

Trustee Line – Current Issue

March 2021

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after last day of the month.

Thoughts From The Trustees – Current and Past

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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

Submit an item to the Trustee Line

You can click this text to send your item to the Trustee Line. After doing so, you should receive a confirming email that your item has been received and should be posted to the current issue.

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

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. In Person or Virtual – But not both?

March 1, 2021 – 1:45pm

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,

In my area, Area 13, as I'm sure in others, we now have an interesting situation: Some of our rooms that have been closed for months due to Covid 19, are re-opening. These groups have been meeting via ZOOM or other formats, and now along with meeting in-person, they want to continue also using the digital options at the same time.

My personal opinion is “you can't have it both ways – chose in-person or video but not both.” I submit that using digital devices during a meeting is a threat to one's anonymity. (It's also rude) It seems to me that the only reason we , the BOT, even considered allowing video meetings is because of the current pandemic situation. Is this video usage supposed to be permanent, or only until the current emergency passes?

Any thoughts from you folks? How do you feel about members attending an in-person therapy meeting with some sitting with their laptops open, or using their phones during the meeting?

Stay safe.

John B. – Trustee – Area 13 – Pennsylvania

March 5, 2021 – 2:49pm

I think there are really two issues suggested here – 1) What is your personal opinion about hybrid and virtual meetings? and 2) Does the BOT have any role in attempting to control or regulate this issue? I will address them separately.

What is my personal opinion about hybrid and virtual meetings?

We were running an outdoor hybrid version of my home group until it got too cold. A few of us sat around in a member's back yard with our laptops and phones while other members Zoomed in. It was OK – initially there were some audio feedback issues so we had to keep muting/unmuting and also turning on and off the sound on our devices.

Nonetheless we mostly overcame these issues and it was nice to see some of my GA friends in person every week. Frankly however I thought it wasn't ideal and I would personally prefer either a completely in person or a completely virtual meeting. I suspect when things return to normal I will continue to attend both in-person and virtual meetings. There are clearly advantages to both.

Does the BOT have any role in attempting to control or regulate this issue?

For me, this is an easy one. It's really a simple "No". Each of our groups should be self-governing. If any group especially likes some kind of hybrid format, nobody should be dictating to them what to do. Also, as I have posted previously, I never understood the anonymity argument since people have the option to turn their cameras off, change their names and only attend meetings based thousands of miles from their homes.

Virtual meetings are here to stay. Truthfully their proliferation has been a real benefit of the pandemic. So many people live in places where there are no meetings nearby or they work hours that they couldn't previously attend meetings that these virtual meetings have proven to be a lifesaver for them. I used to attend about one in-person meeting a week and I now average 3-4 virtual meetings. I had a 3-hour drive earlier this week and spent some of it in a meeting in a different time zone. I am currently sponsoring 3 guys that I have never met in person and they are all staying clean from gambling. I can't imagine why we would ever consider eliminating virtual meetings.

Chris N. – Trustee – Area 2 – California

2. Violation of Gamblers Anonymous Guidance Code

March 8, 2021

I recently received a Board of Regents ballot and I would believe all other current trustees have received the same ballot. As per the instructions included with the ballots is the procedure of how the ballots are to be counted. It appears the change of procedure of how the ballots are to be counted is a violation of the gamblers anonymous guidance code. Even though I understand why it is being done this way and the change of the procedure is a reasonable modification. The question is since a change in the counting of the ballots is needed or modified, shouldn't this be a decision for trustees to decide and vote on? A Quick Response Vote should have been called for the group conscience of trustees to approve this modification under an emergency situation due to the Covid-19 Pandemic? One or a few members should not be making decisions that affect Gamblers

Anonymous as a whole. Even during a pandemic, our Unity Program should not be compromised.

The Gamblers Anonymous Guidance code states “Sealed ballots will remain unopened in the “BALLOT” envelope, and will be handed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees during the first session of the Trustee meeting of the Spring Board of Trustees Meeting each odd year. Absentee ballots will be sent to the International Service Office (I.S.O.) and must be received in the envelope marked “BALLOT” no later than seven (7) days prior to the start of the Spring Trustees meeting. All ballots will be counted by three (3) former Trustees or former Regents prior to the end of the meeting. Any member who is a candidate shall be excluded from the ballot counting. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees will determine who will count the ballots.

After the counting of the ballots, each newly elected Board of Regents member will be asked by the International Executive Secretary to confirm their election. Any ties will be broken by a written vote at the Trustees meeting by the Trustees in attendance. The order that the nominees came in shall be kept by the International Executive Secretary. The results of said election shall be announced immediately after the counting and shall be published in the minutes of the Spring Trustees meeting.”

Would we as trustees as being instructed a violation of the guidance code and would a trustee submitting a ballot be violating the guidance code?

Walter G. – Trustee – Area 12 – New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania

3. How far have we gone?

March 12, 2021 – 3:30pm

I believe this is a very fair and honest question. I deep heartedly believe that many current and the past trustee should do a solid Step 4.

The Question is that the executive board of BOT over the last 15 years has taken away the voices of a single member, room, and areas. This was carefully plotted by a handful of trustees, along with the executive board. With the phrase that "IF IT affects GA AS A WHOLE," it is wrong or against the GC.

Our unity is at an all-time low rate, and we are all seeing the members and rooms are doing what their group conscience elects is correct and not obey the GC's laws.

Knowing the executive board and some of the trustees will disagree with that statement. Yet, every trustee's primary purpose is to swear to uphold the GC or suffer the consequence over our primary objective. Therefore, all of the trustees should disagree.

Over the years, I have witnessed the battles on the BOT floor conferences, to the point that an Area was subjected to be kicked out of GA if they do not repent and give in to the executive board's powers.

Back to the topic – HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE?

The executive board has now thrown out the GC and is making up its own laws to run the ZOOM conference and decide what to ignore in the guidance code with zero input from any trustees. As a trustee, which side do you uphold? The guidance code or the executive board? You can not have both.

So the real meaning of the TOPIC AND QUESTION.

WHO IS REALLY RUNNING OUR FELLOWSHIP?

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