees (not fulfilling this affects G.A. as a whole).”
2) Recovery Step 1 – Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on group unity. If some individual groups set stricter requirements than those in our Guidance Code and other groups do not, the unity is lost, and our common welfare will suffer.

I again wrap back to why this is even an issue that needs to be voted on here. The principles and facts seem very clear. If the group in question will not accept the Board of Trustees decisions from Montreal, and have held a Trustee Election without changing their Guidelines, then their election should already be invalid, no vote needed.

I don't agree with everything in the Guidance Code. That doesn't mean I get to ignore the parts I don't like. That kind of Stinkin' Thinkin' is what helped my character flaws grow. As Trustees, Trusted Servants of the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship, we MUST adhere to the entire Guidance Code, even if we disagree with it. If you cannot adhere to it, our alternatives are clear, either resign as a Trustee, OR submit agenda items to change the parts you don't like. This is how our Fellowship can grow. I hope no one resigns but that everyone submits agenda items. If we are not working towards bettering our lives, we are working towards worsening it. The same is true for Gamblers Anonymous.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 13, 2020 – 1:45pm

I want to agree with what Mike says. None of this should have come this far.

That said, re. the situation in Louisville: for those not familiar with it, Area 12's intergroup voted to change their intergroup's "Guidance Code" to have stricter requirements to be a trustee than our G. A. Guidance code. As a result, in Louisville we (BOT) discussed ad nauseam whether their trustees' elections were valid. Unfortunately, although the consensus of the Board was that the elections were "improper", the BOT did nothing definitive.

I, personally said at the microphone that as far as I was concerned, we were discussing a 'moot' point, since we were talking about non-trustees. (Obviously, the product of an illegal election is "fruit of the poisonous tree")

None of the members elected from Area 12 to serve as trustees were rookies. All had substantial time in the program, and all had a responsibility to be intimately familiar with our Guidance Code. (I believe that one was even a past-trustee.) For any of them to claim they didn't know the rules is absolutely ridiculous. The Guidance Code is very clear about an intergroup setting stricter requirements for trustees. Unfortunately, agenda item #25, calling for a vote to nullify area 12's election, failed. My personal translation of that vote is: 38 trustees said they were fine with area 12 changing the rules, and voted not to nullify the election. And 8 trustees 'abstained', which to me means "I don't care". If 46 of our trustees are content with being "loosey-goosey" about the structure of our fellowship, then that structure is in serious danger.

Like mike, I don't always agree with everything in the Guidance Code. However, as a member, and especially as a Trustee, I must sometimes put my personal feelings aside. If I disagree about something enough, I know the procedures for changing it. For me, being a Trustee isn't about John; its about the good of the whole.

Trustee election will be held this Spring, before we meet in Seattle. If the area 12 situation with their "Guidance Code" isn't resolved by then, I think the first item on our agenda in Seattle should be a "Motion to strike all current members claiming to be trustees from area 12 from the list of current trustees."

John B. – Trustee – Area 13, Pennsylvania

Jan. 14, 2020 – 10:30pm

In regards to Area 12 election, there is a point that was not mentioned in the mailing to each Trustee.

The Trustee that was elected ran unopposed; the Guidance Code did not deny any individual the right to run.

There was no basis to call for this vote based on the BOT Guidance Code so it seems to me that the Executive Board violated their own Guidance Code.

John F. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 15, 2020 – 9:38am

What makes trustee election of area 12 such a emergency that we need to do a quick response vote ?

Which doesn't allow for question or comments from the 125 trustees.

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 15, 2020 – 6:45pm

Lorenzo, your commenting on here proves that Trustees CAN question and comment about the Quick Response Meeting. As far as why this is an emergency, that is in my response on topic 7.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 16, 2020 – 1:40pm

A quick response meeting should be used only in an emergency, i.e. expense items over the BOR limit, a vacancy of the IES position, etc. A quick response meeting requires a response from the voting Trustees within 15 days. Responses will be counted as though it were a physical meeting.

Based on this definition can someone tell me how an Intergroup election fits into this category?

John F. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 16, 2020 – 2:20pm

There are a few key words in there that need to be looked at.

First, the paragraph says “should”. This is a lot different than “must” or “shall”. “Should” means that it can also be used for non-emergencies, if so wished.

Second, the list of items explaining what an emergency might be ends with “etc” meaning that those are not the only instances of what constitutes an emergency, but that other things can also fit the definition. It leaves the definition broad, allowing many things to be determined an emergency.

The reason the Area 12 Trustee Election fits into this is because Area 12 is of the opinion that their Trustee Election was valid, even though it was held outside the parameters of the Guidance Code. This is a serious issue on several levels.

At the most basic level, this situation causes Area 12 to think they have an additional vote that they won't have if the Election is void. Also, the Area sends Trustees to the Trustee Meetings and International Conferences. Area 12 should not be paying out extra monies for someone to attend who isn't a Trustee. This would be especially unfair if this issue was tabled until Seattle. The costs to send someone out there from New Jersey that ended up not really being a Trustee would be high.

Also, as I have stated before, this is a breach of unity. Area 12 has been given direction and results from the Board of Trustees. Area 12 did not like the results and is ignoring it. This doesn't just affect the Trustees or Intergroup, it affects all the rooms in the Area that are not in compliance.

In the end, the way the procedure is written, a Quick Response Meeting can be called over any item, not just limited to emergencies. However, In this case, I applaud our Executive Board for acting on Behalf of the Board of Trustees in calling this Quick Response meeting because THIS IS AN EMERGENCY and needs to be settled as soon as possible.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 18, 2020 – 9:40am

Whether you are for or against this issue is not the question for our groups in New England. we would like to know how and why this warrants an emergency vote . thank you

John L – Trustee – Area 11, New England (Massachusetts)

Jan. 18, 2020 – 5:30pm

Jack, I read the minutes from Louisville and cannot find where 27 Trustees believe that Area 12 election should have been invalidated.

Frank M. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 19, 2020 – 3:10pm

To the Trustees of area 12 that are going rouge on the GA program and what it stands for. I find it troubling that you don't see what kind of trouble you are causing in the program that has saved my life and thousands of others. Although I agree with the changes you are trying to make in the program there are ways to do it and guidelines and rules on how to do it. You have to look at yourselves at what you are doing to the program. I used to have to ALWAYS prove that I was ALWAYS right and I would do anything at any cost to make myself look good. When you spend so much time looking for loopholes in the program which I'm sure we have and spend so much time looking for them you have to sit back and ask yourself "why am I in this program?" I came into the program because I am a compulsive gambler and have learned that once you stop making the bet you have to start to work on yourself and your character defects. Once you start to do that you will start to have "recovery" and start to reap the benefits of recovery and living a normal way of life. You guys are putting personalities and egos before principals and hurting GA as a whole and I find it VERY disturbing. We spent MANY hours in Louisville and you still don't see it. I hope after this emergency vote is over you see what is going on. I'm all for change, AS LONG AS IT IS DONE THE CORRECT WAY !!!!!

Andy G. – Trustee – Area 13B, South Jersey

Jan. 19, 2020 – 7:30pm

Andy, as always I will welcome everyone's input and value the open lines of communication. But everything that you said about area 12 can also be said about the executive board. This program has saved my life. The recovery and unity steps have given me a new way of thinking and living. All the information that I personally need for serving the fellowship are laid out in the unity steps. And what I believe to be detrimental to this fellowship, is when our leaders step away from the roll of trusted servants and go down the road of governing.

I too believe that we have spent too much time on this subject. Unfortunately without clarification of what exactly the executive board's rool is , this will continue to happen. As it did to the room in Long Island where a placard was believed to be affecting GA as a whole. And in Florida wear a bracelet was also believed to be affecting GA as a whole. Both times the belief and attempted enforcement came from the executive board. Luckily the trustees that the executive board serves who are able to come up with their own conclusion. But the problem of the executive board overstepping based on the information available through the guidance code and rules and

procedures and former minutes was never solved.

As area 12 has consistently tried working with the executive board on this matter with no avail from the executive board. Maybe the time in Seattle will be better spent clarifying the executive boards roll. Thanks to all who are been participating in this dialogue and to those who are just reading and may not quite understand what's going on please feel free to contact me directly. For the love of the fellowship.

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 19, 2020 – 9:15pm

In response to Andy calling Area 12 “rogue”. I really feel you should choose your words more carefully. Rogue is defined as a dishonest or unprincipled man. Not one of the Area 12 Trustees that has posted on this site fits that criteria, least of all me.

As all should be made aware 39 “weekly” meetings has been in the Area 12 Guidance Code for a minimum of 22 years. The mountain that has been made out of this molehill is remarkable.

Frank M tried to work this out with the BOT chairperson. Frank assumed the chairperson role as of January 1 and requested only until this months Intergroup meeting to remedy the issue. He was rebuffed in his efforts.

Andy should apologize to all Area 12 Trustees. No one has hurled personnel attacks until now. Where do I find that in principled recovery?

John F. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

7. Validating an Election

Jan. 15, 2020 – 3:04pm

I'm looking for clarification. Have not been able to find anything in the guidance code that gives the executive board power to validate a area election. Nor have I found anything that gives the executive board power to enforce the guidance code by any means necessary. If anybody knows where this information exists please let me know. Thank you

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 15, 2020 – 6:45pm

Lorenzo, I don't think you are understanding the issue clearly. When Area 12 failed to remove the conflicting items from it's guidelines, even AFTER the Board of Trustees came together and voted with Group Conscience that the items were against the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code, any future election is automatically invalid. I have heard you specifically talk about the importance of

Group Conscience, but when the Group Conscience of the entire Board of Trustees agrees on something you don't, it is discounted.

It doesn't matter if only one person ran for the position. It doesn't matter if that person meets all the requirements of the Guidance Code. What matters is, they were elected under stricter guidelines than allowed. As soon as that election took place, the results became invalid for purposes of Gamblers Anonymous. That member was not elected a Trustee of Gamblers Anonymous, period.

This entire idea of bringing the issue to the entire Board as a Quick Meeting is because this is an issue of Unity. Area 12 is breaking Unity and that affects Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, to a level that cannot wait until Seattle. If a rogue group thinks it can get away with doing whatever they want, and our Board of Trustees allows it to happen, then other groups may follow suit and soon every area of the US will have a completely different GA program. This meeting being called allows for the Board of Trustees to attempt, once again, to help Area 12 get on the correct path of removing infringing guidelines and getting back in congruence with the Guidance Code before it gets to a point the area has no more Trustees.

In your asking the question the way you did, you know full well that those specific words are not in the guidance code, but they don't have to be. Your wording is deflecting the actual issue at hand and trying to make it look like Area 12 is being bullied by made up things. Area 12 is not being bullied, Area 12 is being a bully to the entire Board of Trustees. This issue has gone on far too long, and the Board has attempted several times to clarify things through votes, but I feel like it is no longer about right or wrong, it's a desire for Area 12 to win. If that is true, that is a terrible mindset.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 20, 2020 – 9:40pm

Mike thank you for your quick response to my question. I would just like to clarify, your answer to my question is that it does not exist in the guidance code that the executive board has the power they assume they have? And that all the trustees have to be okay with the executive board making unilateral decisions? This might be a little confusing to some as it is to me. If the guidance code is what needs to be upheld above everything else including the unity steps. Then shouldn't it be easier for all the trustees to understand if he assumed power of the executive board?

I feel like some of the responses that I get sometimes from trustee and from the executive board are like the response is my mom and dad used to tell me." It's like that because I said so".

And as far as being bullied, I think it's clear to anyone that's been paying attention that for the past 18 plus months area 12 has been under attack buy some of its own members and by the executive board. And some might feel that this is because of a guidance code violation. But it is much deeper than that. Once some of the trustees from area 12 started asking questions, like who gave the executive board the power they believe they have? When did that happen? And where is it written?

Right now it's area 12 that's going through this. Before us it was a room in Long Island with a placard and the room in Florida with bracelets. Next it could be your room or your area. My understanding of the GA Fellowship and the unity steps is that we're supposed to help each other and be available to help the still suffering. And I believe from a lot of conversations that the trustees that I've spoken to feel the same way.

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 15, 2020 – 10:00pm

Lorenzo, it is a very unfair determination to jump to the conclusion that just because something isn't in the Guidance Code, then it doesn't exist. That is a very hasty generalization. I am not read up on the minutes from every BOT meeting, but I know that some decisions are made in those meetings that don't make it into the Guidance Code or other document, just as the vote in Montreal that Area 12 has stricter election requirements, which is disallowed by the Guidance Code. That is in no other formal document than the minutes from Montreal, but it is equally as valid as if it were in the Guidance Code. Maybe that is an agenda item you can make if you want to see something created that captures those decisions.

Area 12 is NOT under attack. Area 12 is acting outside the Group Conscience of the Board of Trustees and putting themselves ahead of every other member of Gamblers Anonymous. Area 12 has brought all of this on themselves by continuing to be in violation of the Guidance Code. The entire idea of trying to shift the blame of this to the executive board is a Red Herring. Even if everything you said was right about the executive board overreaching, which I don't think is so, it doesn't change the actions Area 12 has made. Even in your response just now, you completely deflect anything about the actions Area 12 has made. You deflect and try to make someone else look bad, in this case "other members of Area 12" and the Executive Board, so that you don't have to face Area 12's problem. And it seems like you are hoping other Trustees will play into that thought process, but that deflection is unfair and I will call it out when I see it. Until Area 12 acknowledges the errors, reverts back, it will be seen as rogue by every area that does care enough to follow the Guidance Code.

The thing area 12, the room in Long Island, and the room in Florida all had/have in common is that they were/are circumventing procedure. It would be one thing if there was no written direction on an item, but here, the written direction is clear and all three issues were clear violations. I am thankful that we have an Executive Board that isn't afraid to look at situations of rogue areas and rooms and is willing to hold those groups accountable to the Gamblers Anonymous program.

I have to set my personal beliefs aside when the principles are clearly stated. How can a Trustee, or any member, proudly stand up and help the still suffering if they are unwilling to follow the Group Conscience of Gamblers Anonymous, as set forth by all the Boards of Trustees? Simple, you can't.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 15, 2020 – 11:00pm

Mike thanks again for the quick response. I always value everyone's point of view.

Maybe my first question was too specific, so I'll ask a broader question. Where does it state in either the guidance code, rules and procedures, or minutes from passed meetings that the default setting is if it's not explained clearly the executive board gets to make a unilateral decision that they deem fit.

My understanding of how a group conscience works, is that if someone is not following the conscience of the group then it is up to the group to discuss and determine what's best. By having this imaginary default setting the executive board is circumventing 125 or so trustees.

Which I also believes falls under we are but trusted servants we do not govern, this feels like an awful lot of governing.

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 16, 2020 – 2:45pm

Paragraph 29 of our current Rules and Procedures for Trustee Meetings specifically discusses “Quick Response Meetings” and what they can be used for. Two examples are provided, neither of which apply here. However, the use of the word “should” in the definition obviously gives the Executive Board some latitude to use this mechanism as they see fit. For those Trustees who believe this mechanism was not used correctly (I am not one of them), please feel free to place an item on the Seattle agenda that gives more structure to Paragraph 29. In the meantime, let’s deal with the real question at hand which is the validity of the recent Area 12 election.

This issue didn’t suddenly come on the horizon. Item #16 in Louisville (“Should we do away with the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code”) was soundly defeated 87-9. If ever there was a vote in endorsing what we are all about, this was it. Unfortunately, when it came to the next logical step which was to invalidate Area 12’s 2018 election because of a clause in their governing documents that was stricter than what was in the Guidance Code, 46 Trustees became inexplicably “squishy” and refused to act. Look up the definition of “enabling behavior” and that is precisely what those 46 Trustees did, but as gamblers in recovery, we have learned that it is sometimes better to just “turn it over” and move on. However, despite these results, the fact that 27 Trustees DID believe the election should have been invalidated sent enough of a message to Area 12 that they could have done the right thing, changed their governing documents, and held a new Guidance Code-compliant election. That would have ended things once and for all. I know that is what my Intergroup would have done under the same circumstances. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Now, fast forward to the Montreal meeting where Items 32 and 33 were passed and Area 12 was given yet one more bite at the apple to change its governing documents and hold a Guidance Code-compliant election. Again, this did not happen. The fact that the Trustee who was elected on 12/27/19 ran unopposed or that this person may, in fact, have met proper Guidance Code criteria for running is of no moment since we’ll never know if there was someone out there who might have run but was dissuaded from doing so because of Area 12’s stricter requirements. How many more “messages” can the Board of Trustees reasonably send before it becomes obvious that something more needs to be done? This Quick Response meeting is the perfect opportunity to undo our previous actions in Louisville. Let’s not let it go to waste.

Jack R. – Trustee – Area 1A, Orange County, California

Jan. 16, 2020 – 8:00pm

Jack thank you for your input on the matter. Unfortunately , paragraph 29 does not mention anything about the executive board having power. Both yourself and Mike are talking about a topic. I’m asking a simple question. If the answer is there is nothing in the guidance code, rules and procedures or past minutes oh, then that’s the answer and I’ll live with it. But if the answer is it doesn’t exist and they are assuming their power then that’s something that needs to be discussed. Thanks again

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 17, 2020 – 2:00am

Lorenzo:

If your question is whether or not the Executive Board has the power to call for a Quick Response Meeting, I would direct you to Paragraph 29 of the Rules and Procedures which says in part "... Quick response meetings can ONLY (emphasis mine) be called by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or, by the 1st. co-chair, if the Chairman is incapacitated...". I'm not aware of the Executive Board as a group, or any members of the Executive Board as individuals, claiming, or even asking for, power to do anything beyond that.

Jack R – Trustee – Area 1A, Orange County, California

Jan. 17, 2020 – 11:00am

Once again thanks for your comment Jack.

Where in paragraph 29 does it state at the executive board can use a quick response meeting as a way to enforce something ?My question continues to remain we're in our literature of any kind does it state at the executive board is a governing body ?

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 17, 2020 – 11:15am

Lorenzo, I don't understand where you are making this jump. We are but Trusted Servants, we do not Govern. You are claiming that the executive board is acting as a governing body and I think that is incorrect. As Trusted Servants, the executive board, as voted in by the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Trustees, themselves, are responsible to serve the fellowship.

To serve the fellowship, we, as trusted servants, MUST protect the fellowship. The next question would be, how is that done? It is done by ensuring that the By-Laws, Guidance Code, and other decisions made by this Board of Trustees and past Boards of Trustees are followed.

To say that the executive board is governing would mean to say they are the ones enacting the rules and regulations. This is not true. The Board of Trustees acts as a governing body only in things affecting the fellowship as a whole. In that capacity we vote on agenda items that affect change in the program. Only the Board of Trustees can do that, not the executive board.

Can you explain why you think the executive board has governed and not simply acted as trusted servants protecting the already established rules and guidelines of Gamblers Anonymous?

You might jump and say, they threatened to remove areas for non-compliance. While I don't recall any specific writing to reference, even a situation like that is not overstepping power or governing. Our Guidance Code clearly defines what a group is. If an area doesn't wish to follow those already established rules, then they are removing themselves. The executive board is merely acting as Trusted Servants in that capacity.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 17, 2020 – 5:00pm

Lorenzo, as far as I can tell, all the Executive Board did was put a question before the Board of Trustees. They are not “enforcing” anything; they are asking the Board of Trustees whether or not they want to “enforce” something. Any decision that is made is ultimately made by the Trustees.

If this was all about “enforcement” or acting as a governing body, the Executive Bard would simply tell the Trustees to pound sand.

Jack R – Trustee – Area 1A, Orange County, California

Jan. 17, 2020 – 5:00pm

Mike, once again thank you for the quick response and the continued dialogue. You are correct the executive board act as trusted servants for the Board of Trustees. I am just having a hard time understanding where you or anybody else makes the jump to where the executive board was given the Authority or the power to act as protectors and enforcers of the guidance code. Ambiguity in a written document goes against the party that drafted it. Very simply I am stating that just because something is unclear doesn't mean you try to fit a square peg in a round hole. It means you go back to the drawing board and figure it out as a group.

Lorenzo T. – Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

8. Local Area Guidance Codes

Jan. 15, 2020 – 10:10pm

I would like to know if each area submits their Guidance Code to the Board of Trustees to ensure that there are no conflicts?

I just read Mike's determination that any election is null and void if their guidance code is stricter than the board's. Where did you find this written or is this your interpretation?

John F. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

Jan. 15, 2020 – 10:15pm

John, I can only speak for our Area, 6A, but we send all of our Intergroup minutes to ISO. For our “guidance code” we follow the Intergroup article, set forth by the Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code. I didn't know other groups made their own Guidance Code. Since you are trying to find fault in the election process because something may or may not be written, where is it written that your area can make its own Guidance Code to begin with?

To answer where I find written documentation about the Area 12 Election not being a Gamblers Anonymous Trustee Election, it is in the Guidance Code. The Guidance Code clearly sets the

standards for a Trustee Election. The Guidance Code also includes the section that an Intergroup cannot set stricter conditions. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that, if your election followed standards any different from the Guidance Code, then your area did not hold a Gamblers Anonymous Trustee Election. That is not so much an interpretation but rather just reading the Guidance Code.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A, North/Central Florida

Jan. 21, 2020 – 12:02pm

When I was going to the Coventry, CT Wednesday night meeting we had a provision that a GA Member would have to attend 39 GA Meetings in the Coventry Room(GA POLICE) to be able to celebrate all successive anniversaries and pinnings!

When I became a Trustee, 21 years ago, I realized that we were in violation of the GA Guidance Code! We held an emergency meeting and dropped the provision. No meeting or intergroup should make a special requirement; or a provision less than or greater than the GA Guidance Code requirement to celebrate all successive anniversaries and pinnings!

Ronny W. – Area 17, Connecticut

Jan. 28, 2020 – 5:42pm

At the Area 12 Intergroup meeting on January 27, it was decided to immediately remove the Articles that were not conforming with the board of trustees guidance Code. More specifically, the word “weekly” and the 27 meeting requirement within our area were removed.

I hope this puts an end to the saga that has gone on for way to long.

John F. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey

9. Question for the Executive Board

Jan. 17, 2020 – 12:10am

I will ask this question directly to David M, Andy R. and the rest of the executive board

The items that Andy R and David M are stating and called for a Quick Meeting based on the 2 items.

I submit that the Quick Response Meeting is totally out of order and should be recalled. Based on these items are not part of the GC as it stands at the moment. Those items just passed the first vote and have not been voted on the second vote. Therefore, are not part of the GC at the moment of the Quick Response Vote.

Please clarify your reasons to remove Area 12?

Gary S. – Past Trustee – Area 12, New Jersey