

**First Quarter  
March, 2015**

The General Service Board seeks qualified candidates for the position of Office Manager at the General Service Office. See website for details.

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The D.A. Focus is published quarterly by the D.A. General Service Board. It is available as a download from the D.A. website at [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org)

**PLEASE SHARE  
THE D.A. FOCUS  
WITH YOUR GROUP**

Present and past issues of the *D.A. Focus* are available at [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org)

**Individual contributions made out directly to the GSO or GSB are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.**



**Job Opening for D.A.'s GSO Office Manager**  
 Debtors Anonymous is [accepting applications](#) for the Office Manager of the General Service Office. All interested persons are encouraged to email their resume with cover letter to [resumes@debtorsanonymous.org](mailto:resumes@debtorsanonymous.org).

**Board Meets with Indy  
Members at Annual  
Mid-Year F2F**

Your General Service Board met at the Crowne Plaza Airport in Indianapolis, Indiana over the weekend of February 5-8, 2015 to conduct D.A.'s business in a face-to-face (F2F) setting. The Board also hosted a forum for local D.A. members on Friday evening and opened up the forum to non-local participation through a national call-in number. The Board discussed upcoming projects, literature, current operations, our finances, and long-range planning. Nine local members were in attendance and an additional twenty callers joined the Forum.

Kudos to Betty who left Lexington KY in mid-afternoon to make the four-hour trek to Indy to attend. Almost one hundred miles into the journey, her car broke down. Unflappable in the face of life on life's terms, she dialed into the national call from the tow truck and participated remotely. Talk about going to any lengths!

As D.A. enters its 40<sup>th</sup> year, fellowship services stand at the threshold of momentous growth and improvement — a new website, WSC cost containment, hire of a new Office Manager at GSO, international growth, and new literature including the Twelve Steps booklet.

# General Service Board Committee Reports

## Three-Year Site Trial to Begin with 2016 WSC

Following up on a Conference Committee recommendation from 2013, the Board engaged a meeting planner to help the GSB make the WSC more accessible to traveling delegates and manage conference costs better. This trial may also mean re-evaluating the way in which cities are chosen to host the WSC, the Board has come to realize. In initial discussions, the Board expressed the concerns of recent delegates that the WSC has become too expensive to attend. With these ideas in mind, the planner began the process by identifying cities which could be accessed easily from anywhere in the US. Several cities were then identified by our planner which were 'off-season' locations and had hotels that could accommodate our specific meeting and dietary needs within a reasonable spending plan.

The board then matched this data up with cities that had a willing and able local D.A. community capable of hosting the WSC. Finally, invitations were extended to two intergroups to meet with representatives of the WSC Conference Committee and GSB Conference Support Committee. The resulting conference calls enabled the local D.A. members to ask frank questions and receive realistic answers to their questions and concerns. The CSC asked each intergroup to carefully consider the responsibility of hosting for three years in a row (a multi-year contract is

another way to save money, according to our meeting planner). Each intergroup was given a couple weeks to gauge local interest in hosting, their human resources, and willingness to serve.

North Texas Prosperity IG was determined to be the best choice for this trial. A local host committee has been established, a board liaison has been named, and the hotel sites have been narrowed down to a final property. A site visit by the host liaison was conducted in February with a favorable review. Dallas D.A. members last hosted the Conference in 2009 and many of the prior host committee are still active in local D.A. and are willing to offer their support to this effort. Negotiations with a hotel in Dallas—Ft. Worth are being finalized. DFW airport is a major air hub and many direct flights reach all corners of the country. This is a work-in-progress and your Board looks forward to receiving feedback from the fellowship during the three-year trial. More information will be provided on the website as it becomes available.

## Audit

The trustees' Audit committee is working to engage a qualified professional firm to conduct the annual review of D.A.'s financial statements and Federal and New York tax preparations.

Sue F., chair

## Communications

The trustees' Communications Committee has been very busy and productive. For the second year in a row Communications got the WSC Final Report out in record time.

Communications Committee is still actively seeking an Appointed Committee Member (ACM) to perform basic proof-reading tasks and formatting of newsletters. Please check the Open Service Positions tab on the website for further details. This is a wonderful way to be of service and give back.

The remaining deadlines for the D.A. Focus are May 1, July 30 and October 1, 2015.

The first quarter deadline for the *Ways & Means*<sup>®</sup> is being pushed back to March, 2015. This upcoming edition will feature two international stories all the way from Sydney, Australia and the United Kingdom! This edition will also showcase the WSC Public Information Committee.

The weekly eNews digest was an experimental project to limit the quantity of emails coming from the board to a reasonable amount. The feedback received was all positive so this "experiment" will now occur all the time. At the end of September, over 5,600 subscribers received the eNews. Only 15% of the subscribers are opening the message to read it. Please let

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# General Service Board Committee Reports

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us know if you don't really want to receive these emails.

Lawanda C., chair

## Conference Support

The trustees' Conference Support Committee is working overtime to get the registration packet finalized and posted on the website. Without a full-time Office Manager in place at GSO to handle electronic registration and payment, CSC has made the difficult choice to suspend online registration for this year only. Paper registration forms with complete payment will be accepted by mail at the GSO where part-time staff are currently under the supervision of Office Liaison, Joan R.

Following the withdrawal of their bid by Sacramento Inter-group to host the 2016 WSC, CSC suggested that the Board move up the dates of the Conference Committee's recommendation of a three-year cost containment trial.

The committee entered negotiations to have a contract in place for the 2016-18 World Service Conferences (WSC) before the 2015 WSC.

The Committee continues to work with the Portland Host Committee on details for 2015's Conference.

GSR/ISR orientation calls are scheduled for June and July.

More details to come in the next issue.

Jeff Y., chair

## Finance

*(With the departure of trustee Maureen C. from the Board, the GSB elected Allen T. to serve out the remainder of this conference year as Treasurer of the Board and Corporation. George M., was also elected assistant treasurer.)*

**Financial Statements can be found on page 11 of this issue.**

## Information Technology

The trustees' Info Tech Committee continues to oversee the development of the new D.A. website, while also making needed corrections and updates to the existing site. Members of the GSB Information Technology Committee: Bill J. (Chair), Pat B. (Secretary), Joan R., Jon (ACM), Chris (ACM).

Our goal is to upload all of the content to the new site by the February 2015 GSB meeting, so the GSB can view the new website.

We are grateful to the WSC Technology Committee for providing websites analytics (statistics) for the current site, which shows us detailed information about the site's visitors.

The new site will have enhanced analytics capabilities so that we can also track the number of downloads of each piece

of free literature (service literature, out-of-print pamphlets, and other resources such as the Steps, Tools, Promises, etc.).

We are updating the database so website visitors will be able to search for meetings using specific criteria. At the same time, we are designing a new meeting re-registration form so that the database will have a complete set of criteria for all registered meetings.

We prepared a comprehensive list of hardware and software requirements for the computer system in the General Service Office in Needham, Mass., as well as a recommended process for bringing the new system online. We are contacting a vendor to get a quote for carrying out these recommendations.

Bill J., chair

## International

The GSB International Committee has two principal areas of activity, coordinating translations and providing support for the service structures of Debtors Anonymous outside the US and Canada.

In the area of translations, texts from the website undergo a two-stage process of translation and review. Please see <http://www.debtorsanonymous.org/en%20espanol.htm> for texts in Spanish; these will be joined by the history of D.A. A group of texts translated by Italian members has gone to a professional

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## General Service Board Committee Reports

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agency for review. In the pipeline are texts in Japanese, Russian, German, and French. A Danish member has stepped up to contribute service in this area.

D.A. outside the US continues to grow and organize. A regional Intergroup, the Asia Pacific Network, has formed. Discussions continue in Europe about the formation of a Regional Intergroup in that area.

Stories from members outside the US have been appearing in the Ways & Means, D.A.'s newsletter from and to the fellowship. Together with the International Caucus and the Fellowship Communications Committee (FCC), the International Committee encourages members, groups, and Intergroups outside the US to continue submitting stories to Ways & Means. Issues are available on the home page at <http://www.debtorsanonymous.org>

Each issue provides the suggested guidelines. Please consider also submitting recovery stories for the website. The suggested requirements appear on the "Recovery Stories" page. If possible, submit texts in English as well as the original language. With D.A.'s 40th anniversary being celebrated in 2016, stories of the founding of D.A. in countries outside the US will be particularly powerful!

The International Committee invites members, groups, and

Intergroups outside the US to submit issues, concerns, and experience to the GSB and WSC committees and caucuses. Submission forms and Issues & Concerns that have already been answered may be found at <http://debtorsanonymous.org/service-world.htm> To contact the International Committee directly, email [office@debtorsanonymous.org](mailto:office@debtorsanonymous.org) and enter "International Committee" into the subject line.

The John H. Scholarship Fund exists to help underrepresented groups send delegates to the World Service Conference. While the fund cannot necessarily help all the groups that apply, groups may wish to look at the guidelines and the spending plan in the current year's registration packet, which will be available in early spring.

Several GSB and WSC committees and caucuses continue to explore ways to facilitate providing literature to groups outside the US and Canada and receiving payments from them for literature and Seventh Tradition contributions.

eNews blasts announce Fellowship-wide calls and offer links to the most recent issues of the Ways & Means and the D.A. Focus. To subscribe, please add your address on the home page at [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org)

The International Committee is seeking two Appointed Committee Members (ACMs). See <http://debtorsanonymous.org/>

[\\_docs/Int'l\\_CFR\\_ACMrev.pdf](#) and pages 90–92 in *The Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service*.

Alexandra BW., chair

### Literature Publications

The trustees' Literature Publications Committee is responsible for the publication, revision, and reprinting of D.A. literature, including books, pamphlets, and other items such as bookmarks and newcomer packets.

Reformed in August 2014 with new members, the committee needed some time to get up to speed. That process is now largely behind us, and we're proceeding ahead on many projects.

At the top of the list is publishing the Steps portion of the eventual *D.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* book. We say the "Steps portion," because at the 2014 World Service Conference, the Steps—but only the Steps, not the Traditions—were presented for approval, and in fact, approved (the Steps were ready for approval at WSC 2014; the Traditions were not). In addition, a related motion at WSC 2014 approved publishing those Steps in a format similar to the *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service*—a simple, relatively easy-to-print, format. The intention of the second motion was to get the Steps out to the Fellowship sooner rather than later, and let the publishing of the true

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# General Service Board Committee Reports

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12x12 book occur after the Traditions are approved.

The committee was initially looking at sourcing additional in-depth editing for the Steps, but has since returned to the standard, post-approval plan of doing only copyediting, and is now in the process of sourcing vendors for the copyediting, layout, and printing. We're envisioning a softcover stapled booklet, roughly 5" x 8" in size.

We're also moving various other projects along, including two new BDA pamphlets, and will report on those in future *D.A. Focus* reports.

We will, however, here, advise the Fellowship that: 1) we just completed a reprinting of the Spirituality pamphlet, including either editing or providing proper attribution to various passages from Alcoholics Anonymous literature that appeared in the prior version of the pamphlet, and 2) we just completed the second printing of *A Currency of Hope*, Second Edition. We were probably a few months early on the Currency reprint, but we were adamant that we not run out of this publication at the General Service Office, and were willing to err on the cautious side regarding when to print. The new books should be arriving at the office in February.

Bill J., chair

## Long-Range Planning

The trustees' Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) focuses on the General Service Board's (GSB) long-term efforts to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering compulsive debtors around the world.

The committee hosted a modified forum in Indianapolis in February, 2015. For the first time, the modified forum was open to all D.A. members via conference call.

Two "Ask the GSB" phone forums have been held since the WSC; October 12<sup>th</sup>, 'Recap of the WSC' and January 4<sup>th</sup>, 'The Seventh Tradition, it's not just about the money.' There is a recording available for the January 4<sup>th</sup> call. Look further back in this issue to find the text of Sue F.'s presentation from that call. Two additional "Ask the GSB" phone forums are scheduled for March 1<sup>st</sup>, on 'D.A. Literature, Copyrights, and the Website', and one June 7<sup>th</sup>, 'D.A.'s Traditions and Concepts'. The remaining calls will also be recorded and available for a limited time for members who miss the calls.

LRPC continues to research possible future locations for the GSO.

D.A.'s archivist is invited to give a quarterly report to the committee on our calls.

The committee has developed a plan of action for cele-

brating D.A.'s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. If you have any suggestions for our anniversary please email to:  
DA40@debtorsanonymous.org

LRPC will also update the *Debtors Anonymous Manual of Service* for the 2015-2016 Conference year.

Eileen N., chair

## Nominations

The trustees' Nominations Committee's main purpose is to identify, review, and nominate (to the full board) trustee candidates. They have been proactive in seeking candidates for both Class A (debtor) and Class B (non-debtor) trustees. Many interested persons who have been contacted and still show interest, but timing, life responsibility prevents them from serving on the D.A. GSB, at this time. NomCom is, once again requesting, if you can serve or know someone who can serve at this level, ask them to possibly give back to D.A. as a trustee. All information relating to applying to serve as a trustee can be found on the debtorsanonymous.org website.

NomCom also has the responsibility in periodic review of the D.A. bylaws, which are considered a legal document that dictates how the organization must be governed. Content includes organizational purpose,

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# World Service Conference Committee Reports

## Business Debtors Anonymous

The BDA Committee has three subcommittees – Pamphlets, Vocations/Visions, and Taking Our Pulse.

The Pamphlets subcommittee is busy trying to get BDA related pamphlets ready for publication and sale to help the Fellowship both spiritually and financially. They have worked on revisions to a Clarity in Business Numbers Pamphlet that they are returning for further revisions. There is significant progress on a Spiritual Marketing pamphlet, which focuses on using the Steps and spiritual principles to market our businesses. They are also in dialogue with the Literature Committee on several other pamphlets that are already in various stages of production that may be brought to the Fellowship for possible publication.

They are also developing a pamphlet that focuses on how we can use accountability as a tool in our programs. They plan to use various D.A. Tools in this. They are engaged in interviewing other intergroups and meetings to find tools that they use to enhance accountability that they intend to share in this pamphlet and possible articles.

Taking Our Pulse is communicating with different meetings and Intergroups throughout the Fellowship to mine best practices and tools that may be shared with the Fellowship at large. They have been working diligently on surveys of these and other groups that are on track to be completed by mid-April. They intend to share their results in articles and perhaps a pamphlet.

The Vocations/Visions Subcommittee is continuing the work of the previous year in interviewing members of the Fellowship to see how D.A. and BDA have helped them in their lives. They are formulating a 2-page questionnaire to find patterns in recovery – what has worked for those

who have found it -- that they hope to share with the Fellowship.

## Conference Committee

We continue to support the Portland, Oregon Host Committee as they prepare to host the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) in August.

The John H. Scholarship Subcommittee has reviewed the John H. Scholarship application, instructions and guidelines to ensure that these documents are all in agreement with each other and to ensure that they reflect the will of the Fellowship (including revisions that were approved at the 2013 D.A. WSC). The most updated versions of the application, instructions and guidelines have been sent to the General Service Board's Conference Support Committee for inclusion in the 2015 WSC registration packet.

The Conference Committee was requested by the General Service Board to consider the issue of understaffed WSC committees. For example, no D.A. WSC delegates elected to join the WSC Internal Operations Committee this year. The Conference Committee created a sub-committee to consider this issue. That sub-committee has developed several recommendations to help remedy the issue of understaffed committees and they will bring those recommendations to the WSC Conference Committee at-large during our next scheduled monthly call. The Conference Committee will decide next steps from there.

The WSC Transparency Subcommittee is considering the idea of allowing non-voting D.A. members to attend the future World Service Conferences.

The Conference Committee will also work this year to find ways to clarify the D.A. WSC Host Committee process, including suggestions for

edits the D.A. WSC Host Committee Handbook. The purpose of this work would be to avoid confusion or miscommunications among members of the Fellowship about the Host Committee process. Based on what the Conference Committee discusses and discovers this year we will make recommendations to next year's WSC Conference Committee and/or the General Service Board's Conference Support Committee for changes to the process and the Handbook.

## Literature Committee

This year's WSC Literature Committee continues to work through an ambitious agenda. Members are busily constructing outlines and reviewing both new and existing literature. Our priority is a new outline for the primary text of Debtors Anonymous. Also on the agenda, we're reviewing two pamphlets scheduled for revision: Recovery from Compulsive Spending and the Anonymity. While the Anonymity pamphlet is currently out of print, an electronic version is available through the D.A. website.

Committee members are creating an outline for a proposed pamphlet on health issues in D.A. Back in 2011, the WSC approved the concept of a health issues pamphlet. In subsequent years, D.A. conducted a health issues survey of our Fellowship, and the survey results now provide us with valuable insights to address health issues within the context of D.A. literature.

In addition, both the Literature Committee and BDA Committee will soon complete a review of new BDA literature, as a vital part of the literature approval process. Finally, we continue to solicit stories of recovery from long time D.A. members, as well as members of diverse and underserved populations.

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# World Service Conference Committee Reports

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## Hospitals, Institutions, & Prisons

The HIP committee has established meetings in prison and post incarceration community re-entry facilities in Seattle and Los Angeles. The committee continues training and work in Los Angeles jails and work to establishing additional HIP meetings in Chicago. A HIP meeting in Portland is also underway.

The committee has created service material including five HIP slide presentations visually presenting D.A.'s 12 Signposts, D.A.'s 15 Questions, and D.A.'s Visions, Underearning, and Record Keeping pamphlets.

An HIP Manual for Service has been outlined and a working draft in being compiled. The HIP manual is intended to document the experience, strength and hope of members work in HIP facilities; compile HIP institutional knowledge gathered over the years, address policy issues and suggested guidelines for HIP service; present "case study" summaries of HIP work in Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Wyoming, Portland and other communities; provide a "getting started" guide for those considering HIP outreach, and provide resources and materials such as sample formats, Power Point presentations, check lists, sample security clearance forms, announcements, and protocols.

## Public Information

The 2014 WSC Public Information committee is abuzz with members showing up for the 12th Step work they are doing. The committee's informal mantra or refrain has become: "Carry the Message." On January 10th they hosted a Fellowship Wide call by that name which had approximately 55 attendees. Three speakers on the call spoke for 12 minutes each can be heard by dialing in 1-(605)562-3139, Access Code: 246247# and Refer-

ence: 2 #. On the 31st of January, many committee members attended the fellowship-wide Media Contact Training led by the chair of the GSB PI committee; as always this D.A. Media Contact Training was a precious opportunity for all who attended to delve into the Twelve Traditions of D.A. as the primary means to protect the principle of anonymity and carry the message of D.A. to the media. It is strongly suggested that any debtor who speaks with media has taken this training which is offered by the GSB several times a year. Assistance with media inquiries can be had by contacting either the WSC PI or the GSB PI committees.

## ***One Member, One Action Day on April 15th***

The founders of Debtors Anonymous established our Fellowship on April 15 – a day many in the United States fear because tax returns are due. The choice of date made a statement that this 12 Step program would be a spiritual solution for creating prosperous lives, unencumbered by fear. To commemorate the Fellowship's founding, a growing number of D.A. members participate in One Member, One Action Day on April 15 each year. On this day, D.A. collectively practices Step Twelve, with each member taking one action to carry the message of recovery. Groups may also act together, choosing an action and/or actions as suggested in Tradition Five: "Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the debtor who still suffers.

To support this initiative, the committee will also host a second fellowship-wide conference call entitled "A Call to Action: Carrying the Message of Debtors Anonymous during World Service Month" which will honor 39th anniversary of Debtors Anonymous with experience, strength, and hope regarding carrying the message of D.A. The call will be held on March 28th with details to be announced in future eBlasts. The committee aims to

encourage members of the Fellowship to practice simple actions to carry the message on One Member, One Action Day.

In March, the committee will be publishing a *Ways & Means* article in addition to sending out an eBlast with five simple suggested actions that members may take to celebrate this historic day. WSC PI hopes that D.A. members from across the world will participate in this exciting event, energizing the Fellowship to practice the Twelfth Step for the sake of the still-suffering debtor and as a critical part of its own recovery as it moves into its 40th anniversary year.

## Technology Committee

The WSC Tech Committee continues to work on the three proposals presented at the 2014 World Service Conference. In addition, we have been asked to assist, as our members did last year, with the online registration for the 2015 Portland Conference.

e-Publications Proposal: Make *A Currency of Hope*, 2nd edition, available for sale on the D.A. website in PDF format. After much study and trial, we have shifted our focus away from the PDF arena to the accepted true e-book formats. The principal reason: security. While PDF books are simple and inexpensive to produce, they are also simple and inexpensive to pirate or innocently copy and redistribute. We are experimenting with creating e-book versions in both Nook and Kindle formats of current D.A. literature, principally the discontinued *GSR/ISR Service Manual*. We shall coordinate our efforts with the Board LitPub and InfoTech Committees as we move forward.

Paperless Conference Proposal: Reduce the cost of the 2015 WSC binder by providing a paperless option. Understanding that to move complete-

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# World Service Conference Committee Reports

ly from a published binder to an electronic binder will require Conference approval, our plan is to run a limited trial in Portland. Working with the Host Committee, we propose that a select group of volunteers be issued an electronic version of the Conference binder, downloaded to their devices, along with their official binders, to test the efficacy, effort, and cost of paperless documentation. The results of the test will be folded into our Conference proposal for next steps.

**Video Conferencing Proposal:** Include video conferencing of the 2015 WSC on a strictly limited basis to enable the six registered international Intergroups to participate. Upon further deliberation, there appear to be multiple aspects to this proposal beyond the purely technical. Discussions with the Board have concluded that in this area as well, Conference approval will be required before we can implement our initial plan. In addition to technology, there are financial, logistical, and even legal constraints that must be resolved. Concerns were raised in Skokie when the proposal was first aired, and these must be appropriately considered. Despite requests from overseas, we do not anticipate at this time any remote attendance at the Portland Conference. However, discussions are ongoing so as to be able present to the Conference a comprehensive proposal for future action.

**Online Registration:** we are working with the registration format and system first used in 2014, to adapt it to Portland. We hope that the capability to make payments through the new D.A. website using debit cards will be ready in time for 2015 registration.

## Diversity Caucus

The Diversity Caucus has made great strides in the past couple of months in refining our statement of purpose, redefining our goals for the

year, developing best practices, and collaborating with the Public Information (PI) Committee.

Our redefined goals for the year are as follows:

- To refine our statement of purpose
- To create "best practices" for reaching out to underserved populations
- To decide whether or not to recommend the integration of the Diversity Caucus into a committee of the WSC

After some revising and discussing, we are now ready to present a revised statement of purpose to the PI Committee for their consideration in bringing it to the General Service Board (GSB) as a motion at the 2015 World Service Conference. We continue working on our second goal of defining best practices for reaching out to underserved populations. Most notably, one of our members spent a few hours talking with a D.A. fellow who is a member of several underserved populations to gather ideas on ways to reach out. The caucus also brainstormed a list of actions we can take right now to carry the message, including the following:

Greeting newcomers from underrepresented populations at our regular meetings, inquire how welcoming the meeting was, acknowledge the lack of diversity (where appropriate, and comfortable), ask how we can make the person feel more comfortable in D.A. and invite the person to come back.

Each of us commit to informing and encouraging our intergroups per page 63 recommendations in the DAMS (this page lists guidelines from the GSB for intergroups to reach out to the still-suffering debtor in underserved communities).

Talk to minorities after other 12-Step fellowships' meetings to get their perspective and ideas on outreach.

Finally, we are collaborating with the PI committee to see how we can best serve the upcoming fellowship-wide workshop, A Call to Action: Carrying the Message of Debtors Anonymous, on March 28, 2015.

## Intergroup Caucus

The Intergroup Caucus continues to correct and update the Intergroups data as groups come and go. The search for "Best Practices" continues with some expected and not expected results and is about 60% finished. We anticipate some changes in the DAMS description of the Intergroups and their functions. We are also working on ideas for celebrating the 40th Anniversary as Intergroups.

## International Caucus

In September, 2014, the International Caucus sent a letter to all international groups registered with the General Service Office. The letter was a means of connecting with international groups to learn more about their intergroup (if one exists) and to ask whether groups would be interested in sponsoring an international conference or service forum in the future. In the letter, we also asked groups to encourage groups they know of that are not registered with the World Service Office to do so. To that end, each mailing included both a new meeting registration and an existing meeting registration form.

The International Caucus is working with the Tech Committee to develop recommendations about how to facilitate the participation of international GSRs at the World Service Conference through video conferencing. The International Caucus is considering hosting a fellowship-wide call in April, 2015 to share stories with the international fellowship.





# Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, It's Not Just About the Money

*The editor of your D.A. Focus presents here the text of a talk given January 4, 2015 during the Phone Forum on the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition.*

I'm Sue Felgenauer, serving D.A. as a class B non-debtor trustee. My recovery and service background comes from my experience in Alcoholics Anonymous. So, much of my sharing will be from my time in A.A.

I love the theme for today's call. 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, it's not just about the money. I hope to focus my sharing on the self support through service.

First, a couple of embarrassing stories from my own early recovery. At the end of my drinking I was stealing money from my parents to drink. At the beginning of my recovery, I continued to steal money from my parents for gas to get to and from the meetings, and so I could put money in the basket.

There is a famous 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition quote from Bill W. one of the cofounders of A.A. (Page 163 of the A.A. 12 X 12) "There was a place in A.A. where spirituality and money would mix, and that was in the hat." Putting stolen funds into the basket is clearly outside of any interpretation of spirituality.

Today, when I sponsor a woman who genuinely cannot afford to put money into the basket, we talk about being self supporting by showing up early to help set the meeting, make coffee, greet newcomers, or fulfill other duties in the meeting.

My next embarrassing story occurred several months into sobriety. I had been coffee maker for some time, and issued some sort transparent complaint that I was the only one getting there early to set up the tables and chairs and make the coffee. A sweet little old lady, with over 30 years sobriety, whom I believe had never uttered a foul word said, "Where in the @#% is your gratitude; we LET you make coffee."

My lack of humility in service was glaring and this was my first introduction to service as an expression of gratitude. We see the t-shirts that read "Gratitude is a Verb". I get it today. Do my actions demonstrate my gratitude? Does my gratitude show up in my actions in proportion to the gratitude I speak with my lips? Let's do a time warp to my 10 year anniversary. By this time I have been active in District and Intergroup service. My sponsor and home group members lead by example. So doing service at these levels was just a natural progression.

A long term member had been invited to speak for my anniversary. Something he said in his talk grabbed my attention. While speaking of service he said, "Never hide your talents for fear of your ego; that's what group conscience is for." I realized I had been holding back on putting my name forward for election in a couple of areas, because thought it was egotistical to put my own name forward. I wasn't humble; I just wanted to look humble.

So I needed to set my ego and false humility aside, dealing with these character defects through the steps. In the mean time, with the guidance of good sponsorship, I let my talents and willingness show. I was elected through a progression of service positions, and eventually put my name forward to serve as a Delegate to the A.A. General Service Conference, representing Area 23, Southern Indiana.

Prior to the elections, my sponsor and her sponsor sat down with me over lunch. They helped me assess a few key factors in my service life:

- Did I have the willingness to serve? Did I have the talent to service in this capacity? Communication, organization, knowledge of traditions and concepts, etc.

- Did I understand the scope of the job?
- Did I have the time to do the job well?
- Did I have the permission and support of my family?

After rotating from the position of Delegate, and while continuing service at the regional level in A.A., I was approached to consider serving on the board of D.A. It took about a year to gather information about the fellowship, about the work of the board, and to assess my willingness, availability, talent, time, etc. The answer to all of the key questions was "yes". I put my name forward and now am in my 5<sup>th</sup> year of serving this most wonderful, healing fellowship.

It is sometimes difficult to get people's attention away from the nuts and bolts of their own recovery to see the bigger picture of what it takes to keep our fellowship alive; to publish communications and literature, to develop and print and reprint our literature and books, to maintain phone lines, to register and protect our copyrights, to manage our funds, to maintain a website and more. All of this with one goal in mind: to allow each of us to carry the message of hope to a still suffering debtor.

My priorities are not what I say they are. My priorities are what I DO. If you want to know what is important in my life, look at what I did yesterday. My level of gratitude is not what I say it is. My gratitude gets legs through my actions. If you want to know my priorities and my level of gratitude, watch me; scrutinize my life; take my inventory; watch my day to day actions.

Bill W. gets quoted a lot in the rooms of A.A. and other 12 step fellowships. I love some of the quotes from Dr. Bob, the other co-founder of A.A. Bob stated in his 1950 farewell talk: "Our Twelve Steps, when simmered

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## Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, It's Not Just About the Money

*(Continued from page 9)*

down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service'."

Dr. Bob also gave an accounting of his own good stewardship, and stated, "I think the kind of service that really counts is giving of yourself, and that almost invariably requires effort and time. It isn't a matter of just putting a little quiet money in the dish." \* He concludes that giving of our "effort and strength and time" was what made all the difference.

\*(as cited in the pamphlet "The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous", p. 16).



## D.A.'s World Service Conference: 29 Years Of Unity Through Diversity

When the gavel comes down at the 29th annual Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference this August in Portland, Oregon, it will mark the continuation of a long, proud D.A. tradition--unity through diversity.

Unlike most Twelve-Step fellowships that hold their annual conferences in the same city every year, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups, D.A. has blazed its own trail, one that goes back to the early days of the fellowship and the pressing need for the unity required to build a national, and not just a regional, recovery program and service structure.

In one sense, D.A. was extremely fortunate in its commitment to the concept of diversity right from the start. Since its founding in 1976, and the establishment of the General Service Board in 1982, the fellowship compiled an extraordinary record of inclusion with diverse groups of every sort. Gays & lesbians, Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and other minorities were welcomed with open arms and played key roles at all levels of the service structure. Even members with HIV/AIDS, welcome in very few other places in the 1980s, were actively recruited and did yeoman's service, writing much of our early literature and getting our service entities off the ground.

D.A.'s main problem during its first dozen years or so was of another kind entirely--geography. Through much of the 1980s, the fellowship barely held together. Trustees scrambled to keep it from fragmenting into two, three, or more regional programs.

Most D.A. meetings in those days were in New York, and D.A. was perennially broke. When meetings started elsewhere, such as Southern California, then Northern California, and eventually the Midwest, there was much bitterness over the lack of proper resources to grow D.A., and the perception that "New York" was hoarding whatever paltry resources that did exist.

Particularly contentious was the issue was literature. The Trustees in New York, operating on a shoestring, literally did not have the funds or the volunteer labor to ship literature across the country to the growing D.A. communities popping up everywhere, and many groups went without literature for many years after it was first published in New York. The minutes of the General Service Board during those years reveal enormous anger and bitterness at "New York", and many threats from other regions of the country to split off and form their own fellowships.

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# GSB Financial Report

Based on financial statements for the first six months of our fiscal year (July through December), the Board can report that Fellowship's finances are healthy.

Shown below is a summary of our income and expenses, through December:

## Summarized Profit and Loss Statement Debtors Anonymous July 2014 – December 2014

	Actual	Plan	Over/(Under) Plan
<b>Revenue</b>			
Literature Sales	\$ 40,297	\$ 40,878	\$ (581)
Member Contributions	42,849	47,502	(4,653)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>83,470</b>	<b>88,380</b>	<b>(4,910)</b>
Cost of Producing and Shipping Literature	10,658	16,078	(5,420)
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>72,812</b>	<b>72,302</b>	<b>510</b>
Office, Board, and other Expenses	62,667	75,398	(12,731)
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>10,145</b>	<b>(3,096)</b>	<b>13,241</b>
Net Other Income (primarily the World Service Conference)	8,089	372	7,717
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 18,234</b>	<b>\$ (2,724)</b>	<b>\$ 20,958</b>

As shown, our year-to-date net income is nearly \$21,000 ahead of plan. The primary factor driving this has been the reduction in office salaries, caused by the retirement of our office manager and the resignation of one of our part-time employees in September. This reduction has been partially offset by increased board travel expenses and higher than planned legal expenses.

The board has started a search for a replacement office manager, but until a new manager is hired, we will continue to experience payroll costs below plan.

Perhaps the other most meaningful data from our December financial reports are the reserves being maintained for future projects and unforeseen events. Those reserves are shown below:

### Reserves

December 31, 2014

12&12 Editing, Design, and Printing	15,000
Basic Text Writing, Design, and Printing	20,000
Step Study Guide Writing, Design, and Printing	15,000
Development of new D.A. Website	10,132
Unrestricted Prudent Reserve	94,868

The Website Reserve was originally \$15,000, but a portion of that has been spent in the last six months in the development of the new website. The Unspecified Prudent Reserve represents approximately six months of operating expenses, which the board considers a prudent level of reserves to keep on hand.

**Allen T., Treasurer**

## Unity through Diversity

*(Continued from page 10)*

For several years, the photocopying of D.A. literature by local groups, which they could not obtain by other means, was the subject of great controversy. The GSB tried to get groups to stop, as it deprived D.A. of virtually its only source of funds--literature sales--but groups in many cities, hungry for literature to carry the D.A. message, saw no alternative.

Faced with a fellowship torn by dissension and in grave danger of fragmentation, the Trustees, following the first-ever World Service Conference in New York in 1987, made a critical decision. The WSC would go "on the road", rotating to a different city every year. New York would no longer be the center of the D.A. universe, nor the sole recipient of most of D.A.'s meager funding.

Although this decision did not make great financial sense and caused a lot of logistical problems, it did address the fellowship's biggest challenge at the time--the need for unity. It is no coincidence that this is expressed in the first of the Twelve Traditions: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends on D.A. unity"

The decision to hold the second WSC in Los Angeles in 1988, the third in Washington DC in 1989, and subsequent conferences in D.A.'s other then-small- but-vital growth centers (Chicago 1990, San Francisco 1991, Boston 1992, Dallas 1993) before finally rotating back to New York in 1994 transformed D.A. in ways nothing else could have.

As GSRs, ISRs, and Trustees traveled all over the country, they began to see D.A. as a truly national fellowship, one deserving of intense national cooperation, and not regional jealousy and rivalry. The "New York vs. California" mentality that had blighted the scene for so many years began to give way to a feeling of all D.A. members being in the same boat. Work began on solutions to many problems, such as literature (an

effective national literature distribution system was in place by 1989). National newsletters and later a web site were put into place, binding recovering debtors everywhere together through media of communication.

During these years, everyone recognized the key role that the rotation of the Conference played in D.A.'s long-term growth. It was discovered that years after a WSC came to town, the positive effects would reverberate in the local fellowship and encourage even more growth.

And as D.A. began to grow beyond several large cities, the Conference rotated to smaller venues, helping to build the fellowship in places like Ann Arbor, Michigan (1995), Seattle (1998), Albuquerque, N.M. (2000), Minneapolis (2003) and Sacramento (2004). Whole regions of the country, such as the Rocky Mountain West, which once had virtually no D.A. meetings, saw the WSC come to town as an incubator for nascent growth there, such as Salt Lake City (2008) and Denver (2010). The trend continues today in cities like Phoenix (2013) and Portland (2015) both of which had never hosted a Conference before.

The General Service Board, when it began holding annual face-to-face work sessions in 1998, decided to follow the same principle of rotation. Each face-to-face includes meetings with local members and a session aimed at helping the fellowship to grow there. During the years that followed, the GSB traveled for the first time ever to the Deep South (Florida and Charlotte, NC), Midwestern cities like St. Louis, and Toronto, Ontario, the first meeting ever on foreign soil.

The GSB even conducted extensive negotiations with the Toronto Intergroup during 2007 and 2008 to hold a WSC in Canada, but the prospect of holding D.A.'s first international Conference could not overcome several logistical hurdles.

In the earliest days of the WSC, the Trustees

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# Unity Through Diversity

*(Continued from page 12)*

were in charge of choosing the venue. This soon evolved into the current system where Host Committees in various cities that wished to hold the Conference would offer “bids”. The Conference Committee of the WSC recommends a particular bid to the Conference as a whole, and the winning Host Committee works with the General Service Board, which is legally responsible for signing contracts and making other legal arrangements, all toward bringing the Conference to fruition.

For some time now, the skyrocketing costs of rooms, meals, and other amenities necessary for a WSC have made an affordable Conference harder and harder to realize. For about 15 years, the GSB has periodically discussed a variety of different plans to control costs. One, under discussion for several years, would have limited the WSC to just three cities in triennial rotation (East Coast, West Coast, and Midwest). Another option currently under discussion is the idea of holding the WSC in the same city for three years in a row, enabling a lower-cost, long-term contract.

At this time, the location of the landmark 30th annual Conference (2016) has not been determined. But in typical D.A. fashion, it will no doubt be discussed at length, debated, submitted to the Conference Committee for evaluation, and voted on by the Convocation before the final gavel falls this August at the 29th WSC in Portland, Oregon.

## **D.A. World Service Conference Locations 1987-2015**

New York, NY--1987  
Los Angeles, CA--1988  
Washington, DC--1989  
Chicago, IL--1990  
San Francisco, CA--1991  
Boston, MA--1992

Dallas, TX--1993  
New York, NY--1994  
Ann Arbor, MI--1995  
Chicago, IL--1996  
Los Angeles, CA--1997  
Seattle, WA--1998  
Boston/Cape Cod, MA--1999  
Albuquerque, NM--2000  
Baltimore, MD--2001  
New York, NY--2002  
Minneapolis, MN--2003  
Sacramento, CA--2004  
Philadelphia/Mt. Laurel, NJ--2005  
San Diego, CA--2006  
Boston/Sturbridge, MA--2007  
Salt Lake City, UT--2008  
Dallas, TX--2009  
Denver, CO--2010  
Detroit, MI--2011  
Seattle, WA--2012  
Phoenix, AZ--2013  
Skokie, IL--2014  
Portland, OR--2015

## **General Service Board Face-To-Face Meetings 1998-2015**

Dallas, TX--1998  
Boston, MA--1999  
Albuquerque, NM--2000  
Chicago, IL--2001  
St. Louis, MO--2002  
Cancelled--2003  
Boston, MA--2004  
Chicago, IL--2005  
Houston, TX--2006  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada--2007  
Portland, OR--2008  
West Palm Beach, FL--2009  
Washington, DC--2010  
Boston, MA--2011  
Charlotte, NC--2012  
St. Louis, MO--2013  
Boston, MA--2014  
Indianapolis, IN--2015



## General Service Board Committee Reports

(Continued from page 5)

board structure, officer position descriptions and responsibilities, terms of board service, officer/board member succession and removal, official meeting requirements, membership provisions, voting rights, conflict-of-interest policy and any other non-negotiable that your governing body deems necessary.

NomCom tries to ensure that bylaws are relevant. Times and circumstances change, and it is our responsibility that our governing document should reflect those changes. After review and amendments, motions are sent to the full GSB for approval and adoption.

No matter where you decide to serve in the D.A. Fellowship, our basic premise is always in how to find and serve that still suffering debtor. That is what the NomCom tries to do. To find members who are willing to serve at all levels, have guidelines in which to serve, so we can help the groups do the 12 Step work they were called to do.

Patricia B., chair

### General Service Office

The trustees' Office Committee is comprised of three trustees, Joan R., chair and office liaison, Lawanda C., secretary and Pat B. They are responsible for overseeing the operations of the GSO in Needham, MA. They wish to thank you for the patience the Fellowship has given the board, during this time of transition of hiring a new office manager. The DAGSB chair has appointed sev-

eral persons to a newly established Ad Hoc committee to seek applications and establish a definite plan to hire and train the new office manager.

To date, there are 3 part time employees, one who works approximately 10 to 12 hours per week, another 3.5 hours per week, and the 3rd on an on call basis, dependent upon need. The staff has worked diligently in processing literature orders, to bring the fulfillment times in a more reasonable time period.

All emails and voice mails coming into office are being answered by several GSB trustees, to ensure the newcomer reaching out is helped, and to address any concerns the Fellowship may have relating to the services the office is responsible for.

One issue of concern is how many of the groups/meetings have not been updated, so a newcomer who reaches out either face to face or by phone can find an active group. We ask that if your group has not updated this year, to please do so now, so it can remain listed on the D.A. website, as an active group.

Once again, the committee states their appreciation in how the members have shown true support and patience during this very exciting period for Debtors Anonymous.

Joan R., chair

### Public Information

The trustees' Public Information Committee (PI) held a Media Contact Training teleconference on January 31<sup>st</sup> for D.A.

members interested in responding to requests from the media for information about Debtors Anonymous. The ninety minute training session included a discussion on Step 3 and Traditions 5, 10, 11, and 12; a review of the D.A. Manual for Service and the Public International Manual for Service; and active participation from the trainees using a new improvised role-playing format. The call was very successful.

Over the next few months, the GSB PI Committee hopes to identify an appropriate event to host a D.A. Public Information booth. We have also supported the efforts of the WSC PI Committee and the WSC Hospital, Institutions, and Prisons Committee.

The GSB PI Committee is actively searching for D.A. members interested in serving as Public Information Appointed Committee Members (ACMs) to the Public Information Committee. Please visit the Debtors Anonymous website at [debtorsanonymous.org](http://debtorsanonymous.org) to find out how you can apply.

Michael A., chair

**Several ACM positions remain unfilled. Check the D.A. website for further information.**

<http://www.debtorsanonymous.org>

**under the Open Service Positions tab**