

**Main Menu**

Select Language | ▼

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

**Phoenix, Arizona - Spring 2016  
Information Section**

[Phoenix Conference Info](#)

**[Rolling Agenda](#)**

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

**[Submit an Agenda Item](#)**

**BOT Committees**

[Monthly Committee Reports](#)

- [Blue Book Revision](#)
- [BOR/BOT Revenue Review](#)
- [Conference Oversight](#)
- [Digital Media](#)
- [Hotline Implementation](#)
- [Hotline Files](#)
- [Intergroup](#)
- [International Relations](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Pressure Relief](#)
- [Prison - Canada](#)
- [Prison - US](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [RSO](#)
- [Telephone Conference Call](#)
- [Trustee Election Guidelines](#)
- [Trustee Removal Merit Panel](#)
- [Trustee Website](#)

**International Areas**

- [Africa](#)
- [Australia](#)
- [Eastern Asia](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Pacific Rim](#)
- [South America and Mexico](#)

[International Event Flyers](#)

**Trustee Line & Other Features**

- [Trustee Line Home Page](#)
- [Login For The Trustee Poll](#)
- [Trustee Poll](#)
- [>>Trustee Information Update<<](#)
- [Trustee Website Tutorial](#)
- [Area Event Flyers](#)
- [Local Area Questions & Answers](#)
- [Local Area Website Guidelines](#)
- [Local Area Help Flyer](#)
- [New Area/Trustee Accommodation Fund](#)
- [Board of Regents News Page](#)
- [Trustee Memorial Honor Roll](#)

**Future Conferences**

[Upcoming Conferences](#)

**Trustee Line for October 2015**

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 10/31/15.

**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.

1. [Blue Book Revision](#)
2. [BOR/BOT Revenue Review](#)
3. [Conference Oversight](#)
4. [Digital Media](#)
5. [Hotline Implementation](#)
6. [Intergroup](#)
7. [International Relations](#)
8. [Literature](#)
9. [Member Retention](#)
10. [Pressure Relief](#)
11. [Prisons - Canada](#)
12. [Prisons - US](#)
13. [Public Relations](#)
14. [RSO - Regional Service Offices](#)
15. [Rules and Procedures](#)
16. [Telephone Meeting Conference Calls](#)
17. [Trustee Election Guidelines](#)
18. [Trustee Removal Merit Panel](#)
19. [Trustee Website](#)

**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

| Item | Subject                                             | Last Entry        | Entries |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1.   | <a href="#">Fantasy Sports Leagues</a>              | 10/3<br>6:17 PM   | 2       |
| 2.   | <a href="#">Agenda Item #11</a>                     | 10/3<br>9:15 PM   | 5       |
| 3.   | <a href="#">Clinging To AA Is Detrimental To GA</a> | 10/15<br>12:05 PM | 2       |
| 4.   | <a href="#">Liability Insurance</a>                 | 10/1<br>12:01 AM  | 1       |
| 5.   | <a href="#">Knowledge Is Good</a>                   | 10/2<br>12:35 PM  | 3       |

|    |                              |                 |   |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 6. | <a href="#">Observations</a> | 10/8<br>9:28 PM | 2 |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------|---|

### Fantasy Sports Leagues

10/1/15 - 12:01 PM

Kent,

I wanted to take a moment to comment on your item. I have several thoughts related to this.

First of all, I am strongly in favor of the proactive approach you are taking here. Too many times, I hear Trustees say if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Second, I really like the proposal. From what I understand, Fantasy Sports are making the poker craze of several years ago look like nothing. And there is no doubt, because it is theoretically "skill based", most consider it harmless and far from addictive.

My last thought I could attach to many of the other posts this month or most months and it frustrates me. Here you have taken your time to come up with this item as well as soliciting opinions from other people here and yet the post remained unanswered to. We as Trustees talk all the time about setting an appropriate tone for The Trustee Line yet the majority of posts that get any feedback are more attacking in nature or calls to eradicate the Trustee Line.

I don't want to end on a negative, so all I can say is come on people.....let's see more posts like this with ideas that can really make a difference in peoples' recoveries.

See you in Mexico.

Steve T. - Area 14, Long Island

10/3/15 - 6:17 PM

Steve, thanks for the kind words, and yes fantasy sports leagues intensity and daily rapid growth makes the poker craze of last 15yrs seem minuscule. Wifi & smart phones has unleashed easy participation for millions of people worldwide. The NCAA is moving towards barring ALL players from being in daily fantasy leagues. I hope this agenda item moves towards a second vote in Arizona. GA will be telling the gambling world we understand what is going on in our society. A recent fanduel fantasy league commercial boasts about going to pay out 2 BILLION in prizes this NFL season, get a team for as little as a dollar. Pro leagues are invested in some fantasy web sites, they have officially hopped over the line, they know minors are playing in fantasy leagues. Taking out "world series pool", and putting in "fantasy sports leagues", will add more wagons to our circle.

Thanks,

Kent D. -Area 15, New York

### Agenda Item #11

10/1/15 - 12:01 PM

Good day current Trustees. May your trip be safe and fruitful to the upcoming conference in Cancun.

Passing agenda Item #11 would be the jackhammer to crack the basic foundation of ANY 12-step program, in this instance, our program, Gamblers Anonymous.

I equate accepting \$25.00 or \$50.00 from a family member or friend of a Gamblers Anonymous deceased member to making the first "small" bet after being abstinent. Too harsh a definition? Please consider the "big" picture and understand what your vote will allow if #11 passes. Please vote "NO".

Please be aware of the 4 words that Carl M., during the early days of Gamblers Anonymous stated, "the Combo Book can be described in 4 words - Do the Right Thing".

Bill B. - Area 6, South Florida, PT NJ

10/1/15 - 2:29 PM

Hello to Everyone,

I have been following the responses concerning Item#11. This item has been

discussed in the rooms in our area as well as other 12 step meeting I have contacted. Not one member has a negative opinion against this Item. Everyone feels a gift to the fellowship as a Memorial Gift is very respectful and appreciative of what the program has done for their loved one. Greensboro had a member pass a few years back and His wife wanted to ask for gifts to the fellowship eludes of flowers. I had to turn her down and instead the gifts were made to the NC Council on Problem Gambling in His memory. Would anyone make a gift to request future consideration? Consideration for What? What is the end game in that. Come on people

Gary G. - Area 6C, North Carolina, Past trustee

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10/2/15 - 12:51 PM

I can not agree more with Bill B regarding outside donations, even if it were \$5 from a family member. I remember years ago when we had a trustee from New York chair my birthday in Glendale CA, during collection he announced "members only", my parents and wife were not allowed to throw in a buck or two in the basket. I had never heard that at my meeting so I started saying "members only" at every birthday at our meeting and started getting resentments. Someone made a motion at our business meeting (group conscious) to not allow me (or anyone) to say "members only" during collection, the vote never took place because we said it was a violation of the unity program. Agenda item 11 is the same thing, it is a violation of the unity program and should not have even been allowed back in Cherry Hill, I thought about ruling it out of order but did not, I regret not doing so. I am shocked it passed and urge everyone to uphold the guidance code and vote this down.

This is my humble opinion,

See you in Mexico,

Ara H. - Area I Trustee, Los Angeles

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10/2/15 - 4:25 PM

I can't believe that Gary G's post was allowed on the Trustee Line!

The North Carolina Council on Problem Gambling is an outside issue and has nothing to do with G.A., unless we are now starting to align ourselves with other programs!

Ronny W. - Area 17, Connecticut, Current Trustee

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10/3/15 - 9:15 PM

I have been like a high school kid counting down the days until he gets his drivers license. My countdown was the time between the BOR conference call last month until the release the BOR minutes from that call last night.

What happened during September was in stark contrast to what happened in March. Back then, the BOR started what turned out to be a firestorm of controversy, by voting 6-1 in favor of a Board of Trustees agenda item (Cherry Hill #48) that read as follows:

“Although the Guidance Code states Groups are self supporting and do not take outside donations the International Service Office (I.S.O.) can accept donations from family and friends of Gamblers Anonymous Members in memory of members that have passed away.”

During that March BOR meeting, Steve F., Chairman of the B.O.R. read an email from the Trustees from Area 18, regarding their concerns of the I.S.O. allowing outside donations. The B.O.R. discussed this in length, and whether or not it is a violation of the Unity Program. It was determined that it was not a violation because the I.S.O. is not considered a Group. There was a motion made to approve the new By-Law change as read. The vote during the Cherry Hill Trustee meeting, approved the item for the first of two votes.

6 months later, the BOR reviews the Cancun agenda and reverses its support and decision for that same item, which is now Cancun item #11. This time, the Chair of the BOR voted himself and this time the results are 0-8-1. ITEM #11 IS NOW D.O.A. (Dead On Arrival) in Cancun. The item that the BOR was to resolutely in favor of, has now crashed and burned during month's BOR meeting. Although I am a horrible handicapper, I am hard-pressed to even consider that item #11 will even be within sight of passing a second vote.

Let me say that I am pleased with the reversal of the BOR's decision on this matter and its support of our Unity Steps, without trying to find a way to bypass them with an item such as #11. I listened to the comments during the conference call about this item during the discussion before the vote, and felt proud that a difficult situation was resolved. As far as I am familiar, I don't believe

that the BOR has ever reversed its vote on any item that affected the BOR, versus what happened in September. I'd like to think that the oppositions voiced in the Trustee Line was partially responsible for the BOR to reconsider the unintended consequences of pushing to get this item approved. But for whatever the reason was, it was the BOR members that made the decision.

So now let me cite some criticisms that were levied against those who tried to rally support for defeating item #11. I think the collective rationale from various people who were critical of those against the item, was to "let it go and move on". From my perspective, the opposition was valid and essential to airing what was not discussed at the Cherry Hill meeting on this item. So here are some direct quotes from the Trustee Line in previous issues.

Quote - "If an agenda item either passes or fails, please don't go back to the author of the item and say "what were you thinking". Uphold the decisions of the BOT or propose a new agenda item to make a change"

My Response – The item was only voted on once and those who were against it had every right to petition the other Trustees to reconsider their votes, which also included the BOR.

Quote – "Or better yet – put on the next agenda to rescind that item they are griping about. I have seen at least two items pass the 2 votes and than they put a rescind item on the next agenda. Where is acceptance?? Where are the principals over personalities – or is it personal principals?"

My Response – Motions of rescission still have to be passed. If such motions were nothing more than nuisances, then they wouldn't pass. They pass because the practical application of what was previously passed can really show the error of initially passing them. To me, that is about courage to know it was wrong to pass them. Acceptance? Yes, it is about acceptance of the fact that the Trustees made a mistake. I see lots of step work involved with such decisions, be it the BOT, BOR or any other part of the Fellowship. To me that speaks volumes about principles over personalities.

There are many more examples, of how the voices of opposition to the status quo is not the undoing of the Fellowship. Cries of disunity are but desperate attempts to take the focus away from the issue(s). They end up as a last resort for those who can't mount an intellectual, civilized counter to the item of dissention.

Long story short... The handicapping of how item #11 is a good thing and should pass, is now a moot point. If the Trustees had called into the BOR conference call for September, they would clearly have heard the deep-rooted change in sentiment for this agenda item. It wasn't so much about the vote itself, but the reasoning for the reversal.

In a few weeks, we will hear Steve F, Chair of the BOR, present item #11 to the Trustees for consideration. Although I have no idea what he is going to say, I believe he will accurately relay the discussions on this item that occurred during the September BOR meeting, along with the rationale, and the complete reversal in the vote by the BOR. So, item #11, originally presented by the BOR in Cherry Hill as item #48 with the very seemingly convincing arguments, barely passes with a majority. Now imagine Steve presenting this item with how the BOR has changed along with an expected statement of how passing it would be detrimental to the Unity Steps, and couple that with some very convincing commentary from Trustees about their opposition to the item, I think this will seal the item's fate of failing the second vote.

I'm not gloating about the prospect of the item failing, because I think the transformation by the BOR in their thinking, is a prime example of how principles prevail, whenever people take the time to research the issues and use a generous sprinkling of H.O.W. The ones who try to discredit those who bring up opposition to any items, are the ones who have taken back their will, in direct defiance of Recovery Step 3.

Kudos to the BOR for their decision to do the right thing. And a request for those who disparage people on the Trustee Line for speaking their mind, to up their game and make the disagreements about this issues, and not a character assassination about the authors. I and many others who read the Trustee Line have grown tired of it.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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**Clinging To AA Is Detrimental To GA**

10/1/15 - 12:01 PM

I have only been to two AA meetings in my almost twenty years in GA, I always believe that these are two different programs... I cringe every time a chairperson wants to give a "90 day chip" to a member, I scream "Key chain!". I get it that GA came after AA and there are so many more meetings in AA than GA, but we need to keep to our principles because it is a life and death program. Many members with many years in AA have such a difficult time in GA because they try to apply AA to their GA program.

As for new members, we will introduce him or her and read the entire combo book, we will skip the 20 questions and go to therapy after the "A day at a time" reading. After a few members have shared, we will ask the 20 questions directly to the new member asking for a simple yes or no. Then we will allow them to share what brought them to the meeting, we will then give a red key chain and newcomer packet... The other members will continue sharing and sometimes direct their shares towards the newcomer, like a comment. They might touch on something the newcomer shared about and how they related. After the meeting, the newcomer is usually surrounded by two or three members, given a phone list and asked to call us. Some of those members might even write their numbers on the packet for easy access.

This is how some of our meetings, not all, in my area handle newcomers. In my area there are about 45 meetings, used to be over 80 but since we have split off to three intergroups, we have less meetings.

Best to all, see you in Cancun,  
Ara H. - Area I, Los Angeles

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10/15/15 - 12:05 PM

I love this topic, similar to last month's "Clinging to AA ways is detrimental to GA" topic.

I didn't get around to replying last month as I was suffering a crisis wondering if I kill a topic when I reply. Of course I'm not that important and there are likely other reasons. In any case, I'm leaving it late enough this month as I'm also worried if I start replying on this vast topic, will I miss my plane to Cancun.

I'm going to just touch on two points, one in the opening post of this topic this month and similarly one from last month opening post.

A small point made in this month's opening post resonated with me ".....there are more AA meetings than GA ..."

I realize I'm taking Ara's point in isolation and as such it's not a direct reply to what Ara meant, but nonetheless it's a direct reply to the topic, I believe.

In my experience ( a small thing in a big world ) a small minority of the total dual or multiple addicted members in this fellowship carry with them an apparent thought process that goes something like this ...I've nothing to learn here, I know it already, I'm in the other fellowship you know. Along with this comes the actions that suggest a disinterest in sharing this " Know it all already " wisdom with the rest of us, through agenda items and due process, making this secret knowledge a part of our program

That's seemingly neither reflective of the other fellowship( s ) nor the vast majority of dual or multiple addicted members in our fellowship, just the small but noisy enough minority.

I believe one of the main reasons for that is this, to become part of our program it must pass tests of scrutiny and debate, requiring a decision by the ultimate authority, Group conscience, us, the members.

On the other hand, if it is brought in through the back door, as it is, then new, small, weaker groups or indeed more mature groups with a significant amount of people of like mind can be taken over or subverted by that type of behaviour. The evidence is there.

So how does this relate to the small point I referred to in the opening post this month ? Simply this, the following saying is heard frequently among this small minority, who in reality have no reference point backing up their dangerously and purposely disunifying behavior, " All you need for a new meeting is a cup of coffee and a resentment "

What a clever and effective way to break up a group and start a new group, not based on spiritual and democratic principles, but based on pure addictive thinking.

It matters little if what I say is actually happening on a grand scale or has been happening for years, the very fact alone that we have no way of knowing how many groups in any fellowship reflect unity or disunity proves the point, I saw it

written somewhere, something like " No opinion.... "

Even if we had an opinion we don't have a say, so double Q.E.D. We do, however, have a say in what happens in our fellowship.

So yes, clinging to AA ways, although the minority who use this tool have no reference point in any fellowship ( or other institutions ) for their actions, is detrimental to GA. It's pervasive, intrusive and its negative effects are much more likely to have people who do not follow guidance codes and who account to no one provide the unruly, misguided atmosphere so familiar to new members from their addictive environment.

Aren't we meant to provide a different choice, or at least the hope that there is a different choice ?

A group or area affected severely enough in this way can have groups that look big in numbers and even sound strong, however, when the crunch comes, the foundations crumble and then we have a rush for the coffee and resentments lead to more disunity and breakaways, more groups but less strength in unity.

While the foundations are crumbling the negative effects on existing and indeed new members are devastating.

So I don't pay that much attention to the actual numbers game as being a sign of strength per se. It can be, but not always.

Give me a group with a handful of members practicing the G A program to the best of their ability over a large group whose foundations have crumbled and sold out to anarchy, anyday.

Just to mention, I have an agenda item to insert the words " ..through the program of Gamblers Anonymous..." into our preamble, hope it goes down well.

And back on topic, finally and briefly, the point made last month in the similar topic by David. M. about clinging to AA ways, David has an item on the agenda for a committee related to this, let's have it and see if spiritual, democratic means and good old fashioned communication can stop the rot.

I believe it can, I always believe and I really hope.

Till next week in Cancun.

Odie B. - Trustee, Area 36, S/E Ireland

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### **Liability Insurance**

10/1/15 - 12:01 PM

I'd like to thank Doug for posting these questions on the trustee line. However we have no comments yet. We are asking because I do know of at least two intergroups that do have insurance and would like to hear from them. We have one location in Burbank that has three meetings a week. Monday, (largest group, 20 members average), Tuesday 7:30 am, small group and Friday nights, which is growing. Our Church notified us that they did not have our "Certificate of Insurance" on file, I told them that we do not carry such insurance and only signed a release six years ago when we moved to this location. They said that all outside groups that use the facility must provide liability insurance for \$1,000,000. If we did not provide one in about 30 days we would have to move out. So we started looking for insurance and new location, almost every new location demanded insurance, so we all chipped in and purchased the insurance. We think it might be the trend of the future, more and more locations are going to ask for it. So we are thinking about buying a umbrella policy to cover all 45 meetings in Los Angeles intergroup. We just wanted to get feedback from other areas, anything would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your feedback... Ara H. - Area 1, Los Angeles

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### **Knowledge Is Good**

10/1/15 - 4:00 PM

How about something bright and sunny? Oh, too soon for something like that from me? Well, here it is. The title is from the movie Animal House...the opening scene... Faber College...a statue of Emil Faber that has a plaque on the bottom...Knowledge is Good.

By the way, the movie is 37 years old. So why is this relevant? It is because of

what happened on September 19th that so many people missed. The Board of Regents opened a telephone conference call line to allow any GA members to listen to the Board of Regents meeting, as it was happening.

The first thing that bears mentioning, is that the minutes that are published each month are only a fraction of 1% of what is really the meat and potatoes of a Board of Regents meeting. Yes, I have been a long-standing critic of the minutes, strictly because reading them gives no indication of what is the sum and substance of what is discussed.

With this live conference call, all the questions and answers for every item are crystal clear, as to who says what and how items progress through the meeting. This is not so much about the content of the discussions, but more about the process, which now open for those who want to know what the Board of Regents does, or does not do. Gone are the periods of uncertainty and the information vacuums between meetings and waiting for the minutes to be released, just as the agenda is closed for the next meeting.

Yes, knowledge is in fact good. However, it should not go unmentioned that the BOR has taken a very big step to the issue of transparency. I would venture a guess that a very small percentage of our members even knows about the Board of Regents, what they do, or how it affects Gamblers Anonymous universally. Now will be the time for a strong indication of whether others are committed enough to the Fellowship to take the time just once a month to learn more about what greases the wheels, so that the business of GA can continue.

An email will be going out to about 300 current and past Trustee before each monthly meeting. It's time that many of us take an extra 2 hours and make a commitment to be better informed about this Fellowship. The Board of Regents has now made a huge step forward in accomplishing this, but as always, it's always about who wants to make that decision to give a bit more of ourselves for more information.

My hat is off to all the BOR members for agreeing to this conference call and conducting a meeting that opened my eyes about what is really going on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Bravo for showing the courage to make a difference. We will leave the content for another posting, when it becomes appropriate.

Knowledge is indeed good, and I am glad to have been on the conference call and plan to be each month. The number to call is 712-775-7035...use ID 752927#. The meeting starts at 9:30 AM Pacific Time. Nothing changes if nothing changes. Be there for monthly meetings and change your thinking about the Board of Regents.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

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10/1/15 - 6:08 PM  
Hi David,

Bravo to you. This is the first nice thing I have ever heard you say about the Board of Regents. This is real progress and it really puts a chill up my spine. Keep it up and Gamblers Anonymous will flourish.

Bob W. - Area 1B, Inland Empire, California

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10/2/15 - 12:35 PM  
Great comments David,

I do agree that this is a great step forward for the BOR. I even enjoyed reading Bob's comment in agreement with you. I feel it is very important that trustees, myself included get the word out. I do remember being notified about this option being available this past month and I do confess not announcing it at meetings. That will soon change, I will start announcing it regularly and I can not control members to call in, but at least I could notify and educate them.

Looking forward to the next BOR meeting,

Regards,  
Ara H. - Trustee, Area 1, Los Angeles

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| <b>Observations</b> |
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10/8/15 - 12:16 PM

After reading Bill B's post (from last month), I went to the local Q&As to see why he wrote his post.

To say I was amazed by the questions posed is an understatement. I don't know

what meetings the questioners are going to, what intergroup they are part of, or why the trusted servants are in the meetings. In my experience (in going to about 12 different meetings in my area), I haven't found the basis for any of those questions, and think they may represent a very specific issue in a specific location or locations. I would suggest the questioning individuals contact their local intergroup to get the answers and responses they need.

Jim G. - Area 6, Southern Florida

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10/8/15 - 9:28 PM

To Jim G, Area 6, Southern Florida and other interested Trustees:

I have hesitated to respond to your post in an effort to remain anonymous along with my desire to protect others in the area who may be impacted. Believe me, it is no fun having your 'dirty laundry' exposed in a fairly public venue. However, since the Board of Regents, in an effort to be transparent themselves, have divulged the efforts being made by the Board of Trustees to help us get through this turmoil, my efforts have now become secondary. As we so often hear, there are always 'unintended consequences' aren't there? Yes, I could have remained silent, but that wouldn't answer what appears to be your concerns, and I think they are important enough to us to warrant this epistle.

Like your amazement at our questions, I have been amazed for the last four years at how this area has conducted themselves, especially considering the fact that I am a former Trustee. To directly respond to your concerns: (1) We have no intergroup here. We've held workshops here to advise the community what it is and how it works, but then it stalls - no efforts made to move the concept along. (2) We have no elected Trustees. We did have for 2 years, but they chose not to re-up - the personal expense was too great. We tried, believe me, but could not even find volunteers to work on an 'election committee.' I have attended most trustee meetings since in an effort to keep the community informed. I do this at my own expense and I am on social security alone. This statement is not an effort to be applauded, but to raise a point. I bring the agenda and minutes to the meetings and no efforts are made to follow the voted results - they'll believe it only when they see it in print.

I've been told that 'you don't know everything' (to which I've replied 'that is true, but I can contact someone who does.'). I've been told, 'if you don't like it, get out.' (This was in response when I advised the chair that it might be wise to 'warn other GA members planning to attend' that they would have to 'sign in' which I felt would violate their anonymity.) The questions posted were either questions or statements which a few of us questioned which have been hurled at us and we felt with an appropriate response from another GA member might help in our effort to develop a healthier and more unified group of GA members.

I have frequently requested - here on the Trustee Line - to consider the fact that not all GA meetings and/or members are lucky enough to be in an urban environment; many of us struggle in a rural environment to 'do the right thing' or to 'follow the GA Guidelines' (which we are forcefully told are only suggestions). I heard once (and of course cannot find it now) that the BOT might consider creating a committee to develop a set of instructions to be included in the ISO's New Group Packet to inform the new group what is and what is not considered 'acceptable' to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole. I don't know how long it has been for some of you, but the new group packet is a box of GA literature. No instructions; no directions; and new groups are often left to 'fend for themselves' and often there are multiple issues which must be dealt with...usually after the fact, unfortunately.

Jim - I hope this helps you to understand why those questions are there. Our hope is to help other members to lose their fear of asking the questions for which they desperately need answers

My sincere thanks to the BOT, the BOR, our former Trustee, Kent C, and Karen at the ISO for all the help and support they have provided.

With love, hope, trust and respect for our Fellowship  
Linda S., Member Area 7C, Oklahoma  
Former Trustee, Area 3A, San Diego

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