

Main Menu

- [Home Page](#)
- [Trustee Guidelines](#)
- [GA Reference Material](#)
- [Keyword Search](#)
- [Download Center](#)
- [Contact Administrator](#)

**Ontario - Fall 2017
Information Section**

[Ontario Trustee Meeting Info](#)

Ontario Rolling Agenda

- [Ontario Absentee Ballots](#)
- [Conference Bids](#)
- [Agenda Information](#)

[Submit An Agenda Item](#)

BOT Committees

[Monthly Committee Reports](#)

- [Abuse & Harassment Booklet](#)
- [Blue Book Revision](#)
- [Conference Oversight](#)
- [Digital Media](#)
- [Electronic Voting](#)
- [Group Handbook Revision](#)
- [Hotline Implementation](#)
- [Intergroup](#)
- [International Relations](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Pressure Relief](#)
- [Prison - Canada](#)
- [Prison - US](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Spanish Literature](#)
- [Telephone Conference Call](#)
- [Trustee Election Guidelines](#)
- [Trustee Removal Merit Panel](#)
- [Trustee Website](#)
- [Video Meeting Format](#)

Trustee Line & Other Features

- [Trustee Line Home Page](#)
- [Login - Only For Required Situations](#)
- [>>Trustee Information Update<<](#)
- [Local Area Website Guidelines](#)
- [Local Area Help Flyer](#)
- [New Area/Trustee Accommodation Fund](#)
- [Board of Regents Meeting Minutes](#)

Future Conferences

[Upcoming Conferences](#)

Trustee Line for May 2017

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 5/31/17.

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.

Item	Subject	Last Entry	Entries
1.	Rummage Sales	5/15 5:05 AM	7
2.	Date of Abstinence	5/17 4:31 PM	3

Rummage Sales

5/4/16 - 1:56 PM
My question is:

We are having a rummage sale to raise money for the local Intergroup. Many members are donating items for this sale. The question is, can we accept items from Non-Members?

There is a thought that, if we cannot accept free donations from "outsiders", would it change the nature of the transaction at all if we paid them a nominal amount for their item(s). The feeling was that then the item(s) would be "ours" and we could do with them as we please.

Any thought/experience with this matter would be appreciated.

Thanks,
Terry D. - Area 3C, Reno, Nevada 3C

5/10/17 - 9:26 AM
Interesting question.

that said, if the " Thought " were to prevail and sidestep the need to avoid outside contributions, which it clearly should not, I believe, the question then becomes for me " If only a small amount, speculatively and probably less than real value, is paid from intergroup funds to a non-member, with the intention of risking loss or gain on the item or items, for benefit or loss to the intergroup, does the fact that it is only a small amount and with a bit of luck a profit will be made make it not a gamble ?

On that question the answer is in the Combo book, under the definition of gambling, no matter which way you interpret it and on the first question, I would say the same.

I'm very interested to see how others interpret this question.

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland

5/13/17 - 8:16 AM
There are a couple of ways of looking at this. I think back to a meeting I started

and chaired back in the early '90s. Part of that meeting consisted of members writing anonymous questions on small pieces of paper, putting them in a basket to be pulled out and read by the chairperson as time permitted, and discussed by the group. Inevitably, there would be at least one question each week pertaining to a particular scenario where one would ask "is this gambling"? The stock answer was always "if you have to ask...". That is certainly one way of pondering your question about buying and selling items at a rummage sale.

Another way of looking at it is how it would make the group "feel". Speaking for myself, I would say the anxiety alone wondering whether the group made a wise choice in how much they paid for the item versus how much they hoped to get for the item (assuming it is even sold) would be enough for me to conclude the group was indeed making a collective bet, or at the very least, the group's collective mind was "in action". However, I also don't see a non-member donating an item for a rummage sale in the same light as the same non-member giving the group a cash donation. If they were of a mind to give you cash, they would have simply given you cash (or sold the item themselves and given you the cash) and your decision to turn it down would have been easy. My guess is what the non-member is really saying to you is that they have something lying around that is of absolutely no monetary value to them that they would just as soon have hauled away BUT "if you could get something for it that would benefit your group, have at it".

Jack R – Area 1A – Orange County, California

5/13/17 - 9:06 AM

Terry,

I've been waiting for others to chime in on this thread and with 2 other participants, I thought now might be the time to write a few of my thoughts.

Rummage sales by a group or Intergroup, generally make my heart skip a beat. My concern is who your intended audience is? In other words, who will be buying the items in the sale. If it's a question of putting a few signs out on trees and directing the general public to the sale at some member's garage then my response is ABSOLUTELY NOT. This is a right out of the book Unity Step 7 violation – period, the end. However, if it is only for other members, then you have the makings of a fun day, as members find value in other members' junk. It's a good piece of Group Unity also.

There is no justification whatsoever for taking items from the public, even if there is a 'nominal fee' paid by the GA entity. The involvement of people outside the Fellowship in any fundraising is prohibited. Think about how this process works. How does your neighbor or friend know about this fundraiser? You are giving up your anonymity to say it's for Gamblers Anonymous, so now you also have a Unity Step 11 issue. Hopefully, you are not being deceitful and saying that you belong to an unnamed organization in an attempt to hide who will benefit from the donated items.

Who is paying this 'nominal fee' to the outsider? Will it be your group or Intergroup? If so, we are back to Unity Step 7. If you give them cash to hide the true beneficiary, then once again this is an act of dishonesty.

On the question of how this fits in to the definition of gambling, I'm somewhat lost. To determine if anyone is gambling, there are 4 words that have to be answered before you go any further. "ANY BETTING OR WAGERING". The rest of definition only applies if those first 4 words can be answered yes. You cannot pull segments of the definition to make stand-alone arguments in support of anything else. As an example, 'whether for money or not', which I assume you are referring to in this example, means nothing by itself. The logical next thought is whether or not a bet or wage was made. Another item would be 'where the outcome is uncertain'. Areas run conferences and the outcome of profit or loss is clearly an instance where the outcome is uncertain. Again...was a bet or wager made? I hope you get the point.

Getting back to the sale itself, having the general public purchase items – the answer is NO. Having the general public donate items – the answer is NO. The conclusion is that we don't involve the general public with anything that has to do with money going into our pockets. Buying supplies from vendors is acceptable, but the best places for the general public is at a GA speaking engagement or as attendees in Open GA meetings, as we exercise Unity Step 5.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

5/13/17 - 12:47 PM

Just to refresh and perhaps clarify things here, this is the question Terry actually asked.

(We are having a rummage sale to raise money for the local Intergroup. Many members are donating items for this sale. The question is, can we accept items from Non-Members?)

The specific stated purpose is to raise money, the issue of whether gambling was involved was posed by me, not Terry, to be fair to Terry.

There seems broad agreement here that there should be no acceptance of assistance in any form of cash or items of value or otherwise from non members, whether free or not.

There can be no comparison with area or other conferences as the stated purpose of the rummage sale is to raise cash. If items are purchased with the sole intention of selling for a profit in the context of a rummage sale which is geared solely or primarily to generate profit, then that is a gamble, simple as that, I would think.

If the item (s) sell for a profit the gamble pays off, it's still a wager, if a loss, it's still a wager.

Conferences and International conferences are not set up like rummage sales, it seems incidental that any profit or loss is distributed as per membership requirements. Any investments in conferences are for the purpose of spreading the message. The profit or loss at a conference is not down to luck or risk it is primarily down to the effectiveness and efficiency of those involved, be it the ISO, the BOR, the BOT, the local area the profit or loss is entirely down to legitimate effort of inside membership with no betting, wagering or gambling involved.

Buying items from non members to sell for profit is a gamble, regardless of the level of certainty of profit, there can be no confusion whatsoever with that.

As a side point, Jack, I wouldn't recommend we start guessing the intent of non members as to whether they didn't mean to give cash, we're all here due to guesswork being not too accurate.

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland.

5/13/17 - 9:26 PM

Odie...there is a fine line between the paired opposites "profit/loss" and "winning/losing" and the more we try to rationalize one pair over the other through our own sophistry, the farther we get from the BIGGER picture which is "what is gambling" and "what does self-supporting really mean at the end of the day". That sophistry is one of the many things that turn people off to the fellowship.

No, conferences and international conferences are NOT set up like rummage sales. However, let's remember that we announce those conferences BEFORE we ever collect a dime or get a room reservation from anyone so in a sense, we ARE gambling that the intergroup(s) who host it will be able to meet their obligations which include occupancy guarantees to the hotel where it is to be held. How significant is that? We don't have a lot of places bidding for conferences and that is one of the many reasons why. Would a reasonable person call that gambling? Obviously not even though hosting a meeting certainly has all the elements of it.

With regard to the second point, if someone is not comfortable accepting donations from an outsider for a rummage sale, by all means don't accept it, especially if one has to purchase the item in order to make them feel it is not "really" an outside donation. To me, that's the worst type of sophistry there is! However, before people start taking the moral high ground by drawing these lines in the sand, let's all remember that those bowling alleys where we hold our "bowl-a-thons", those golf courses where we hold our golf outings, and those restaurants that host our karaoke nights are NOT giving us those venues at their usual and customary cost. That so-called "discount" can easily be construed as a donation even though it never shows up that way in the record. Enough already with parsing definitions and instead, let's look at the PLAIN meaning of things, like what gambling is and isn't, and what an outside donation really looks like within the grand scheme of things. If we do that, we'll never go wrong.

Happy Mother's Day!

Jack R. - Area 1A, Orange County, California

5/15/17 - 5:05 AM

Jack, as far as sophistry goes the program has a simple antithesis, keeping it simple. As it happens, that basic, age old wisdom that we should keep it simple also works as an antidote to shortcuts, confabulation, blurred lines and delusion. That's probably why it exists and is more important than the most sophisticated charlatany or chicanery imaginable. It protects us from ourselves, so to speak.

I look to the program for that simplicity, rather than trying to write and propagate my own program. Thus, there exist no blurred lines between normal life, business, necessary transactions, functional behaviour and Gambling.

An area hosting a conference with the purpose of spreading the message is not gambling by making necessary investments to host. The area is accepting its

responsibility and trusting the membership to accept theirs. As regards golf and all 'thons' you refer to, if there is a discount available to the general world then availing of that is neither gambling nor accepting outside contributions, that would be like saying driving to a meeting is accepting outside contributions because we use a road that is paid for by outside interests. That would be ludicrous.

If a discount is sought because we are G. A. then that is accepting outside contributions, that is different to availing of discounts generally available. It really could not be simpler, there are no blurred lines in the program on that matter, the blurring occurs in the interpretation and of course, as you point out, sophistry propagates itself.

As regards outside contributions, the not so distant fiasco of the BOR, trying to justify having previously erred in accepting outside contributions by making their errant actions retrospectively legitimate through an agenda item, was resoundingly rejected by the membership. Seeking simplicity and trying to follow the guidance code is not drawing lines in the sand or taking the higher moral ground, blurring the clear lines, propagating personal opinions as the word and moving the posts, however, are exactly that, in my opinion

Once again, keeping it simple is both the Antithesis and, when it can be found, the antidote to sophistry, finding it is where the program comes in.

Keep making a difference,

Odie. B. Area 36 Ireland

Date of Abstinence

5/12/16 - 11:46 AM

I got a phone call from the birthday list committee chair in our intergroup who said she did not agree with what the intergroup secretary wrote on the minutes of last month's business meeting. It's about a statement indicating that some people are confused what their abstinence date is. He wrote that "according to ISO, your abstinence date is the date you came to a meeting after your last bet. If I gambled this morning and came to a meeting tonight, today is my abstinence date". The complainant wasn't physically present at that business meeting. Her understanding is that it's the first meeting 24 hours after a person's last bet. My reply to her was "I'll search the guidance code and let you know."

Article VII, Section 4 clearly states, "Date of abstinence starts from your first meeting after your last bet. I sent this information to the complainant thru a text message. I got another call from a past trustee echoing the same information to the same person complaining to her about it.

Should this topic need to be discussed at the next BOT meeting? I'm thinking of submitting an agenda item to add a statement or two supporting that single statement in the guidance code. Unbeknownst to me it could have been done before my time as trustee. What do you think? Thank you.

Zeny K, Area 3, Las Vegas, NV

5/12/17 - 12:42 PM

Zeny,

One of the biggest issues I have with people in the program, is the obsessive need to take back their will by using our literature as a roadmap to figure ways around things for their personal benefit. How many times do we all run across those member who are told they can't do something because it violates _____ (fill in the blank)?

There is no confusion about what the Guidance Code states. Everyone starts out the same. If I were new to the program and came in on May 1st of this year, but hadn't actually made a physical bet since June 1st of 2014, am I to start making plans for my 3rd anniversary in a few weeks? That is why the section you quote is written that way.

If you go back to the bet, then obviously that date is your last bet. There is no time window restriction as to when you come back to GA and when your last bet is. That is when honesty comes into play. Nobody can take away anyone's abstinence. That is written in the Guidance Code in the manner of 'by your own admission'.

A person could be coming to meetings and lying about his/her abstinence date, because they are actively gambling. You could actually witness someone playing one of the table games, come up to them and ask what they are doing, catching them red-handed. If that person continues to come to meeting and use an old date, that is their issue.

Maybe the Guidance Code could use a small modification to say that your 'initial' date of abstinence is... But I would think that anyone who comes back after

having gambled again, would know that the most current date is the one that applies. As Forrest Gump would say..'and that's all I have to say about that.'

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

5/17/17 - 4:31 PM

Zeny,

I would concur with the thought that the date of abstinence is the date of the first meeting after the date of the last bet, such date being a later date. I would love to see an agenda item from you to clarify that, it could be as simple as adding a few words.

If the last line of Article VI I section 4 was written as follows, for example (Date of abstinence starts on the date of your first meeting on a date after the date of your last bet.) it would be a lot clearer to anyone in doubt.

I would also suggest a new section 4A along the lines of (A date on which a gamble takes place can not be considered a day of abstinence, under any circumstances or for any reason)

However you choose to word it, I would encourage you to put that agenda item in.

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland
