

Responses to 2014 Issues & Concerns

Responses to all Issues & Concerns submitted to the World Service Conference 2014, Skokie, IL

The Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference (WSC) addresses the issues and concerns of D.A. groups that affect D.A. as a whole. Members, groups, and Intergroups have submitted the Issues & Concerns listed below during the past year via the debtorsanonymous.org website or by mailing them to the General Service Office. The receiving and processing of Issues and Concerns (I&C) from the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous (D.A.) is an important communication vehicle aiding the health, unity, and growth of D.A. as a whole.

After the Conference, the committees of the General Service Board (GSB) and the World Service Conference committees and caucuses consider these Issues & Concerns as possible items for motions and recommendations at Convocation or as potential topics to discuss during their service throughout the year. Direct responses to each Issue & Concern are published in the WSC final conference report (if they are submitted at the Conference) or on the D.A. website (if they are submitted by December 1 following the Conference.)

I & C number 14-01

Issue/Concern

CITY: Reseda, CA

GROUP NAME: Serene and Solvent

GROUP NUMBER: 165

Please provide clarification on the content of A Currency of Hope "Forward to the Second Edition" page xi, paragraph two. Please explain why the printed version of paragraph two differs from the revision of the paragraph approved by a two-thirds vote of the 2012 Annual Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference in Seattle.

Was the paragraph content change from the conference approved version intentional or an oversight? In light of this change is the book authentically "Conference Approved" literature? Please advise how the GSB plans to remedy the error so that COH is aligned with the above Conference action

(e.g. a correction insert, peel and stick cover-ups, etc. for books in stock) for the following -

- (1) The printed book inventory now in stock at the WSO
- (2) Books already sold, and
- (3) Future printings of COH.

Reference: 2012 Annual Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference 26th Annual Report, page 17, Literature Committee Motion 1.

Assigned to

GSB Lit Pub

Response/Resolution

The General Service Board made an error in not removing references to "The San Diego Statement" in the first printing of A Currency of Hope, Second Edition. To remedy the error, the GSB took the following actions:

- (1) The following eNews Announcement

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was issued on August 5, 2014:

In the "Foreword to the Second Edition" of the recently published A Currency of Hope, there is an error in the last sentence of the second paragraph. The Convocation of the World Service Conference voted by substantial unanimity to change the wording to read: "Her statement continues to influence the review and production of literature, both in print and on the website." The Literature Publications Committee, Literature Services, and the General Service Board regret the error. Please know that the error was not intentional and will be corrected in the next printing.

(2) The following errata notice was then printed and inserted into the remaining copies of the first printing of the book: In the "Foreword to the Second Edition" of the recently published A Currency of Hope, there is an error in the last sentence of the second paragraph. The Convocation of the World Service Conference voted by substantial unanimity to change the wording to read: "Her statement continues to influence the review and production of literature, both in print and on the website."

(3) The error was corrected in the second printing of the book, completed in February 2015.

I & C number 14-02

Issue/Concern

CITY: Los Angeles, CA

GROUP NAME: Southern California GSR

GROUP NUMBER: 167

We request clarification on the content of A Currency of Hope "Forward to the Second Edition" page xi, paragraph two. Please

explain why the printed version of paragraph two differs from the revision of the paragraph approved by a two-thirds vote of the 2012 Annual Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference in Seattle.

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I & C number 14-03

Issue/Concern

CITY: Reseda, CA

GROUP NAME: Clutter No More

GROUP NUMBER: 594

Subject - Inexplicable lifetime and influence of "The San Diego Statement." "The San Diego Statement" was never approved by the D.A. WSC, yet it reappears, year after year, like a zombie. What keeps it alive? "The San Diego Statement" has no legitimacy: it was never approved or even voted on by the full Conference of Debtors Anonymous. It was one person's opinion about D.A.

Some chronology - The so-called "San Diego Statement" was first mentioned by Carla J., the Chair of the General Service Board, in her "Report from the Chair" at the D.A. World Service Conference in San Diego CA in 2006. [2006 Annual Report, page 12, available on debtorsanonymous.org] It was then adopted by vote of the 12 members of the GSB. [I have no written documentation of this.] At

the 2007 WSC in Sturbridge MA, the new Chair, Carol B, repeated the statement in her "Report from the Chair," reported that the GSB had voted to submit the Statement for approval of the full Conference. The statement was renamed "Commentary on the Primary Purpose of D.A.."

According to the official records, "the motion was not brought forward during Convocation due to time constraints." [2007 Annual Report, page 12] At the 2008 WSC in Salt Lake City, the Chair Carol B, incorrectly reported that the "primary purpose" statement had been presented to the Conference in 2007 and was defeated. [2007 Annual Report, page 10] In fact, this statement was never presented to the Conference for a vote.

For four years, the "San Diego Statement" was buried at the bottom of a page on the D.A. website as a statement which had been approved by the GSB. I believe this was deceptive, particularly for newcomers, since there is considerable confusion between the WSC, GSB and WSO. Many people thought this "primary purpose" statement was an official policy of the Debtors Anonymous. I thought that the San Diego Statement was dead and buried. I attended four WSC conferences, and never heard anyone mention it except as an historical curiosity.

I was a GSR at the 2012 WSC in San Diego, we were given copies of the Table of Contents and the Introduction to "A Currency of Hope" Second Edition. I was shocked when "The San Diego Statement" was mentioned by name in the Introduction. It was as if the (anonymous) author of the Introduction had exhumed the rotting corpse of the "San Diego Statement" and place it at

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the head of the table at a brand new D.A. banquet. Because the rules did not permit us to change the wording of literature, our only choice as delegates was to accept the whole package or put off the new "Currency of Hope" for another year.

Several delegates were able to persuade the Conference to vote, by substantial unanimity, to eliminate all reference to the "San Diego Statement" by name in the new "Currency of Hope." [2012 Annual Report, page 17] Several months later, "The San Diego Statement" was removed from the D.A. website. I thought that the Statement was dead and buried, with a stake in its heart. 21 months later, I was able to open the first printed copy of "A Currency of Hope, Second Edition." I was shocked and dismayed to find reference to "The San Diego Statement" by name in the Introduction. The unanimous vote of the 2012 World Service Conference had been ignored. My question: What explains the inexplicable lifespan of this zombie statement? Could it be that the opinion of one person (the Chair of the GSB) takes precedence over the opinion of 100 members of the World Service Conference?

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GSB Lit Pub

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I & C number 14-04

Issue/Concern

CITY: Reseda, CA

GROUP NAME: Clutter No More

GROUP NUMBER: 594

Subject: Non-Conference-approved content in A Currency of Hope, Second Edition; At the 2012 Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference in Seattle, the Convocation voted to eliminate all reference to "The San Diego Statement" in the

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Introduction of A Currency of Hope, Second Edition. [See page 17 of the 2012 WSC Report available on debtorsanonymous.org];

Whether we agree on the content of “The San Diego Statement” or not, it should not be referenced by name in Conference-approved literature, because the statement has never been approved by the D.A. Conference. A Currency of Hope, 2nd edition appeared in printed form on June 1, 2014, nearly two years after it was approved by the Conference. On the first page of the Introduction, there is a direct reference by name to “The San Diego Statement.” How did the vote of the 2012 Conference come to be ignored?

Assigned to

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I & C number 14-05

Issue/Concern

Submitted by Carol H. and GSO staff

Urgency for changes to The Debtors Anonymous Website. For many people, their very first look at the D.A. program is the homepage of the website. Frequent calls to the office are from Newbies who have looked at the website and have no idea where to begin. The website is confusing. People who call the office for the first time are in trouble and often in a state of anxiety. They need the information to be clear and simple. Often people call after hours and they need help.

The website could be more helpful and instructive to a newcomer. I regularly have to walk people through the first step such as printing the tools, or finding a meeting. A first timer looks at the meeting descriptions and has absolutely no idea how to pick one

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for them. People ask regularly is it free. It's not that the information isn't in there, it's that the layout is not user friendly. There needs to be a frequently asked questions page, a newcomer's page, and something that is welcoming to the viewer. I wonder if there are those who may have looked at the website, couldn't relate and therefore didn't reach out. The web is a powerful tool that could strengthen the organization as a whole, as well as the debtor who still suffers. I feel strongly that this need is here and the ways to address it do not need to be in the distant future.

Assigned to

GSB Info Tech

Response/Resolution

Thank you for submitting your issue and concern. The General Service Board (GSB) has approved and GSB Technology Committee is diligently working on the new website. The Board continues in its efforts to improve delivery of services to D.A. members. The new, improved D.A. website will be available very soon.

I & C number 14-06

Issue/Concern

Submitted by anonymous member/longtimer

Create new and/or improve existing materials on Sponsorship in D.A. IMHO the inability of members to find sponsors is a major component of the stagnation of our Fellowship and of the continual arrival and departure of newcomers. D.A. needs to develop a culture that supports and

encourages Sponsorship. In one of my other Fellowships, newcomers can easily find a Sponsor, often at their first meeting.

Assigned to

WSC Lit Comm

Response/Resolution

Thank you for submitting your issue and concern. We share your view regarding sponsorship in DA. The Sponsorship pamphlet is available to download from the DA website. Sponsorship will also be addressed in the primary text of DA, which is the priority project of the Literature Committee this year.

I & C number 14-07

Issue/Concern

Submitted by GSO staff

Please consider and investigate the concept of D.A. purchasing a small building or office suite in order to provide a permanent and suitably outfitted home for D.A. The continued talk about 'maybe we should move the office' or 'will we renew our lease?' leaves the office in a state of limbo where serious issues are overlooked or ignored. To attract the best staff and provide the best service to the Fellowship, we need and should have a prosperous and professionally equipped headquarters.

Assigned to

GSB Office

Response/Resolution

As per Tradition 6, it is unwise for D.A. to

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own any considerable property. Ownership of real estate property requires ongoing responsibilities which can detract us from our primary purpose in helping the still suffering debtor. Lease agreements allows us to focus more on the spiritual needs we have before us.

The Office and the Long Range Planning committees are continually researching other venues to meet not only the operational needs of the General Service Office, but also within the approved spending plan supported by the D.A. Fellowship.

I & C number 14-08

Issue/Concern

CITY: Sydney Australia
GROUP NAME: Sydney Intergroup
GROUP NUMBER: 1606

Investigate using locally based print on demand publishing technology to print D.A. literature outside North America e.g. Europe, Australia/New Zealand, in particular "A Currency of Hope" and the forthcoming 'D.A. Twelve and Twelve'. It is currently quite expensive (due to shipping costs, customs duties, other fees) and slow to order literature to be shipped to UK/Europe/Australia from the GSO.

Assigned to

GSB Lit Pub

Response/Resolution

The General Service Board has started its initial investigation regarding the licensing, revenue, quality-control, and other issues

associated with printing literature locally, and will report to the Fellowship at future dates concerning this topic.

I & C number 14-09

Issue/Concern

CITY: London
GROUP NAME: UK Intergroup
GROUP NUMBER: 1269

Assuming there was an entity legally able to receive it in the UK, under what conditions would the GSB consider a grant of rights to print and distribute D.A. Conference Approved Literature here.

Assigned to

GSB Legal

Response/Resolution

At the General Service Board (GSB) meeting held February 7, 2015, the following motion was approved: "That the GSB approve the concept of licensing selected foreign entities to publish, price, and sell D.A. literature by the applicable licenses, upon such terms as may be specified in the applicable license; the selection of such licensees and the terms of such licenses be subject to prior DAGSB approval." Approval of this concept now opens the door for the Board to research the both the legal requirements and implications, and the financial impact of issuing such licenses. The Legal Affairs Committee of the GSB has already started this research.

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I & C number 14-10

Issue/Concern

Submitted by a D.A. member

I believe the WSC Public Information Committee (PI) and the Hospital, Institutions and Prisons Committee (HIP) should combine to form one committee going forward. My concerns are as follows:

(1) The work the PI and HIP does is the same in that they are both seeking to reach the debtor that still suffers. They are both currently addressing similar audiences by utilizing the same means.

(2) PI and HIP: they both reach out to the public & institutions. They work hand in hand, literature is a shared method.

Institutions are found in the public arena, vice versa.

(3) With the combining of the two committees it helps alleviate some of the resources needed for each committee, i.e.,

(a) Two committees that have each been struggling to have enough people to do meaningful work would be combined. A single combined committee would be stronger than two marginal ones trying to "make it" on their own.

(b) One less meeting room would be needed at the annual WSC.

(c) One less WSC committee would require funding, which equates to savings.

(d) Conference delegates torn between joining PI or HIP would no longer have to choose.

(e) The lists of potential entities to reach out to are practically identical for the two committees. No need to have two separate committees contacting the same group of people.

Assigned to

WSC CC

Response/Resolution

Response: In response, the conference committee wishes to thank you for bringing this concern to our attention. The two committees have different missions, as set forth in the D.A. Manual for Service (DAMS). The question of understaffed committees is being addressed separately. Therefore the Conference Committee is not recommending adoption of the proposal to combine the two committees.

I & C number 14-11

Issue/Concern

CITY: Fort Lauderdale, FL

GROUP NAME: Solvent Serenity

GROUP NUMBER: 1173

I would like you to reconsider your criteria for scholarships. Everyone that asks for a scholarship should get one. I have done a great deal of service for this program. I am Treasurer and GSR of Solvent Serenity, Fort Lauderdale FL. I would like to start an intergroup in Florida. I should be able to attend the conference but my group does not have enough to fund the trip. I have deep concerns about the favoritism used in awarding scholarships. All requests should have gotten equal distribution of funds. More funds must be made available to the applicants that got nothing. This is not good for the fellowship of D.A. I hope that GSB can revisit this issue and make it right.

Assigned to

WSC CC

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Response/Resolution

In response, the conference committee wishes to thank you for bringing this concern to our attention. The John H. Scholarship Fund is limited by the amount of donations received from the DA membership during the year preceding the DA World Service Conference. Because the funds are limited, not every delegate can receive a partial or full scholarship. Moreover, dividing the available funds so that every applicant would get an equal amount, would not necessarily meet the delegate's needs.

For example: If the fund has \$7,000 and 60 delegates apply for scholarship assistance, each would get \$116.67. There are objective guidelines for awarding scholarships, approved by the WSC. We are unaware of any instances of favoritism or deviation from these. However, the concern expressed here alerts us to a need to better publicize these guidelines. We were unable to determine how to do so before the November 30th, 2014 deadline for submitting this response, but we intend to propose or adopt a solution before the next WSC in 2015. We also welcome any member's suggestions for amending the guidelines. We hope that this response addresses your concern.

I & C number 14-12

Issue/Concern

CITY: Portland, OR
GROUP NAME: Queer/Gay Men's Debtors Anonymous
GROUP NUMBER: 1620

Debtors Anonymous Brookline MA, saved my life. The group gave me the tools and fellowship to move through credit card debt and a subprime loan. Before I had the tool of awareness, I succumbed to Bank of America advertising and other banks. In the Great Recession, it has been approximated that 10,000 lives have been lost to suicide. Dartmouth just released a first time study of suicide linked to foreclosures. Bank of America predated on many people with subprime loans. In years past, they predated on Black Americans in the south and stripped them of their homes.

Tool # 9: Awareness: "We maintain awareness of the danger of compulsive debt by taking note of bank, loan, company and credit card advertising and their effects on us". When the D.A. Focus arrived, I was disappointed that D.A. places their money in Bank of America. My first thought was to remove myself from the fellowship, because of the clear hypocrisy of any organization like Debtors Anonymous that teaches the members to avoid debt at all costs, and be willing to go to any lengths necessary to not debt one day at a time. It is my hope that through a thorough inventory, we may discover a bank that is more in alignment with our steps, tools, and traditions. In order to not debt one day at a time, and be willing to go to any lengths necessary, sometimes convenience is too costly. "Making it easy is the trap" Sincerely, Sean from Portland Queer/Gay Men's Debtors Anonymous

Assigned to

GSB Finance

Response/Resolution

The primary answer to your question is one of accessibility. The members of the Board are scattered across the country. Currently,

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the Treasurer is in California, the Chair is in Pennsylvania, and the General Service Office is in Needham, MA near Boston. Also, the annual World Service Conferences are held in many parts of the country, most recently Seattle and Phoenix, this past year in Chicago and next year in Portland. Our banking needs to be near all of these locations in order to conduct transactions quickly and efficiently, as well as other conveniences that have been offered to D.A. over many years of working with them. A credit union does not offer these location advantages and service offerings.

I & C number 14-13

Issue/Concern

City: Brookline, Massachusetts USA
Group Name: 12 Steps to Entrepreneurship and D.A. Tools
Group Number: 102

Please consider hiring a professional editor to review all D.A. publications, including D.A. Focus, Ways & Means, and all eNews communications. Most every issue has both glaring errors in basics such as punctuation and capitalization, and writing that is amateurish and sometimes approaching child-like. (See the article in May 2014 D.A. Focus, Information Technologies, page 2, particularly bad writing)

Assigned to

GSB Com Com

Response/Resolution

Thank you very much for your suggestion that the D.A. General Service Board (GSB) hire a professional editor to review our

fellowship's publications. Currently, books and pamphlets undergo a thorough review process which includes editing and proof-reading by paid professional services. These services are contracted as needed. The GSB is dependent on the volunteer services of D.A. members and friends of our Fellowship for the editing and proof-reading of our quarterly publications, the D.A. Focus and Ways & Means, of the eNews announcements, and of our service materials.

The Communications Committee is currently looking for an Appointed Committee Member (ACM) to help us with the pre-release review of these publications. You may find the details of this service position on the D.A. website under the Open Service Positions Tab. While our ideal spending plan includes funding for full-time GSO employees dedicated to the editing and proof-reading of all D.A.'s publications, our current spending plan does not; Debtors Anonymous operates within our means. With that said, the stories found in the Ways & Means come from D.A. members willing to share their experience, strength, and hope using their own individual styles under the guidance of a Higher Power. As always, love and tolerance is our code.

I & C number 14-14

Issue/Concern

Submitted by the 2013-14 GSB
Communications Committee

The Communications Committee of the D.A. General Service Board considered a recommendation from the WSC BDA

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Committee in 2013 “that the publications committee consider changing the name of the Ways & Means publication. ‘Ways and Means’ is the name of the chief tax writing committee of the House of Representatives and may suggest government affiliation and create confusion. We suggest changing the name to more closely reflect the mission of the publication and improve engagement with the D.A. fellowship.”

We thank the Fellowship for its many wonderfully clever suggestions for a new name. All opinions have been welcome, even if that opinion is to keep the name as it stands. However, any important change to the Ways & Means would best be considered by the whole conference following a full and thorough discussion of the well-informed fellowship conscience. Please assign the consideration of this change to a WSC committee to allow the fellowship a voice in the matter.

Assigned to

WSC FCC

Response/Resolution

The Communications Committee has asked for our input regarding possible name change of “Ways & Means.” Does FCC believe the name should be changed? Committee moved and approved: Retain the name “Ways & Means.”