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Trustee Line for October 2012

A PDF version of this issue to distribute to your rooms, or to print out for easier reading, will be available after 10/30/12.

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

Item	Subject	Last Entry	Entries
I.	Unity Step 10	10/1/12 12:01 AM	I

Unity Step 10

10/1/12 - 12:00 AM

Unity Step 10

GA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the GA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

For a period of two years, I did an open 12 step meeting on public radio every month. Several members would be in the studio with the host and we would pick a topic on recovery and share our experience with the topic. The host would ask one member to tell how they hit bottom and how they got into the program. After that, we took calls for the remaining time. We never knew what we were going to get from the callers. Some of the calls accused the program of being a cult, others told stories of bad experiences at meetings, others wants to attack the "God stuff" of the program and some wanted our opinions on drunk driving laws.

We always told the members before the show to never engage in a debate with the callers. We would many times explain Unity Step 10 to the caller and stress that none of the people on the show spoke for the program, we were just sharing our own experience. For the combative ones, we would let them get their idea out and thank them for their call and just share our own experience on the topic, never trying to explain or defend the program.

I've heard people in meeting ask for members to vote for a specific item on a local election or write some politician on a law up for vote. After the meeting I go up and explain that they should not do that because it may confuse a new member or scare them away because they felt pressured to conform to the request. All have understood after I talk to them. If they are really passionate, I have explained that they can approach people after a meeting, one on one, as long as they make it clear this is their personal interest and has nothing to do with the program.

The other common problem is when a local person or family is in the news because of a gambling problem or arrest and members start getting into specific details about the event or people involved. Or it could be an incident that is getting national attention. In most cases, a gentle reminder to the room to take our own inventories will get the focus off the outside issue.

When people speak in detail about their therapist or treatment program and refer to it by name, I explain that they should refrain from using names. Using names could lead new people to think those people or programs are a part of GA. I have been less successful in this area, some members insist on telling new people to contact this program or a specific therapist. In these cases I will share in the meeting that treatment or therapy are not a part of GA or required for recovery, though helpful in many cases, those are outside issues. Unfortunately, there is a very small minority of therapists in GA that break this Unity Step the

most. If you have found a successful way to get the message to these people, please post it here. How do you deal with these situations?

Paul S. - Area 17 Trustee, CT and Western MA

new version