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**Trustee Line for February 2017**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 2/28/17.

**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 do not constitute an endorsement or statement of approval or acknowledgement 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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**Veterans**

2/15/17 - 10:17 AM

There are various opportunities available to recovering compulsive gamblers to provide assistance to those who are still suffering. Consider helping veterans who have sacrificed on behalf of all of us. There are programs at Veteran Affairs Hospitals where veterans are receiving treatment for drug and alcohol addictions. Many of the veterans have a gambling problem, too.

Out-patient and in-patient programs exist at the East Orange, New Jersey Veteran Affairs Hospital. Other VA facilities around the country offer such services. For the past few years, I have been volunteering at the East Orange hospital. Offering to speak at their out-patient sessions on a monthly basis provides needed awareness. Weekly, I conduct a GA meeting for the patients confined to the hospital because of their drug and/or alcohol addictions. Some of the veterans who attend the meetings discover that they have a compulsive gambling problem. Others realize that close relatives have issues with problem gambling. For all of the patients, the realization that another addiction exists like their drug and/or alcohol addiction is informative and helpful. Replacing one addiction with another is common.

Most of the meetings include a featured speaker from one of the GA meetings in the state. Discussions, including questions and answers, are a part of each meeting. Carrying the message of hope is always a rewarding experience for the GA participants. If you have a couple of hours a week available to help, it is suggested that you contact a VA hospital in your area and offer to speak there or offer to start a GA meeting for their patients. Your own recovery will be enhanced by helping veterans.

Respectfully,  
Vinny B. - Area 12, New Jersey

**Copying GA Literature**

2/15/17 - 11:05 PM

Greetings, Fellow Trustees; I'd appreciate some guidance:

Recently, I attended one of our meetings that designate 1 meeting a month as a "Step Meeting". As the room was being set up, the secretary placed a copy of the

'Step Two' page from our "Working the Steps" booklet.

When I mentioned that copying of GA literature is not allowed, unless specifically designated for that purpose, she referred me to our "Gamblers Anonymous Step Meeting Handbook", which states on page 2: "Everyone has a Blue Book or a photo copy of the complete step text being worked." (For anyone wondering, I refer to the Step Meeting Handbook as 'Revised 5/02, Printed 6/04')

Question: There were 26 members present at the meeting. As far as I'm concerned the room either should have had 26 Step Meeting Handbooks, or have a lesser number of books and let the members share them. Am I correct?

See you in Cherry Hill.  
Your friend in recovery,  
John B. - Area 13, Philadelphia

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2/16/17 - 12:32 AM

John,

The answer to your question is that the 26 members present at the meeting should have 26 original copies of the yellow 'The Gamblers Anonymous Step Meeting Handbook', which item 29 from the long order form, which costs \$1.25 each.

It was 100% correct of you to cite Article VII, Section 5, that was passed in San Diego '16.

**All Gamblers Anonymous literature, books, and service pins should be purchased from Gamblers Anonymous through the International Service Office (I.S.O.) except when otherwise approved by the Board of Trustees. Copying of any GA approved literature is prohibited, unless specifically designated for that purpose. Such designation will be listed on the item(s), where applicable.**

Having said that, I find it disingenuous of the Secretary of that room to try and justify why it was okay to distribute copies and then reference the booklet as supportive documentation for her actions. The middle of page 2 of that publication has a header of: 'One Group's Experience'. The section continues with: **'The following comments were made by a Gamblers Anonymous group about their Step Meeting.'**

What she referred to was what another group was doing. It is **NOT** a statement of the Board of Trustees that gives approval to photocopying any of our literature. Since the original publication, the intensity and awareness of intellectual property rights, which also include copyrights, has exploded in activity.

It wasn't until the early 2000s that the Board of Regents engaged one of the top intellectual property firms on the East Coast. This was the beginning of Gamblers Anonymous securing all its intellectual property. Moving closer to our current time, there was increased attention regarding making all groups aware the copying was not permitted, based on US copyright laws. It still continued as, those people who are most interested in doing things their way, are the first ones to shout from the rafters: 'Show me where it says we can't do \_\_\_\_\_.'

Well, that day arrived last Fall in San Diego on October 6th, 2016, when that change to the Guidance Code was formalized. The item passed the 1st vote in Phoenix in Spring of with a 94.3% margin. It passed the 2nd vote in San Diego with a 97.1% margin. The reality is that items in the Guidance Code need to pass with margins of at least 66.7%. Passing it is just that, passing it. I mention the higher actual margins to aid those who need to see it in print, to think more about doing the next right thing, not just what the rooms want to do that affects Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

Now the room in question, in fact all such rooms had better be concerned with Article VII, Section 1, which states: **'Whenever two or more persons with a desire to stop gambling meet together on a regular, weekly scheduled basis to discuss their gambling problem, they will be known as a group, only if they commit themselves to follow Gamblers Anonymous' Guidance Code and limit their use, display and distribution to only approved and appropriate Gamblers Anonymous literature. They are also to notify the International Service Office (I.S.O.) of their existence.'**

It is my opinion that all rooms that violate the Guidance Code, should be given the opportunity to understand how they are not complying with the Guidance Code. That should be followed by a short period on how to correct the problems. If the room doesn't comply, then the room has collectively voted to violate the Guidance Code. It is then that the room loses its Gamblers Anonymous sanctioning, and is removed from all rosters of meetings.

So let's stop arguing with the Trustees and calling them the GA Police, because the rooms want to take back their wills and do what they want. Let's not get

bogged down with this stuff and get back to Unity Step 5 and Recovery Step 12.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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2/16/17 - 2:21 PM

David,

Thank you for your quick response to my query. As you probably know, I value your opinions highly.

First, allow me to apologize: I misspoke when I said I talked to the secretary of the room; I actually spoke with another member of the group. That said, I disagree with your use of the word 'disingenuous' in referencing a room member trying to justify the room's copying of material. If I may play Devils Advocate for a minute, I'd say that for "One Group's Experience" to be printed in our approved literature, when that group clearly states that they copy GA literature, definitely could give one the impression that copying of literature for a step meeting is or has been approved by the BOT at some point. Hence, I understand the member's confusion. In fact, if you'll recall, I indicated my confusion at the microphone in San Diego, because Page 1 of our "Pressure Relief Group Meeting and Financial Forms" states "One week prior to the Pressure Relief Group Meeting, the member should be given copies of Pages 2,4,5,6,7,8,10 and 11." Also, page 2 of the "Pressure Relief Group Meeting Handbook", under "Preparation for the Meeting" states to "Provide a copy of the financial forms that should be filled out prior to the meeting".

I think that most of us can understand how ambiguous language can be confusing to some of us. I will attempt to convey to my members how apparently being told to give copies or provide a copy does not mean copying. In the meantime, at the risk of "dumbing down" our literature, I suggest maybe replacing "given copies of pages..." with "given pages...", and "Provide a copy of the financial forms..." with "Provide the financial forms...". Also, let's get that "One Group's Experience" out of our literature, since they are clearly in violation of our Guidance Code.

Earlier this morning I emailed several members of the room in question, informing them that making copies of literature to use at the meeting is a violation of our Guidance Code.

Also, as Communications Coordinator for Delaware Valley Intergroup, I will see to it that all of our rooms are instructed in no uncertain terms of the contents of Article VII, Section 5 of our Guidance Code.

Your friend,  
John B. - Area 13, Philadelphia

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2/16/17 - 3:50 PM

John,

Someone told me there was one person in GA who valued my opinions. I'm glad to know that my quest to find that person is now over. It's you. Just kidding, love you brother.

I'm going to take this a bit more global. I think that we need a Literature Relevance Review Committee to be formed. It's mission statement is to review every piece of our library of literature and come up with a report to the BOT about outdated and relevant segments of each piece. Some of the material is so inappropriate in the current environment of what our world is today.

There is no way that a segment entitled "One Group's Experience", should ever be part of any of our library. Yes, I do understand that it can easily be inferred that the BOT approved it, so it is logical to assume that such details would be approved.

We can go to page 5 of that same booklet and see a section entitled: 'One Group's History'. I personally see this as yet another inappropriate writing that does not belong in any GA approved material. The list of things like this is very long. It seems that people have what seems like a good idea and then don't bother to come back as the original authors to update the material.

Tell you what... If you want, let's form our own committee and add those who have an earnest desire to update these pieces of literature. The easy part is finding what needs to be changed. The hard part is changing it to something the BOT will find acceptable.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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