

**Life-Line Bulletin**

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**Trustee Line for June 2016**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 6/30/16.

**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**

**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.	<a href="#">Why Would We Want To Encourage Less Talk Time On The Phone?</a>	6/1 12:01 AM	1
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6.	<a href="#">Non-Approved Prayers In The Rooms</a>	6/1 12:01 AM	1

**Why Would We Want To Encourage Less Talk Time On The Phone?**

6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

The Phoenix conference is now in the past. I've started several threads, hoping that others will chime in and add new threads or add to what others have written. There are a number of items that left me questioning much of what the BOT does.

Most disturbing for me was the apparent urgency that accompanied using our phones to better communicate with the members. The underlying thread to these items is about texting. In other words, we need to give our members more of a reason to detach from the rest of us trying to help them

3 cheers for technology, but if you want recovery, you need to use the telephone list; not to text someone, but to physically speak to the people from the rooms they attend. One more thing, there is no excuse, I repeat, no excuse for people to not take 5 minutes out of their day to return a call. I don't care how busy you think you are, you have that much time to use the telephone list.

If you want to be chummy with your friends, throw them a text. We seem to have plenty of time during the day to text. If you want recovery, speak to someone, especially those who call you.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

**LifeLiners - Talk The Talk, But Don't Walk The Walk**

6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

Phoenix also had too many items on the agenda to try and squeeze more money out of the Fellowship for the sake of the ISO. I am very clear about the financial problems the ISO has faced as a result of contributions dropping off because of the \$217,000 contribution it received from the will of a deceased member. But now we face a savings of maybe \$5,000 a month or even more, because the Life-Line Bulletin is now in a digital format.

Our own Trustees only have a 40% participation in the Life Liner program. That's deplorable. I wish there were some way to reveal the Trustees who are not Life Liners. How can we even talk to our areas about giving more to the ISO when the majority of the Trustees aren't even Life-Liners? How can we expect more money to go to ISO from the rooms when people who are in the program for many years are still putting a dollar in the basket at the end of their meetings? How can we expect the rooms to send more money into ISO if there is no written formula for each room, as to how they disburse the money they collect?

How easy is it for members to spend money on all these expensive hobbies we all seem to have time for, now that we are not gambling? I hear of those who are going to professional sports games where the tickets are crazy expensive. Let's include the money for the drinks and dinner, etc. that are part of the day. And all these people can put into the basket is \$1.00? Times have changed since the days of putting \$1.00 in as a weekly contribution. Why not step up and be a living example within the rooms you attend. So everyone what an Abe Lincoln looks like.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

6/1/16 - 10:27 PM

The percentage of trustees participating in the life Liner program is troubling. The 40% rate of contribution by trustees is only topped by the apparent \$1.00 contributed at meetings by most members of the fellowship. Trustees devote countless hours of service throughout the year which is costly. Taking that into consideration, many of the 60% get a pass.

I was vilified a few months back when I suggested that members spend \$2.00 plus on beverages that they bring into the room, but donate only a dollar when the basket is passed around the room. I was only trying to point out how priorities seem misplaced by some folks. Selfishness is a common character flaw displayed while one is in the throws of addictive, destructive action. Sacrifice is a virtue to be admired. Recovery often involves sacrifice and responsibility. GA has been my life savor, many others in the program express the same situation in their lives. Everyone giving back a little bit, really adds up.

David suggests that trustees set a good example in our rooms, and he goes on to mention finding a Lincoln in one's wallet and to consider placing one in the collection basket. How about simply talking in each room about two Washingtons instead of one as a starting point for everyone? Immediately, the fellowship becomes financially stable. Will anyone in recovery suffer by making the extra dollar donation at each meeting?

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

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### **Dysfunctional Rooms - Where Are The Area Trustees?**

6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

I hope I was not the only one baffled by how the members of three rooms could allow a single member to be the Treasurer in all those rooms. Also for that person to be able to borrow money from members in those rooms.

People who are not GA members speak at GA meetings, and questions arise to warrant trying to put restrictions on that into the Guidance Code. Non-GA members are being elected as a Trusted Servants in rooms that are deemed open meetings. Those same people are entrusted with the room treasuries.

This all points to rooms not being aware of our literature, like the Group Handbook. The members of such rooms may not be aware of all our literature. The Intergroups are probably not aware of the rooms that have these problems. That's where the Trustees come into play. Question for everyone: Are we really doing our job as Trustees and helping those rooms with problems? From what we all heard in Phoenix, it seems not.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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6/1/16 - 12:22 PM

From my perspective, the issue is not whether the Group Handbook is being used (or even respected) but the fact that for many, the Group Handbook is nothing more than a non-binding "roadmap" on how to manage a GA room. It seems to me that if we are truly serious about maintaining some semblance of decorum in our rooms, we shouldn't just re-write the Group Handbook as Andy implored us to do in Phoenix, but take some or all of it and actually roll it up into the Guidance Code. Speaking for myself, I know I would have a much easier time as a Trustee selling proper meeting decorum to rooms in my area if it came from the Guidance Code rather than the Group Handbook. What people fail to realize is that for a lot of compulsive gamblers (myself included), it was the seriousness and structure of the rooms that engendered the "buy in" necessary to make the program work in the first place. In fact for many compulsive gamblers, a properly run meeting room was the first time their lives had any structure at all! Obviously, enforceability of either the Guidance Code or Group Handbook is next but that is for another time, place, and posting.

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

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### **Using Program For Our Own Personal Agendas**

6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

I think the biggest problem I face with the BOT, is how the members lose the understanding of what the items are that are submitted and approved. I'm referring to item 31 from Phoenix. As I got up to the microphone to give the reasoning behind this item, I made it very clear that items that originate from the ISO, BOT committees and Intergroups, that provide information or singular even documents, such as flyers pertaining to breakfast meetings, pressure relief meetings, etc, should not have to go through approval as appropriate literature, they would be appropriate, providing they comply with the Guidance Code and any previous decisions of the Board of Trustees.

Immediately, Trustees got up to the microphone and said that this would classify material at conferences as appropriate. No, that is not the case, because all such documents coming from a conference must be comply with what was previously passed for the Hosting A Conference Booklet. Let me refresh everyone's memory. You can see both items on the Phoenix agenda, items 54 and 55.

Current Version: Any booklets or other printed material, including workshop handouts are not Gamblers Anonymous approved or appropriate material, unless they are designated as such by the Board of Trustees. These items must include a prominent listing on the cover of any booklet, pamphlet or all individual pages of the following: This material is NOT Gamblers Anonymous approved or appropriate literature. It cannot be used, displayed or distributed in any Gamblers Anonymous room, or made available to any GA member outside this conference.

That should end the conflict with what many twisted into an interpretation for

their own convenience. I'm not going to start a discussion of why that material is neither approved or appropriate, but the discussion for this thread, is that I'm so disillusioned by those who would use all the work we go through with the Trustee meeting and twist them for their own convenience. Evidently, when an amendment was proposed to clarify this point, by adding with the exception of conference material, the responded by not approving the amendment, because the floor wanted to get these conference booklets approved in any manner they could.

What was especially unsettling is that once someone declared that this item made the conference booklets appropriate literature, another discussion started about how this item now conflicted with the core of item 54 and 55. The answer is, they don't conflict. When I realized how some Trustees were pulling the wheels off the track with item 31, I was forced to vote against my own item. This is not how the BOT operates. We don't use our decisions to as a road map to figure out a way to take back our will.

Maybe more clarity will prevail in San Diego.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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### **Maybe It Is Time To Look At Restructuring The BOT**

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6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

I am interested in hearing the first draft of what the new committee will propose, regarding restructuring the BOT and having bi-annual BOT meetings. It might be nice if we could post some of the things we would like to see for a proposed restructuring.

For me, the cost of these conferences is depleting the Intergroup Treasuries. I would look favorably to 1 Conference a year, which would coincide with an annual Trustee meeting. Yes, it will take 1 year to approve literature if we need 2 votes and 2 years for something that requires a merit vote. Is there anything that important that it can't wait the extra time? Think of what kind of money we could be saving our Intergroups. So many areas don't fully fund their Trustees. This is the opportunity to do so.

When an area elects Trustees, many of the people might not be able to afford to pay for not covered expenses, don't accept a nomination for the position. Because of not being fully funded, the Trustees become a group of elitists, people who have to have extra disposable money, to be a Trustee. I know in NJ, our Trustees are never fully funded. We are not reimbursed for the shuttle rides to and from the airport. We are not reimbursed for parking and tolls to get to the airport for what can be 4+ days. We get \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch and \$25 for dinner. I have yet to fall within those numbers. Of course I can always go to a fancy restaurant and I am not advocating that those costs be covered, but when you couple all these other expenses together, it still is money out of pocket for our Trustees. If we only had 1 Trustee meeting a year, that problem could be solved for many areas, if not all of them. We might also see more people from the overseas area attend our meetings.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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6/21/16 - 7:50 AM

It is my firm belief that our fellowship is best served by a BOT that is neither a function of an individual's financial resources or that of his/her Intergroup. Reducing Trustee Meetings to once a year (coinciding with a single international conference) is certainly a wonderful start but which conference? The one with the most amenities and outside activities or the one that provides us with the most favorable financial terms in terms of travel, lodging, and meals? We're still back to the issue of finances, whether it is the Trustees' personal finances or that of the Intergroup's. If we, as Trustees, are in this solely to advance the fellowship, perhaps we should think about abandoning face- to-face meetings entirely and conduct our business using a medium such as Skype or Go To Meeting. The only people who really need to be physically together for these meetings is the executive team and there is already money to fund this. Of course, we would miss out on passing the hat after each session but we could make up for that simply by assessing each intergroup a few dollars on behalf of each Trustee. Also, just by its virtual nature, meetings could be held more often with fewer agenda items per meeting, hence quicker and shorter meetings. If it's the camaraderie people want, they can fund their own attendance at International Conferences.

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

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### **Non-Approved Prayers In The Rooms**

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6/1/16 - 12:01 AM

Evidently I have much to say about a lot of things from the Phoenix conference. I wait every 6 months after our conferences to see items like mine make it to the Trustee Line, and seldom does it happen. If so, it is usually only for 1 or 2

items/issues.

Although Item 51 passed, it seemed that to many people went off the rails with trying to take this item some place it shouldn't have. It is only about prayers and recitations not being brought into the rooms. The discussions by some went to not mentioning God in their therapies. Nowhere does it say that. It is very clear that outside prayers in the room were what this was about. The Lord's Prayer is inappropriate. Reciting psalms or other passages from any religious following, is inappropriate. If people want these items to be used in the room, then submit them for approval as GA literature,

Our Fellowship is struggling to retain the members we have. Why would we use, read, display or distribute any non-approved literature, because someone wants to take back their will? We need to focus on Unity Step 1 and provide a bond with our members, rather than events, material and procedures that divide and alienate the room and its members. Focus everyone, on what is written here. It is not about the problems that were brought up in Phoenix.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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