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Trustee Line for November 2015

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 11/30/15.

**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**

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

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Cancun

11/1/15 - 10:54 AM

There were 53 absentee ballots submitted for the Cancun Board of Trustees Meeting. Understandably, some of the trustees that couldn't make it had legitimate reasons. Others may have not. Whether they decided not to come because of all the bad press having a conference in Cancun, or had other reasons, what they missed was a truly remarkable experience. I'm not here to criticize anyone, each person has to make their own decisions. What I'm here to say is that the Cancun conference exemplified what is truly amazing about our Fellowship.

After the BOT meeting ended, someone approached me and stated that they felt more unity at the end of these meetings than they have in a long time. Many of the previous BOT meetings were contentious to say the least. However, in Cancun, this wasn't the case. Things ran smoothly and effectively.

Now for the conference itself. More than one person indicated in conversations I had with them that this was the best conference they ever attended. I couldn't find a reason to disagree. The hotel, the staff, the recovery, the unity, and the fellowship were beyond exceptional. Martha and her committee did a remarkable job in putting together a fantastic time to everyone attending. Personally, the recovery and unity, including friendships that became stronger, would not have happened if I hadn't attended. After the bad rap by members and trustees themselves about having a conference in Mexico, the experience outweighed all the assumptions made by those who criticized the BOT for selecting Cancun, and having a more open mind. It's a shame they didn't attend to see the marvelous job done by Mexico in pulling this off. I can't say enough good things about everything. It's an experience I will never forget. Thank you Martha; to you and your committee.

Pete K. - 1st Co-Chair BOT
Area 13B - South Jersey

11/1/15 - 10:06 PM

I would also like to take a minute to comment about the great conference we just had in Cancun Mexico. I did not know what to expect when I arrived in Cancun for the conference. I was pleasantly surprised how everything exceeded my expectations. From the hotel staff, to the people of Cancun Mexico, service and hospitality was amazing. Everywhere I looked people were smiling and welcoming. I never for a minute felt unsafe or unwelcome. We took a public bus into the city, everyone helped us with directions and info.

As for the committee that put this conference together, there are no words to even begin to say how amazed I was with their enthusiasm and attitude. We keep forgetting the committee is entirely from Monterrey Mexico and not Cancun...which is a good two hour plane ride away. Then there was the entertainment and workshops, and dancing. They were so happy to be in recovery it was amazing. Only ten years ago there were five meetings in all of Mexico and now there are over 122 including one that wants to get started in Cancun, as I understand from a past email to the ISO.

I know there were 53 trustees who sent in absentee ballots, I am sure some had respectful reasons not to be there. But if they were scared off from the talk at Cherry Hill or from others, I am just disappointed they were unable to share this amazing experience with us all. However there were a good number of past trustees present also.

I would like congratulate Martha and her committee on a job well done. As a member who has been on committees on three international conferences and numerous mini conferences, I know the amount of works it takes to put on a conference. I would consider this conference one of the top three of all time I have attended. I would also like to urge Martha and her committee to submit another bid in a year or two for another conference down the road.

Again, job well done and looking forward to another conference in Cancun, same hotel please. It felt great and intimate. Not too big and not too small.

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

I have no hesitation in agreeing with the comments about the success of Cancun as a conference and would like to add my thanks to Martha, the organizing committee and indeed all the members of Area 28.

I thought on Saturday evening that the Unity, good natured support and Mexican Wave which greeted Martha's speech was a highlight to remember.

Later, as both fellowship speakers on Saturday evening felt they were at their best when they spoke from the heart rather than a rehearsed speech, I would add this, I have seldom, if ever, heard two speakers, one from each fellowship, deliver speeches which were so absolutely focussed on the respective message of their fellowship. All that without being boring or long winded, I'd say it was good natured, entertaining even, as well as focussed and effective.

I was beyond impressed and in many ways this was the unexpected highlight for me.

Sure, it's unfortunate that some may have allowed others negative words and opinions sway their decision whether to attend or not, sure there are clear problems for the fellowship regarding absentee ballots, sure there are bound to be different viewpoints as to how well or otherwise the trustee meeting went (The chairs were comfortable and the sound was good for sure) of course each may have their own reason for attending or not and each may have their own tale to tell or memory or highlight.

As it happens, our flight home was cancelled and we were shipped back to the conference hotel, ironically enough. Although we were given a 6th floor balcony room and had the pleasure of the bones of an extra 18 hours to enjoy the beautiful sunset and sunrise, the reality is that our trip home, originally hand picked to entail a relatively short 8.20 flight from PHL as part of an overall 19 hour trip home, turned into a return trip that saw us home 33 hours after our original time having endured extra stopovers and flights, a longer trip home than the outward 23 hour trip and further not insignificant expense.

I'll soon recover lost time and forget that episode above, but I will never forget the Cancun conference for the reasons mentioned formerly above, so thanks again Martha, the committee, Area 28 and of course the speakers, you know who you are.

I would end by seconding the motion for Cancun to do it again soon, just as good will do just fine. If Cancun does it again I will be back, that's the plan in any case.

Odie. B. - Area 36 Ireland (south east) Trustee

Unintended Consequences

11/2/15 - 5:30 PM

I couldn't agree more with what accolades have been written about Cancun. Aside from the humidity, the only problem I found was the negative impact of the 53 absentee ballots. There was something afoot with this large a number, as the previous record for absentee ballots was 28. No doubt, there is a long list of reasons that would be given if each of those people were to cite why they didn't attend, so I won't belabor the point. I prefer to say that the Trustees who wanted to be there, were there. That points to something that was very noticeable during the 2 days of the Trustee meetings and might be part of the reason why there was a greatly increased feeling of unity.

The biggest component that I noticed, was a significant increase in the number of Trustees who got up to the microphone to speak their minds on the items brought to the floor. This is how it should be at every Trustee meeting. I applaud this level of participation. If your area sends you to a Trustee meeting, then get up to the microphone and tell us what you think, good, bad or indifferent. Of special significance was that more people got up to speak as the discussions started and opinions started to multiply. That was a great sight to witness.

But for me, I believe that the 15 minutes allotted for discussion should begin once the author, or designated person, makes a motion that is seconded. There were a few items in which the author monopolized the bulk of the 15 minutes. Don't get me wrong, I understand that this may be necessary in order to get all the facts/opinions out on the floor, as to why the item needs to be passed, but we can't penalize the floor because the bulk of the time has been chewed up by the author.

This is one of the agenda items I plan on submitting. It will not be to encourage the authors to filibuster on the floor, but specifically to allow orderly and complete discussion on the items, with sufficient time for varied opinions.

Also, it is time to deal with the problems of dealing with the ability to vote on Step changes. When Article VIII, Section 9 was passed, the only overseas area was Australia. Dealing with a Step change wasn't affected by someone not being physically there from Australia. The fact is that with the efforts of the IRC, the increased amount of Overseas Trustees has greatly skewed the likely percentage of physical attendance of all the seated Trustees. Skewed to the point that we have not had a physical quorum to vote on Step changes. We needed 88 in Cancun and only had 66. Had we been able to pass a Step in Cherry Hill, it would have automatically failed in Cancun, based on the provisions of this section.

There are those Trustees who will automatically vote against any Step changes, no doubt many of them may also be the same Trustees who took back their will and decided to handicap the quality of the Cancun agenda and not attend the Trustee meeting. To me, there is a bigger issue to consider. We need to give every agenda item the courtesy and respect that every item should get. We owe it to our Fellowship to consider everything in a fair and non-biased basis. How often have we been predisposed to think about an agenda item one way, only to vote the other way after hearing the discussions?

I will be putting up an agenda item, whereby we add the concept of absentee ballots will count not just as attendance for the Trustee meetings, but as physical attendance, which will allow for each item involving a Step to get its due consideration. This will also help with the requirement of having a voting quorum for the 2 consecutive meeting requirements. This will be done through a proposed change to Article VIII, Section 19. Hopefully, it will pass by a margin high enough to affirm that the Board of Trustees can't ignore this issue any longer.

It must be underscored that this absentee ballot situation in Cancun was very much an unintended consequence of the expansion of the absentee ballots. There were items that went one way on the floor in Cancun, and the other way once the absentee ballots were counted. I don't know what the answer is to this problem, especially when those 53 people did not have the benefit of hearing the discussions on any items. Step changes are a bit more straight forward, but the other items are generally more complicated and all the Trustees need to hear what the discussion is, before voting can be done in earnest. Perhaps someone will come up with an idea how to improve that, with an agenda item of their own.

In closing, the Cancun committee deserves a lot of credit for a Trustee meeting that was the best facilities I can remember. Just to have an almost full-time audio technician in the room, was a huge plus, let alone have comfortable chairs for the first time. Thanks again Area 28. You guys really hit it out of the park.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

Step Up For Veterans

11/3/15 - 11:40 AM

About two years ago, I was contacted by the doctor in charge of an in-patient drug and alcohol rehab program at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in East Orange, New Jersey. Dr. Gates asked if I was willing to start a GA meeting for his patients who spend between 30 to 45 days confined at the hospital addressing their addictions. He recognized while treating the veterans that some were suffering from a gambling addiction. Some are compulsive gamblers, for others, the meetings provide the patients with awareness of another addiction that they may fall prey to after their recovery from drinking and drug addiction.

The veterans are involved in group and individual therapy daily. The established GA meeting format is an "Open Meeting" and held one night per week in a hospital conference room. The meetings have a one hour time limit to accommodate the hospital schedule. GA brothers and sisters in New Jersey step up to help as featured speakers at these meetings.

If any of you want to provide helpful, meaningful service as a part of your recovery, feel free to contact me about how you can get involved at a VA hospital in your area. There are vets in such programs who have served in the Vietnam War and every conflict since then. Regardless of their addiction issues, these people have given great service and sacrifice for all of us. They need our help.

My email address is: (This information has been omitted, as per Trustee Line guidelines) If you wish to direct any comments to Vin, please send them to trustee.site.admin@trusteewebsite.com and they will be forwarded to him.

Respectfully,

Let's Start The Discussion

11/10/15 - 6:20 AM

So, how do you feel about deleting Unity Step 2? "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." Is your first thought to dismiss this idea? Let me point out a few things. (Bold and underlined words were done for emphasis)

At the Cancun Board of Trustees meeting, agenda item 18 passed a second vote. The Board of Trustees have mandated that no GA member may not share material they got at any International Conference or Mini Conference. Whether it is a workshop that provided some good information on recovery or it is a conference book with the thoughts of GA members on their recovery, you can no longer share it with other GA members.

Unity Step 3 says "The only requirement for Gamblers Anonymous membership is a desire to stop gambling." Guidance Code Article VII, Section 4 states "Abstinence from gambling and regular attendance of at least thirty-nine (39) Gamblers Anonymous meetings (exceptions can be made, via group conscience decisions, for medical reasons, and military stationed overseas) in the prior 12 months, by the member's own admission, is required for pinnings and for all successive anniversaries.

Article VIII, Section 4 states that a Trustee must be removed by a 2/3rds vote by the Board of Trustees. This means that no area can remove a Trustee without bringing it to the Board of Trustees for a formal vote.

These examples above indicate to me that the Board of Trustees is a governing body for these types of issues that could be addressed at the group or Intergroup level. Why is it necessary for the Board of Trustees to mandate how many meetings a member must attend to celebrate their anniversaries? That should be decision of the GA group the member attends. If a Trustee is not servicing his/her area, why must that area bring the issue to the Board of Trustees? The Board of Trustees did not vote the Trustee into that office. We all share our thoughts about recovery in meetings that are personal experiences, why is the Board of Trustees excluding material from GA conferences?

I came away from the Cancun Board of Trustees meeting thinking that the Board is overstepping the concept of "matters affecting GA as a whole" to create many items in the Guidance Code that erode the autonomy of GA groups and turn the Trustees into the "GA police" when they honestly try to do their job and uphold the Guidance Code.

I am asking for a discussion on whether the Board of Trustees is getting too far down into the items that should belong to the groups or Intergroups. Should we take a fresh look at the Guidance Code and work to return autonomy to the groups where appropriate? Or do you think the Guidance Code is correct?

Paul S. - Area 17, Connecticut

11/10/15 - 10:55 PM

Hi Paul,

Good topic. The unity steps and guidance code are not compatible. Never was and never will be. Plain and simple.

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

11/15/15 - 7:21 AM

Thank you for the response Joe, I appreciate the affirmation of my thoughts on this subject. I was hoping for some more substantial discussion. Where do you think the Unity Steps and Guidance Code are in conflict? Do you think we should take a fresh look at the issue?

I know people dislike when we refer to another 12 step fellowship, but we adopted many of our steps, both recovery and unity, from another fellowship. There is a rich and extensive history on how the precursors to Unity steps came into existence. Many mistakes were made and they learned from them as they developed the traditions that eventually became our unity steps. I encourage all Trustees to explore this history.

My early morning exploration into that history gave me some thoughts that I want to share. The other fellowship developed 12 concepts for world service that lay some groundwork of how their service board (similar to our BOT) should conduct its business. Those concepts provide some insight into the role

of their "Trustees"; very informative reading, especially their definition of leaders and leadership.

The other thing that jumped out to me was the idea of "right of participation". Every Trustee has the right to speak at our BOT meeting or here on the Trustee Line, we all accept without question. But part of that "right" is that we have a responsibility to speak our opinion or our area's opinion. For this to be an effective board we must all speak up. In Cherry Hill BOT meeting, I did not speak up on an agenda item because I thought it had no chance to be passed. Well, it got passed and generated a lot of discussion, and thankfully was defeated on the second vote. I will not disregard my responsibility to speak in the future, it is too important.

Why is it important? The original version of Unity Step 2 talked about an informed group conscience. Being informed means that we hear from our members and we hear all sides of the issue. With all that input, we have the opportunity to make the best decision for our fellowship. I know that I have changed my vote on an agenda item after hearing the discussion at the BOT meeting; it provided me new information or understanding.

So my hope is that this topic, or any topic on the Trustee Line or BOT agenda, will motivate other Trustees to do some homework and generate some healthy discussion and allow all of us to become more informed on the issues affecting our fellowship.

Paul S. - Area 17, Connecticut

11/15/15 - 9:48 PM

Hi Paul,

I actually wrote this on the trustee line back in July 2014. I even called you out ironically hoping for feed back. You never responded. LOL

Are the guidance code and unity program compatible?

7/20/14

Hello Fellowship,

I'm asking this question because someone at our last Intergroup I attended made a statement that he felt they were NOT compatible. I thought about it and had to agree with him. In the 10 plus years I have been a member of GA I can count a handful of times where there was some disunity because of some guidance code violations (used unapproved literature). I think most 12 step programs have survived for as long as they have because of the 12 traditions (unity steps in GA's case). The unity steps uses language like "we should" and "we ought". The only time I see the words DO NOT is in unity step 2 (our leaders are but trusted servants. They DO NOT govern). The unity steps are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. We follow them willingly because we want to and feel we ought to, not because anyone makes us. This is where the guidance code differs. The guidance code has successfully allowed GA trusted servants to govern groups. Another question I want to ask is does one take precedence over the other? From what I witnessed at our last Intergroup, it absolutely does. Paul S. If you are reading this, you touch a lot on this issue in 2012 when you were writing about the unity steps. I hope you can chime in on this.

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

11/22/15 - 5:51 PM

Paul,

You raise interesting points but I'd love further clarification. Clearly, there is a measure of governing (at least by the dictionary definition) that is done in the fellowship and it's not limited to Trustees.

I guess my questions to advance the discussion of your posting are:

1. Should we have Trustees or even responsibilities for Trustees in as much as that could be considered governing? If not, how would the work of the fellowship be done and who would do it?

2. You raised 2 issues to illustrate examples of what you feel are governing (relating to Trustee Removal Procedures and Requirements to celebrate anniversaries). Assuming you still want Trustees (based on your answer to #1), if an impropriety occurs that requires review would Trustees being removed at an Intergroup Level be considered any less governing than if it were at the Trustee level? On the second, as to celebrating anniversaries what could be the reasoning to leave that up to individual meetings?

What I am saying is in any successful organization, there needs to be structure and guidelines in place to allow in what is GA's case, the fellowship to survive. Although my interpretation to the intent of what is meant by "non-governing in the unity steps" could be described as leaders who rule without regard for group conscience, I recognize others may have different interpretations. However someone interprets it, there is a strong need for there to be people to uphold the guidance code at all levels. This shouldn't be enforcing their own will so much as overseeing that all of the previously established Group Conscience decisions (at any level) are carried out.

It's just sad how many meetings want to call themselves GA meetings and be a part of GA when in reality, they have no regard for the established guidelines of the fellowship.

Steve T. - Area 14, Long Island

11/24/15 - 6:12 AM

Thanks for the discussion Steve. The Trustees are definitely needed to conduct the business of the fellowship. We need a guiding voice in the operation of the ISO, Board of Regents, and the evolving needs of our fellowship to reach the gambler who still suffers. And the Trustees have the experience as a result of their time in the fellowship to provide information and insight to groups who ask for help. My issue is when the Board of Trustees try to mandate how groups should handle situations that should be decided at the group level. Let me use two examples.

If a group is using outside literature (non-GA approved), there is no way to know if that literature follows the principles of our recovery and unity steps. It could even be in complete conflict, and be detrimental to helping someone stop gambling. This affects our fellowship as a whole. And it is appropriate for the Trustee to approach the group and ask them to remove the outside literature. If groups feel that there is a need for different literature in our fellowship, they should work with their Trustees to get the literature written and approved.

I'll go back to the anniversary "requirement". Several years ago, I stated here on the Trustee line that there was one or two years that I did not meet the 39 meetings in a year requirement because I do attend two 12 step programs and I split my time between them. But during those years, I also attended GA mini conferences, GA international conferences, BOT meetings, presented workshops, served as an officer at Intergroup, and worked many hours on the Hotline Committee. Did I deserve to celebrate my GA anniversary with my group? According to the Guidance Code, I should have told my group to not recognize my anniversary. It's my group's decision to celebrate my anniversary, not the BOT. Somebody needs to convince me how this requirement affects GA as a whole and how you can even enforce this rule when no one even questioned me when I self-identified that I was in violation of the Guidance Code. Did I get some special exemption because of my service work?

As to your second question, it is simple: the Board of Trustees did not elect the Trustee, it was the group conscience of the groups in the area that the Trustee represents. It should be that same group that determines that the Trustee should be removed. I felt extremely uncomfortable when this issue was brought to the BOT by one area and we had to vote on whether to remove a Trustee. The only evidence that I have is the verbal information presented by each side. I had no input on how that areas groups felt about their Trustee: were they happy with the job the Trustee was doing, did they feel the Trustee was acting inappropriately or dishonestly; I just had no way of knowing all of the facts. Why should my vote carry any more weight than the people who elected the Trustee? That same logic applies to celebrating anniversaries, I don't know the facts – the groups do.

I hope this answers your questions, thanks for taking the time to send in your thoughts.

Paul S - Area 17, Connecticut

11/14/15 11:33 AM

Joe,

Interesting tie in of topics from 2012 – 14 & 2015, just for completeness I might add that there was also a discussion item, by the topic author, I believe in Vancouver 2013. I'm pretty sure just about every year since 1957 there have also been many discussions on the same issues.

I see your point regarding "Ought to" and "Do not" and as it stands I believe Unity step two ".....we do not govern" is actually a statement of fact rather than a possible suggestion as in "ought to etc." our leaders do not and indeed cannot govern, regardless of intent, wording or interpretation, as I understand

the reality. So “ do not ” seems not necessarily used as an order, in my view.

Paul, on the Topic title and question, I see no need to remove the fact, as mentioned above, from the Unity program.

I also appreciate the conundrum you found yourself in in your own particular circumstance, it seems to me that the decision in your case as a trustee comes down to yourself and your area. I believe the fellowship is better off in having you as a trustee, therefore I am satisfied that the intent of the overall process, is alive and well.

The bottom line for me is this, if you and I were the only people in an area election for a trustee position, based on what I know about our respective records and the overall benefit to the fellowship at large, despite your unease at whether you qualify or not, I would still vote for you. But that's an easy case.

I would also vote against an agenda item to remove step 2 Unity if you put one up, as things stand.

I am not sure if what you are seeking is some way that the fellowship can mandate what happens in every situation, whether the BOT should in some way feel empowered to step in and say what areas do in every case or alternatively never be a part of the overall process at all, I think that would be unmanageable, as would any efforts at suggesting perfection.

Steve, your discussion points interested me and helped open my mind a notch further. Your last paragraph sent a chill down my spine both in terms of self reflection and understanding situations and others.

When you wrote this Steve “ It's just sad how many meetings want to call themselves GA meetings and be a part of GA when in reality, they have no regard for the established guidelines of the fellowship ” you stopped me in my tracks, you could have blown me down with a feather, as if you read my mind and came up with a suggested way of looking at something that solved half of all troubles and opened the door to a resolution of the rest.

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

Cleaning Up A Mistake

11/10/15 - 11:45 PM

Paul wrote his piece about “Let's start the discussion” and mentioned a serious flaw in Cancun item 18 that passed the second vote. I thought it important enough to start a separate discussion on that item, so as not to take away from the underlying issue that Paul raised.

For too long, material from conferences have made it into the rooms of GA. These booklets, handouts and other items are almost without exception, non-approved GA material. They cannot be used, displayed or distributed in any GA room. That is right out of the Guidance Code, Article VII, Section 1. Worse yet, is that Intergroups from the hosting areas have sold such material to their members, essentially validating their uses by members and in the rooms. Why would any member question the use of anything coming from Intergroup?

The purpose of putting the 2 items on the Cancun agenda, 18 and 19, was to make it known to all who attend local area mini-conferences and International Conferences, that this material is not approved. The language from those 2 items is as follows:

“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.”

We all know about the fine line that divides what happens inside and outside the meeting. This is a quiet thing that is used to circumvent provisions, guidelines and other things that can't be used, displayed or distributed in the rooms. For some reason, we wash our collective hands of all that, once we walk out of the meetings. Flyers of members who are trying to solicit business from other GA members. No good in the rooms, but outside it gets done. Flyers to promote the various Councils on Compulsive Gambling throughout the US. No good in the rooms, but outside it gets done. It gets done that way and those who conduct themselves accordingly, defend their actions by saying that they didn't do it in the room and it doesn't say anywhere in our literature that we can't do it outside the room. Yes, another grey area that many members love to exploit. That's a subject for a different time.

I've used some extreme examples above, but the same thing is true with the non-GA approved material from all conferences. As a result of this language

passing the second literature vote, the language of exactly what the material is will be clear to all GA members. However, as the original author of this item, I feel that there is part of it that has to be revised. I came to that conclusion after a very focused and impassioned objection on the floor in Cancun from Popeye from Area 2H. What I will be submitting to the Phoenix agenda is to remove the part of that language that says: "or made available to any GA member outside the conference."

Some of the Trustees may be upset that this got passed and the ink isn't even dry and here I go trying to change it. The item was headed to failing the second vote, based on what happened with the voting of the Trustees in attendance, but it passed because of 53 people who sent in an absentee ballot and did not have the benefit of hearing objections to the item, which were all focused on that last line. That brings up a totally different issue, regarding the absentee ballots, but that's it for another time.

Those who know me well enough, know that I don't have a problem admitting when I submit an item that was poorly structured or ill-conceived and then it fails. 18 and 19 should have failed, but they didn't. I'm principled enough to attempt to right the wrong and will submit a new item to properly focus the statement to deal more specifically with the language of non-GA approved literature. For now, I hope that the Trustees will all get behind this revision in Phoenix, which we can approve with a second vote in San Diego.

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

A Call For Help

11/15/15 - 12:42 AM

In Cancun, a new committee was created under item 62. The item was to "Form a committee to compile viewable suggested meeting procedures, using any modality that does not violate any aspect of the Unity Program or any decisions of the Board of Trustees." After a passing vote, the committee was formed with 10 people.

This is an ambitious project, which will hopefully quicken our slow path to being relevant to the new compulsive gamblers who have yet to come into our Fellowship. This posting is not about trying to debate the issues surrounding this committee. It is, as the name suggests, a call for help.

The committee has to first formalize a mission statement, which we will do on Monday, 11/23. From there, we will begin to flesh out the process and procedures for the delivery for what the committee was charged. However, for various reasons, 4 of the original volunteers have decided to resign.

It would be great to have representation from committee members throughout the US and Canada. Showing the Fellowship and prospective members how things are done, can only help strengthen those rooms, so we don't drift into other areas that violate the Guidance Code.

If you are interested in joining this committee and you are a current or past Trustee, just send in a reply indicating that you wish to do so. GA members who are not Trustees may also be part of this committee, providing they have a minimum of 2 years of abstinence and regular attendance at GA meetings. Another requirement for this particular committee, is to be available for monthly committee conference calls at 9:00 PM Eastern Time.

Currently, these states are represented by the current committee members:
California
Indiana
Maryland
New Jersey

To join, just send an email with your information to trusteeline@trusteewebsite.com and we will get you onboard. Remember item 8 from the Responsibilities for International Trustees: "Serve actively on committees on the Board of Trustees."

David M. – Area 12, New Jersey

Intent And Interpretation

11/18/15 - 7:31 PM

I'm reaching out on behalf of a member with two questions about Article XIX Guidance code, I'm trying to ensure I don't mislead unintentionally. Any replies

on intent or interpretation appreciated.

Article XIX – Voting

Section 1: Group and area voting shall be conducted in a manner selected by each group and or area. On issues which necessitate a vote of a group or of the Board of Trustees the vote will be conducted in a manner prescribed by, and incorporated in, the Rules and Procedures of the Board of Trustees. Revised as of Orlando '13 Section 2: Institutional groups or meetings that do not meet in a physical location will not be allowed to vote on any issues, which affect groups other than their own.

Revised as of Tampa '10

Q 1

Section 1 second line “ On issues which necessitate a vote of a group.....” is this any issue that requires a group vote or does it refer to mail meetings or Ballots or effectively BOT related issues ?

Q 2

Section 2, Does this include meetings in treatment centres / facilities ? The clarification is sought primarily with reference to use of The Rules and Procedures.

Appreciation in advance,

Odie B. - Area 36, Ireland South East Trustee

11/20/15 - 6:06 AM

Hi Odie,

Here is my two cents. Section 1 clearly addresses group and area votes in the first sentence. The second sentence is talking about the BOT or any group of trustees since it refers to the Rules and Procedures of the BOT.

On the second question, "Institutional Groups" are groups where some or most of the members do not go home after the meeting; the group members are institutionalized. If a meeting of GA members happens in a room at a treatment center, they are self supporting, and they all go home after the meeting, they are not an institutional meeting.

Paul S. - Area 17 Trustee, Connecticut

11/20/15 - 9:46 AM

Thanks Paul,

Helpful and informative as always.

I should expand on the second question for fuller understanding, remiss of me not to have clarified this in the first place.

Where Treatment centres / facilities are primarily Residential based, where residents remain for a month or more, am I safe in concluding these particular meetings are therefore Institutional per se ?

It seems as though Paul has effectively covered that in his explanation which was very informative and that, by virtue of the distinction, such groups are in fact Residential / Institutional, but only when held at residential centres.

In Ireland, most, if not nearly all such groups are residential, there are many instances where members of these groups, having attended perhaps only three meetings in total, are paraded around the country as representatives of this fellowship, by their counsellors, and the result is really shocking. Usually, past residents return and this is the perpetuation of the groups, rather than surviving through following the program. invariably the clear message at these centres has little, if anything, to do with the message one might expect in a G A room.

I understand we have no opinion on outside issues and no opinion with how other organisations or institutions are run.

This is not about dis – enfranchising or interfering with these groups, this is about whether, in accordance with the guidance code, groups held at these facilities have a vote on matters affecting the fellowship, other than their own group affairs.

Paul, your reply was amazing, it seems to have answered even my expanded question even before I asked it.

Where there is a residential aspect to treatment, Groups in those centres may vote only in matters affecting their own affairs.

Or is that an unsafe conclusion ?

new version