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Trustee Line for June 2015

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 6/30/15.

Questions and Answers Involving Individual BOT Committees

Any GA member can contact the Chairs of the Committees listed below with any questions or concerns they might have. The Chairs will answer the emails and the resulting issues will be posted under each committee involved in the email. This will serve as help for other members, Intergroups or areas, who may be going through the same situations. The emails will not breach anonymity and will be redacted to make sure names and areas are not included in this section. You are also invited to click the individual committee links on the left margin, for more information.

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Thoughts From The Trustees - Current and Past

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

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1.	BOT + BOR = Best For GA	6/1/15 12:01 AM	1
2.	Self-Supporting vs. Non-Member Memorial Donations	6/4/15 12:37 PM	3
3.	Self-Supporting...Passing #48	6/4/15 2:19 AM	2
4.	Unity Steps - Now Available With Conditions Of Your Choosing	6/4/15 12:25 AM	1
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BOT + BOR = Best For GA

6/1/15 - 12:01 AM

A thank you to the Trustees for electing me for a 2 year term to the BOR starting 7/1/2015. My participation will be similar to the past times (four?) that I served the Fellowship in the capacity as a Regent. Using my business acumen and past BOR experience I intend to suggest ways to improve the business area of Gamblers Anonymous.

I am amassing a number of items for our agenda suggesting changes, hopefully for the betterment of the organization. I encourage you to let me know in writing of any areas that you believe are in need of discussion or possible changes.

If you would like to review some of items that I will be discussing at future BOR meetings, kindly refer to my suggestions in the April issue of the "Trustee Line". By the way, only those items that are BOR issues will be discussed.

My #1 agenda item is to improve Gamblers Anonymous at our Directors and Officer level as outlined in the By-Laws.

Bill B. - Area 6, South Florida

Self-Supporting vs. Non-Member Memorial Donations

6/1/15 - 6:33 PM

Flying home from the BOT early Saturday morning on May 31st, on the plane, dozing on and off – my waking thoughts came back to the words self-supporting, fellowship of GA, and carry its primary message.

What is Self-supporting mean to you? Before you read any further – write your own definition down what Self-supporting means to you and what it means part of the 7th Unity step as we pass the can around in our meetings "Every Gamblers Anonymous Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions". And on page 2 - we are self-supporting through our own contributions..... does not wish to engage in any controversy..... neither endorses nor opposes any cause.

Have we considered what self-supporting means to the fellowship of GA ?

Do we understand the principles of the GA Unity steps?

I was surprised this item passed, as we often do not change the Recovery or Unity steps (NO, we didn't change Unity step 7 – but I wonder what will come next), we amended to the by-laws Article to make an exception. And, yes I failed to properly do my homework before the meeting and now I am asking questions, not to change my vote but to have a discussion on what this Unity Step 7 represents to BOT and to how a "minor" change to the Article in the By-laws may/can change our fellowship as a whole.

Is there any reason why we would accept donations from non-members? What will we use the money with? To help a compulsive gambler? To pay our service workers? To pay other expenses? Will the members of GA argue about this and become more subdivided and stop giving to ISO?

Is being short in assets a cause to say we can't support ourselves and now need to accept outside contributions?

Are our character flaws - resurfacing – minimizing, justification, rationalization, over- analyzing, greed or fear?

Will members and or groups stop sending because we now receive money from outsiders?

With the new amendment to accept donations from non-members in memory of GA members that have passed away, how is the money going to be used? Is that for the membership for the "groups" of GA?

Do we bend the rules because we think we can? Can I bend the rules and say that its only just a little tiny amount and take a risk on a \$1 or 5\$ scratcher? I didn't go overboard on them when I gambled, hey its only a small amount , it's not like the scratcher is \$100 each. No, that is crazy thinking – what is the difference than from saying It's just a small amount from a non-member to our not-for-profit corporation?

With the new amendment to accept donations from non-members in memory of GA members that have passed away, how is the money going to be used? Is that for the member ship for the "groups" of GA?

Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers – who does this and with what resources do we receive from – our

members or non-members?

What happens if a non-member sends in a memory to a gambler who has never been a member of GA or only came once and we never saw them again? or the non-member is a member of Gam-anon but their loved one never came to GA yet they wish to donate in memory?

Where does the line cross, we are self supporting through our own contributions. Next thing we know is that the non-member is going to tell us how and what we can spend the money on.

And again maybe the non-member only wants to send the money as a donation with no strings attached. Should we accept the money? - GA is self-supporting? Really? Do we want to have exceptions that this article is just for the ISO?

Are we opening the doors for non-members to tell the compulsive gambler how to run GA?

The ISO and the Groups of the fellowship are as one... we the members of GA support by donating to ISO either by groups or individuals. The ISO provides us literature for sale, maintains the website, so that we all may carry the message. How does one say that we are self supporting – when we clearly are not if the ISO is able to take outside – non-member donations. What the future beholds us is unknown - anyone may send us donations in behalf of a loved one that passes away - what type of influences may that bring to our fellowship ... will we still carry the message

Has our Unity step 7 been broken? Is it repairable ? what does Unity really mean when one entity accepts outside contributions and the other has to be a member to donate to groups and or ISO. Does Self-supporting only apply to one segment, how can that be?

What has been broken with Unity step 7 when ISO can accept monies from non-members, outside contributions Our primary purpose is to carry the message, what message?

Are we taking responsibility for our actions or letting money from the outside influence us ?

One popular or long-time member dies and friends and family send in donations and its stated in the newspaper or online to send donations to GA... for this one member; 100 outsiders send in \$25.00 each, that's 2,500 dollars

Are we at risk of ISO even getting less donations from GA members, when outsiders can support us ?

Do we lose any freedoms when we take the risk of having a non-member contribute to the welfare of a compulsive gambler ?

Has GA taught us that we pay for our own expenses through working the program? Do we support ourselves so that we can provide support our fellowship?

This is a spiritual program - when I do things because I “want” it done my way, I lose – when I use the power of the group or the higher power I am provided the resources that is needed to do the right thing. Yes, the power of the group voted to pass the agenda item #48. Though I wonder if those who voted “yes”, was it because they wanted others to be able to honor the loved ones only? And don't know what the headlines of Unity steps represent or what Unity step 7 stands for, We are compulsive gamblers and that yes we are responsible as we work the program, we belong to the GA fellowship and yes we can be self-supporting, we respect those that may want to help us, the Unity 7 step says our members support our program, declining outside contributions. this is so that we can follow all of the Unity steps in program. Can GA members be self-supporting? Yes we can!

History repeats itself, 12 step programs have experienced this before when they accepted donations from outsiders –thus the guideline was created (what we call Unity step 7) to be self-supporting , do we think we'll be able to handle a non-member influences differently than any other 12 step program? It will take just one non-member to tell us how to run our program – they may not tell us directly, they may tell us with a twitter ...

I can empathize what Karen may have to do in writing letters and returning donations back to non-members, especially if the deceased member had become someone she personally grew close to. It may be difficult to return the request to the sender (non-member/outsider) who wish to donate to our organization. We have learned to pay back our losses and became a contributing member of society.... By the financial means was gained by hard work and paying back my

debts... I don't want a non-member to start to say how our monies can be spent as we have enough issues with that within the membership and as more donations come in from non-members we'll probably be fighting again about how the money should be spent. And even if the member wants to just honor the loved one and move on we should not accept it. Can a non-member help to carry the message to the compulsive gambler who suffers?

By the way, self-supporting - what does it mean to me in regards to our Fellowship -- as a member, within the group or ISO. Self-Supporting means that I can stand on solid ground, no longer am I crawling through the fog ... being clean today, to help others, to carry the message, to be service - to support my home group, my area, the fellowship as a whole. It's for me to be responsible, taking care of myself, working hard so that I can pay back my losses, and pay any current expenses, I can give back to GA . When I am self-supporting than I don't become dependent on others . As this applies within the fellowship to not accept outside monies from non- members, even if the monetary is in the memory of a loved one. Keep it simple ... non-members should not have any representation of what can and cannot be done with the monies, even when they have no intentions, we should not be accepting any aid. To say that we are self-supporting respectively, and don't accept outside donations.

Internet definition -- The act of or capacity for supporting oneself, especially financially, without the help of others.

In the first paragraph I suggested for you to write down your own definition of self-supporting. After reading these questions and thinking about what it means to you, to our fellowship... Any change on the meaning? If we start to allow non-members or outsiders to donate money to the ISO - is GA fellowship self-supporting? Should a non-member (non-gambler) help others to carry the message to the compulsive gambler that still suffers?

What do we (or do we) lose anything if a non-member donates to GA? How does this question apply to the Unity Steps?

Susan W. - Area 2, Northern California

6/3/15 - 1:00 AM
Hello fellowship of GA,

I asked a question a few months ago if anyone believed the unity steps and the guidance code were compatible. I think I'm getting a lot of answers already alone with Susan W's post. I'm very interested to see others thoughts on item #48.

Joe T. - Area 2, Northern California, former trustee

6/4/15 - 6:40 AM
Let's offer an annual plaque to the family of the deceased member of Gamblers Anonymous with the following inscription:

"Awarded to the family of _____ for the largest donation in 2015 to the Gamblers Anonymous Memorial Fund"

Let's also start a contest to see how many pre-deceased contributions that we can obtain. Each member would have a solicitation package that would identify the Gamblers Anonymous member with full name and Social Security number (personal information is necessary as there are more than one Bill B and I would not want my family to have their money credited to a different Bill B). New members will share the solicitation packages when they see Family creditors with the proposed payment plan from the Budget Relief Group; the family members that are owed money can offer a pledge and not have to honor until the Gamblers Anonymous member repays their debt in full - no settlements. The more seasoned members could send individual packages to their family at Holiday time and ask that the normal Holiday gift be supplanted with a pre-memorial donation to Gamblers Anonymous.

If I leave Gamblers Anonymous before I die, will Gamblers Anonymous refund all contributions, including a market rate of interest? What would the rule be on sending back the contributions? 6 weeks after I leave, 6 months, 6 years? How does Gamblers Anonymous get the money back if I decide to return to Gamblers Anonymous?

Can Gamblers Anonymous use the funds if I am still alive or do the funds have to be placed in a Trust Account until I pass?

Will the Bulletin have a list each month reflecting the top 10 member's families contributing? Will pledges count or only cash received?

I could go on and on, but I hope all get my point.

If a Gamblers Anonymous member has given instructions to have a certain amount or percentage of their assets donated to Gamblers Anonymous after death, no problem. A simple letter sent to the contributor's designee (person, law firm, Trustee) that they will confirm that the deceased has instructed that \$XXXX is to be given to Gamblers Anonymous is sufficient.

THE MOMENT THAT GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS ACCEPTS ANY DONATION FROM OTHERS IS THE MOMENT WE WILL CEASE AS A SELF-HELP ORGANIZATION.

Have you ever heard or ever said to a member "Money is not your problem, gambling is your problem"? Gamblers Anonymous is akin to the creditors of the gambler, we need our money to continue to keep our business of saving the ones who want to be saved by having a financially strong International Service Office to keep delivering to the needs of our members.

Our on-going Gamblers Anonymous financial problems have not been addressed in an appropriate business-like way. That can be fixed with dedicated work of all of us, more to be discussed at the next BOR term starting July 1, 2015.

Please leave the Recovery & Unity Steps alone; they are the basis of our program.

Bill B. - Area 6, Southern Florida

6/4/15 - 12:37 PM

I would like to mention how appalled I was to see this board of trustees vote against our principles and Unity step and accept outside donation just because the Iso is struggling financially, even if it is a donation from a family member of a deceased member. I must admit that I agreed with Denis's comments at the end of the trustee meeting and we should seriously think about this and do the right thing in Cancun and voted it down. I was expecting someone to rule the item to be our of order but no one did, maybe I should have stood up, but can't change the past.

Hope everyone has a great summer and looking forward to seeing everyone in Cancun.

Ara H. - Area I, Los Angeles, trustee

Self-Supporting...Passing #48

6/2/15 - 1:11 PM

Is this the begging of the end ??? (What's Next) ???

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

6/4/15 - 2:19 AM

BOT Item # 48 was initiated as the result of the discussions of the recently formed Revenue Committee.

The Revenue committee was formed due to the \$47,000 deficit from last year's ISO operations.

Over 20 items were discussed at these meetings with varying degrees of potential Revenue impact.

The item with the lowest Revenue impact was the \$200/year related to Agenda item #48.

Fortunately, the Revenue committee was also pushing for high impact items like the Lifeline's campaign which could bring in over \$20,000/year.

Having this inside information as the result of being an active BOR member and on the Revenue committee and in conjunction with what David and Susan have already stated about possible Unity Step 7 implications, made the decision easy for me.

Is it worth \$200/year for the implications it may have on our Unity step 7? My answer is "No". The answer would be the same from non-GA 12 step programs also.

Is it worth \$200,000/year? My answer is still "No".

Doug E. - Area I, Los Angeles

Unity Steps - Now Available With Conditions Of Your Choosing

6/4/15 - 12:25 AM

In the 15 years that I have been attending Trustee meetings, I don't think I've walked out of any Trustee meeting with such a bad taste in my mouth over some of the decisions that were made in Cherry Hill. Along with that was the substance and nature of many of the Trustees who pleaded their cases for whatever position they had.

I understand that items don't have to go the way I would like. When it comes to new ideas on how to plug some of the holes in our procedures, Guidance Code or other material, or improving efficiency, or any other benefit, it really depends on how the group feels. I may not be happy with the decisions, but the Ultimate Authority has spoken – group conscience, and we should all abide by it.

Where I have a problem is when we deal with the principles of this Fellowship. Then it is not a matter of what I think should be done, it is a matter of doing the right thing to enforce the principles that are the core of our Fellowship.

Top on my list, is the horrific decision to allow item 48 to be passed on the first of 2 literature votes. Let me cite the item.

By-Laws, Article XVIII – Donations

Although the Guidance Code states Groups are self-supporting and do not take outside donations, the International Service Office (ISO) can accept donations from family and friends of Gamblers Anonymous Members in memory of members that (should be 'who') passed away.

This all comes about from the financial problems the ISO is having. Suddenly, the BOR can look to use the Guidance Code and Unity Step 7 for a roadmap of how to figure out a way to make it happen? This is such a negative statement about the BOR and how they process matters. If anything, the BOR should hold itself to the highest of standards about the Unity Program. Well I guess that point is now moot.

The BOR voted 6-1 in favor of this item, as reflected in the April BOR minutes. Thank goodness for Doug E, as it appears he was the only one to see the principle side of this item, by voting against the item.

Right out of the box in Cherry Hill when the item was called to the floor, the statement made was that Unity 7 is about groups and the ISO is not a group. I thought my carotid artery was going to burst. This is again, part of the mentality of just finding a way around our existing literature to make it happen, by reading the Step headline itself, not referring to any other GA approved material.

Evidently, no one on the BOR looked at the Red Book to see what follows the headline for that Step. "In order to maintain the independence of the Fellowship as a whole as well as individual groups, Gamblers Anonymous does not accept outside contributions. This policy is sustained in order that no undue control can be exercised over Gamblers Anonymous, from without or within. By allowing outside contributions both groups and members would be deprived of exercising responsibility over their affairs and their obligation to the Fellowship.

If anyone were to be permitted to contribute to Gamblers Anonymous other than its members, that person might expect the right to voice an opinion as to the manner that we choose to run our Fellowship."

Evidently, no one on the BOR took a look at the back of the Bulletin that deals with becoming a LifeLiner. The page starts with a very bold, underscored headline of "SELF SUPPORTING". It continues with, "The concept of being self supporting is probably one of the most misunderstood activities in the Fellowship. The Program reminds us there are no dues or fee, yet a pitch for money is usually made at each G.A. Meeting. We believe being self supporting is a VERY important part of our recovery...."

So now we have trashed Unity 7 in favor of a 'special' condition, an asterisk, if you will, to allow money from outsiders to contribute. It was said that these contributions will be small contributions. Oh really? When does small become not so small? Who makes those decisions? Are we just going to wing it and make a determination based on what our cash flow is for that month? I have a friend who sold his company and made a huge amount of money in the process. If it is his idea to contribute a ridiculously large amount of money to GA when I pass, will that be too much? Why is one contribution better than the next? What if a member dies who did incredible things for the company that the member worked for. Why can't the close friend who might be the CEO of the company make a donation as the member's friend but use a check made out from someone else or the company? Who will verify this? Or will we just take any check just because someone says it is in memory of someone?

What was shocking to watch on the BOT floor, were all the emotional pleas from people about how our friends should be allowed to contribute. To me that sounded all about the individual person's needs and wants. The BOT seemed to fall prey to those kinds of presentations. When we make emotional decisions, we are not using our heads about the principles of the program. Principles before personalities – meet your cousin – principles before emotions.

Item 48 was passed and with all the discussion against this item, not one of the BOR members who were present said that they realized this was going to be a mistake and that everyone should vote it down. That didn't happen, so the BOR was single-minded about wanting this item passed and they cannot hide from that position.

As far as those who said it is embarrassing to send back a check from a non-member in memory of someone who has passed, I say that is total crap. If the letter that the ISO sends with the check is clear about our principles, then the non-member should be respectful of the seriousness of the Unity Steps and gain new perspective and respect for all that GA represents. By the way, who at the ISO is embarrassed?

I am so outraged at the decision of the BOR in this matter, that I wish it were possible to call for the resignation of those BOR members who voted in favor of this item 48. Obviously, there is no reasonable way to achieve that and no doubt, this posting will be dismissed by the BOR as not being relevant. Oh wait, I think the new phrase out of the BOR is that such writings are a 'distraction'. As they say on the TV, that's another show.

I hope this and all the other entries on the Trustee Line this month persist right up until the Cancun Trustee Meeting, where the BOT must collectively dismantle that decision by voting it down and get our collective heads back into the business of improving this Fellowship, not weakening it.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

Let's Support The Cancun Conference Instead Of Bashing It

6/4/15 - 12:25 AM

I was amazed and disappointed in a few past trustees and long time members who were talking very negatively about the Cancun conference. How it is not safe, and it will be a disaster and no one will show up. This kind of negative attitude could influence many members who are on the fence about going. We voted to have a conference in Cancun and we should support our decision. I was not in favor of going to "centrally located Tampa" for the trustee meeting. But I went and it turned out to be a very pleasant, smooth trustee meeting that was concluded in only a day and a half. We could accomplish anything if we cooperate.

So please, if you are not going, I respect your decision, but don't try to spoil all the hard work our brothers and sisters are doing in Mexico...

Ara H. - Area 1, Los Angeles, trustee

6/15/15 - 11:46 AM

I have hesitated writing my thoughts on the negativity that has been expressed for the International conference in Cancun, mainly due to the fact that my dear friend presented the bid for Mexico and I felt my opinions would be interpreted as nothing more than my loyalty to our friendship. After hearing multiple negative comments in Cherry Hill, I must express my support for the Cancun Conference and share the following quotes with you:

"It's too far to travel." Thank you Ara for mentioning the centrally located BOT meeting in Tampa, really? was my first thought. Centrally located for who? I'm sure if we included a mileage graph in the bids this would not be an issue.

"Flight costs are way too high." Some BOT members had their flights reserved before Cherry Hill and the cost was comparable or less than other conferences. I myself just found a flight for \$58.00 less than my flight from Oregon to Philadelphia and I won't be spending \$60.00 for a cab ride to the hotel.

"Have we lost our minds, Cancun?? What message are we sending to our members? That this is all about a vacation? We may as well have a BOT meeting in Disneyland!!!" - WE DID!

"I have to have a passport. Can't believe what Mexico expects from us." - No comment.

And last but not least...

"I will not risk my personal safety for the BOT or anyone else for that matter." I have learned from this program to trust in my Higher Power and not live in fear as I once did. It has been my life experience that bad things can happen to the most safety oriented people. There are risks EVERYWHERE ! Common sense people. I am ecstatic that Mexico has stepped up, this to me is a huge sign of growth for Gamblers Anonymous. As a G.A member and a Trustee I am embracing this momentous event with the utmost respect and support.

Debb W. - Area 2G, Oregon

6/19/15 - 3:43 PM

Just one question when we all speak so sincerely about "UNITY" is that for all our brothers and sisters everywhere in the fellowship or just the one's that live around the corner? Those of you who choose to make these comments please think about the whole picture and how what you say "affects" others and I guess I could say "infects" others as well. Looking forward to a productive meeting in Cancun and sharing with a proud G.A. Mexico their outstanding growth in the past few years. Steve R. - Area 2B, Trustee - Sacramento, California

6/19/15 - 8:48 PM

Careful what you wish for...

This Fellowship has been on a tear for the last 10+ years to make this an International Fellowship. During that time, we added areas from many different locations around the world. Oh yes, let's approve this one and that one, and don't forget those guys from over there.

Nowhere did we have the infrastructure in place to adequately deal with servicing those areas, but let's sidestep the Guidance Code to approve areas. Yes, we did that, in case you are wondering. Do we know which areas are running their meetings according to the Guidance Code? How do we know this? The International Relations Committee has a mission statement to "Assist the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous with International matters and help create a worldwide united Gamblers Anonymous." What does that really mean? Who is responsible for what? Where does the committee's jurisdiction end and the ISO's begin?

Simply put, like most things we do at the BOT, they are not well thought out. It is the unintended consequences of our actions in a hasty manner that leads us to troublesome outcomes in so many situations. And isn't it wonderful to hear those who say we have too many rules. Talk about being disconnected from reality.

The complaining and whining about Cancun is just plain sickening. My own area still persists in classifying this conference as a vacation, and in the process colors the Trustees as a bunch of over-indulged parasites, who are sucking the blood and life out of this Fellowship. No doubt they would feel better if we were going to Detroit in the middle of January only to hold the meeting on a platform in a subway station. By the way, no disrespect meant to Detroit, but that would be less than ideal circumstances to have a Trustee meeting, or a conference for that matter. Also, our brothers and sisters in Detroit have hosted 3 conferences - '68, '85 and '91.

People in my own area are still saying that the Trustees do nothing of value at these Trustee meetings, but re-hash the same issues and items from 10, 15 and 20+ years ago. I wish I had the ability to list names, but decorum restricts me from doing that.

I remember the vote for this Cancun Conference. It was Cancun or New Orleans. Cancun was getting all the sympathy votes that have characterized the attitude of the BOT every conference since we became more aggressive with adding areas. The slightest perception that an agenda item might hurt anything connected with the international community, and the item got voted down. Conversely, the item would pass if there was only a hint of it helping the international community, irrespective of what other parts of the item were impractical or would create a problem later.

I bought into this game in 2006 and spent 3 solid years with a completely selfless and very dedicated translator to help bring Moscow, Latvia and Lithuania online as Areas 29, 30 and 31. The honeymoon was over within a year or 2, now there is no support for them. An email here, an email there, who are we kidding? I regret bringing them onboard now, because they are floundering and they are not my responsibility. So whose is it?

We are still pushing for new areas, and nothing else has changed with our infrastructure to ensure those areas, wherever they may be, will flourish. It's the

same story, just a different chapter.

I voted for Cancun, because they deserved a shot at a conference and New Orleans had one back in 2004. Did I think that the trip would be expensive, yes, but no more expensive than a trip to Vancouver was a few years ago for anyone on the East Coast. We voted and group conscience prevailed – again. If I had voted for New Orleans, I would have been disappointed, but again, group conscience was at hand.

So for all the naysayers in the Board of Trustees, regarding the Cancun Conference, it was voted upon, it can't be rescinded, and that's the end of it. If you think it's too expensive, then don't go. If you think it's too dangerous, then don't go. If your area says it's too expensive, then maybe your area needs to redefine how funds are raised and spent within your area. If you think about anything else as reasons not to go, then follow your conscience and don't go. But please, stop bellyaching.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

3 Cheers For Those Who Serve

6/22/15 - 8:13 AM

Any GA member who thinks a Board of Trustees Meeting is a vacation is crazy. No matter the chosen setting for these important sessions, it is 90 % all business and 10 % informal interaction with dedicated, hard-working people who take recovery and the fellowship seriously. The total time at these meetings is centered on improving the fellowship, and the exchange of ideas face to face by members from all over God's Good Earth. It is all well worthwhile. One is in great need of a vacation after participating in a trustee gathering.

It is a "no win" situation for anyone who volunteers to serve as a trustee. Those who rarely volunteer to help advance the fellowship are the people who criticize trustees. I was a participant at the LA meeting a few years ago. Securing the least expensive air fare from New Jersey to Los Angeles and back required a stop over adding three hours time to my trip both ways. No problem, it saved \$150.00 doing so. The return flight from LA to Newark required a 1:00 pm departure from LA on Saturday. On Friday evening, the trustees added an extra Saturday morning session to the meeting because of the length of the agenda. In order to make my flight, I had to leave the Saturday session before the last two items on the agenda were completed.

I was grilled at the next Intergroup Meeting about my irresponsibility of leaving the meeting early. A question was posed to me. Why should Intergroup pay for my expenses when I did not attend all of the sessions in their entirety? I missed ten minutes of that extra Saturday session in order to make my flight home. Changing flights is a costly proposition, but the critics were simply content with finding fault.

As a trustee, have any of you driven to a meeting two plus hours from your home and been treated like a leaper? Often, the welcome mat is not out for a visiting trustee. "Why is he here checking on us?" "We do things our way, if Intergroup or the trustees do not like it, tough!" "Trustees only show up to get money from us." Sadly, time and again, trustees are perceived as the enemy or intruders. Is urging people in GA to become a Lifeliner an unreasonable request?

From one former trustee, a huge thank you to all those who step up to service. Many of us in recovery appreciate the capable leadership and wonderful folks who serve vital roles as trustees.

Vinny B. - Area 12, New Jersey, Former Trustee
