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Delegates and Trustees meet at WSC 2015

This past August, the trustees of the General Service Board (GSB), plus approximately 80 delegates from D.A. groups around the world, met in Portland, Oregon, USA, at the 29th annual D.A. World Service Conference (WSC).

The WSC is the annual business meeting of our Fellowship. It is where General Service Representatives (GSRs), Intergroup Service Representatives (ISRs), and the GSB trustees gather to review the state of the Fellowship, work on topics like new literature concepts and new outreach methods, and vote on topics that affect D.A. as a whole.

The primary activities of the conference include:

- **Reports from the WSC and GSB committees** of the activities conducted and accomplishments made during the previous year.
- An **Open Forum**, in which each conference attendee is provided the opportunity to speak for two minutes about any topic pertaining to the D.A. Fellowship.
- **In-depth committee work**, in which the delegates are formed into nine different WSC committees to address topics pertaining to their committee and develop motions or recommendations to bring to the full conference body. The nine committees are:
 - Business Debtors Anonymous
 - Conference (addresses topics pertaining to the structure and planning of the WSC)
 - Fellowship Communications
 - Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons
 - Internal Operations (addresses topics pertaining to the General Service Office)
 - Public Information
 - Literature
 - Resource Development (addresses topics pertaining to increasing the level of Seventh Tradition contributions and the level of service)
 - Technology
- **In-depth caucus work**, in which delegates serve, on an optional basis, one of three caucuses that address special D.A. topics. The three caucuses are Diversity, Intergroup, and International.
- **Convocation** general sessions, at which each committee and caucus reports on their work during the conference and presents any motions or recommendations to the full conference for consideration and, in the case of motions, for voting.

Additionally, there is a Fellowship Day with D.A. speakers, plus a gala dinner/talent show/dance.

This issue of the *Focus* provides reports from most of the WSC and GSB committees, summarizing what the various committees intend to address during the coming conference year.

General Service Board Committee Reports

Audit

The GSB Audit Committee members this year are: Pat B., chair and Allen T., secretary

The main functions of this committee are to:

- Engage the CPA firm that will review the GSB's annual financial statements and prepare our U.S. federal and New York state tax returns.
- Review the completed financial statements and the review process with the CPA firm.
- Review the communications to those charged with governance (including the management letter) resulting from the review with the CPA firm.
- Report to the GSB the results of these procedures.

This year, the Audit Committee will also review New York state laws pertaining to the committee's function, and will be updating the committee's Composition, Scope, and Procedure document.

Conference Support

The General Service Board voted to cancel the hotel originally selected to host the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) in Dallas, Texas, USA, because the location was too distant for most members of the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, especially those who will be on the Host Committee. The Conference Support Committee (CSC) has hired a consultant to negotiate a new contract with a new hotel for the 2016 WSC. A priority is to compile a food menu that can satisfy a variety of dietary regimens.

Besides negotiating contracts for the 2016 WSC and supporting the host committee and host-committee liaison, CSC has several projects for this Con-

ference year: revising the Host Committee Handbook, updating the "Starter Kit" that goes in the delegate Conference binder, and compiling a committee "best practices" handbook.

Finance

George M., the GSB Treasurer, has resigned from the General Service Board. We thank him for his service to our beloved fellowship. The Assistant Treasurer, Alexandra BW, has been accepted as our new Treasurer, and Michalene R., our newest trustee (Class B), has been accepted as our new Assistant Treasurer and has joined the Finance Committee. Allen T., the former Treasurer, is generously supporting the newbie treasurers.

In this season, the Finance Committee, with our CPA firm and bookkeeper, will prepare the tax returns for Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, Inc., for the 2015 fiscal year (July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015), as well as other year-end reports. Finance thanks Allen T. for preparing the July financial reports.

In other news, the Finance Committee is collecting material for a GSB treasurer's handbook.

International

In the coming service year, the International Committee will undertake these actions:

- **Supporting Service Structures outside the US.** The committee will continue its support of the Asia-Pacific Regional Intergroup (APRI) and the European Regional Intergroup (ERI). The committee also hopes to continue researching viable payment options like DCO, less-expensive shipping methods, and the feasibility of electronic literature, print-on-demand literature, and licensing

of publications to international Inter-groups.

- **Translations.** The committee will continue to request and collect translations of prioritized texts in the following languages: Dutch, French, German Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian. The committee also hopes to review and publish some of the already-translated material.

Included in the review process is forming a relationship with a suitable pay-for-service translation agency, as well as editing and finalizing the committee's internal Translation Process document.

- **Other Projects.** The committee will work on creating a Committee Handbook, participating in D.A.'s 40th anniversary celebration, and updating D.A.'s history to include the growth of the Fellowship internationally. Please send stories of the establishment and growth of D.A. in your language or region, as well as other personal accounts, to the Ways & Means.

To contact the International Committee, please email the General Service Office at office@debtorsanonymous.org and write "International Committee" in the subject line.

Legal Affairs

The Legal Affairs Committee is mainly involved in the registration, maintenance, and defense of D.A.'s intellectual property, copyrights, and trademarks. Some of the projects of the committee are:

- We received three Issues & Concerns at the World Service Conference (WSC) that we will respond to by December 1st.
- We will review and update our Composition, Scope and Procedure document.

General Service Board Committee Reports

- We will register Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, Inc as a foreign corporation in Massachusetts.
- Will look for a general business lawyer in Massachusetts to consult as needed on general legal questions.
- Will work with the GSB Literature Publications Committee to ensure the newly approved Step, Tradition and Concept book is copyrighted. Also, the revised Under-earning Pamphlet will need to be copyrighted.
- Will work with the GSB International Committee to research the licensing of literature to Intergroups outside the United States.

Literature Publications

The GSB Literature Publications Committee has a full docket for the new conference year. This includes publishing the D.A. 12x12x12 (Steps, Traditions, and Concepts) and moving fifteen or so other literature projects forward in their respective development lifecycles. The other projects include new BDA pamphlets; new and revised D.A. pamphlets; new books and other projects needing outlines; and reprints of various existing literature pieces.

The committee is starting off short-handed, with only two GSB trustees and no Appointed Committee Members (ACMs). Given this, revising the Lit Pub ACM announcement and reaching out to D.A. members who have expressed interest in possible ACM service on the committee is a top priority. Additionally, the committee has prioritized which projects must be started immediately and which can be deferred until later in the conference year. The most important projects are publishing the 12x12x12

and completing the reprints of existing literature—the latter because running out of literature at the General Service Office causes all sorts of business headaches, and is thus something we want to avoid.

The committee is looking forward to a productive conference year, and hopes we're able to deliver the goods! (And, we're remembering that HP is in charge.)

Long-Range Planning

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) focuses on the GSB's long-term efforts to carry the message of recovery to still suffering compulsive debtors around the world. During the year, the committee will:

- Host a "Meet Your General Service Board" (GSB) in Atlanta in January 2016. It will again be open to all D.A. members via conference call.
- Host the first of four "Ask the GSB" phone forums on November 1st. The topic will be: Recap of the WSC. The call will be from 5-6 ET. There will be a recording of the presenters available for those who cannot make the call.
- Host three additional "Ask the GSB" phone forums: January 10, 2016: The Seventh Tradition, it's not all about the money; March 13, 2016: D.A. Literature, Copyrights and Website; and May 22, 2016: 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.
- Complete our research on possible relocation cities for the General Service Office (GSO). The research and our recommendations will be sent to the GSB Office Committee.

Develop and submit a spending plan to have our archivist and a portion of our archives present for the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) in Dallas/Ft Worth, TX.

- Continue to collect ideas for celebrating D.A.'s 40th anniversary in 2016 to share with groups and members. If you have any suggestions for our anniversary please email to DA40@debtorsanonymous.org. Some groups will celebrate with long-timer Share-a-Day. Another idea is to spend the day stuffing envelopes to be sent to lawyers, banks, counselors, etc, to spread the word that D.A. exists and can help their clients recover from compulsive debtting.
- Update the *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service* (DAMS) for the 2016 edition.

Nominations

The members of this year's Nominations Committee are Alexandra B-W., Michael A., and Pat B.

Current and future actions include:

- Continue to encourage D.A. members to submit their applications to serve as Class A trustees.
- Process any application received and interview candidates.
- Revise D.A. Bylaws, as necessary.
- Cooperate with other 12 Step fellowships, in acquiring their strength, experience and hope relating to international and fellowship growth, Public information, and other topics during our January F2F Board Development session.

WSC Committee and Caucus Reports

Business Debtors Anonymous

Although smaller than the previous year's BDA Committee, our 2015-16 members are committed to increasing awareness and providing additional clarity to the D.A. Fellowship as to the elements of debting that are unique to business owners and that require BDA-dedicated resources for their recovery.

The 2015-16 BDA Committee has simplified its primary focus to moving BDA-specific literature through the review and approval process. There are five conference approved literature concepts that have, in some cases, been waiting further development for five or more years. At the August conference, we accomplished an initial review of these draft pamphlets and prioritized each concept. Our work for the remaining year will be to thoroughly review and provide guidance to the WSC Literature Committee on each concept, beginning with our September recommendation that the BDA Signposts and Tools pamphlet use the signposts as published in the current BDA pamphlet combined with the draft tools portion of the pamphlet, to enable the publication of this important resource.

Our October meeting will focus on providing further guidance to the Literature Committee on the content of the Getting Started with Business Record Keeping / Monthly Business Record Keeper / BDA Numbers pamphlet.

The four BDA Committee members will continue working throughout the year to finalize other approved literature concepts such as Clarity in Business Finance, the Annual BDA Business Plan and BDA Detaching from Difficult Personalities pamphlets.

We will also seek to fund the inclusion of BDA-related literature in the proposed Hospitals, Institutions and Prisons Committee's initiatives to distribute D.A. literature packets. We are blessed to have four experienced and capable BDAs on the Committee who are eager to reach out to the business debtor who still suffers.

Conference

The 2015–2016 Conference Committee brought three motions to the August World Service Conference in Portland, which passed with modifications. Two related to making the Dallas-Fort Worth area the location for the next three conferences, assuming that all goes well with the first. The third involved the large binder of materials each WSC delegate receives. It called for our committee, in consultation with the Technology Committee, to do a trial of electronic delivery of these documents to volunteers who wish to receive them in that form at future conferences.

The item receiving most attention at our Portland meetings involved a basic structural feature of the WSC. Each WSC committee forms near the start of the Conference, works throughout the year, disbands as the next Conference approaches, and then is constituted anew for the following year. If a committee develops expertise and works out a solution to an issue it has studied during the year, it cannot, however, present its work to the next Conference because the committee no longer exists. The practice has been for each committee to make recommendations to its successor committee. The new group then has a few hours during the Conference to get up to speed on the issue (if it thinks it is worthwhile to do

so) and perhaps get to a place where it can bring a motion to the Convocation (the plenary decision-making body of the Conference). If it does not succeed in bringing such a motion to the Convocation, the committee's only recourse is to deliberate the matter during the year and hand it off again as a recommendation to its successor committee, which will then be in the same position.

During our time at the WSC, we were not able to propose a solution bring before the WSC 2015 Convocation. Looking into this further, however, in consultation with the Board's Conference Support Committee, is one of our priorities for action this year. In the meantime, we would appreciate feedback from current and former GSRs and ISRs, and trustees, on whether they experience the current practice as problematic, along with any suggestions for alternatives.

Our other top priorities are:

- Responding to three "Issues and Concerns" referred to our committee;
- Clarifying the respective duties of, and relationships between, the three entities involved in organizing the WSC: the GSB's Conference Support Committee, the local Host Committee, and our committee;
- Studying the somewhat complex issues involved in a proposal from the International Caucus and the Technology Committee to do a pilot project permitting delegates from outside North America to participate in the Conference remotely.

If time permits, we also will take up some or all of the following between now and next August:

- Institutionalizing a census of WSC committee staffing when committees begin meeting at the Conference, so delegates can learn of any understaffed committees when there is still time to move to them;
- The possibility of providing future host committees and meeting planners

WSC Committee and Caucus Reports

written guidance on providing dietary options for WSC attendees;

- A recommendation made by another committee that the Conference create an Under-earners' Caucus.

Finally, we will consult with the WSC Resource Development Committee on whether it would be appropriate to encourage fellowship-wide fundraising on a larger scale than John H. Fund, in order to lower WSC costs and increase WSC participation.

Literature

The 2015-2016 Literature Committee is an enthusiastic, dynamic group of 18 members. We continue to work closely with the General Service Board's Literature Publications Committee and other GSB and WSC Committees in all levels of creating DA conference-approved literature.

Our first order of business is to prepare responses to twenty Issues & Concerns that were assigned to the Literature Committee at this year's World Service Conference in Portland. The topics presented in the Issues & Concerns are wide-ranging and have already generated lively discussions among the Committee members.

Lit Com has four main projects on our agenda, to date. In addition to responding to the Issues and Concerns, they include the following: preparing an outline for the Debtors Anonymous basic text, creating a writing to replace the 'Preamble,' and de-

veloping an outline for a Beginner's Meeting Format. Additionally, the Committee remains ready to review and comment on other 'in-process' projects, including manuscripts and other pieces of literature, as requested by the Literature Publications Committee.

Resource Development

The RDC for 2015-2016 is composed of six members. We are excited and looking forward to working on our objectives to: 1) increase contributions to the World Service Office; 2) reach out to groups to expand understanding of what a GSR is and does and the importance of this service position; and 3) to work toward increasing the number of groups that have a GSR.

We will also undertake these actions:

- We are in the process of updating the John H. Scholarship letter. The annual April Anniversary Appeal letter is also moving forward.

- We are planning two Fellowship-wide Conference calls. A sub-committee has been formed for the first call, which is tentatively scheduled for late November. Its title is: "So You Think You Want to Be a GSR: GSR and ISR Service Made Simple".

- A second Fellowship-wide call is planned for the month of April to celebrate D.A.'s 40th Anniversary. Its tentative title is: "Spiritual Problem Solving: 40 Years on the D.A. Trail".

- We will be investigating ways to encourage individual monthly contributions to the WSO.

- The committee members will be working on their stories of service for the Ways and Means.

- The committee is studying the DAMS and will cover one chapter each month. This will be discussed for five minutes during the monthly meeting.

Intergroup Caucus

The Intergroup Caucus will continue to pursue the three objectives begun last year. The first is to help Intergroups develop websites or contact information on the D.A. website that is accurate and helpful. The second is to continue to pursue a separate tab at the D.A. website for Intergroups. The third is to compile some of the best practices to help new and struggling Intergroups. In addition, the Intergroup Caucus will recommend some past successful activities to repeat to celebrate D.A.'s 40th anniversary.

International Caucus

Areas of focus for the coming year are:

- Recruit international D.A. members for the GSB International Committee's open ACM positions.

- Research and develop video conferencing for WSC participation by international GSRs and ISRs.

- Research debit card only (DCO) and other types of transactions for payment of literature orders and Seventh Tradition contributions.

- Create a database structure for new international members and groups to find D.A. support, including Group Sponsorship.

- Assist with literature translations.

- Develop a strategy for answering the question, "What do GSRs & ISRs overseas need?"

- Compile a list of current intergroup electronic contact information, to facilitate communications between the board and international Intergroups.