

DEBTORS ANONYMOUS

First Annual World Conference
September 20, 1987
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Minutes

St. Vincent's Hospital Auditorium
New York, New York

Opening Session (SESSION I):

The Conference opened with a call to order by John C., followed by the Serenity Prayer.

In his opening remarks he spoke to the delegates of the importance of continuity at this level of service. He encouraged people to continue holding their commitments to being GSRs, and to renew the commitment or commit to another group and remain active in GSR work. It is important at this time in DA's history because we are building our future leadership and we need to complete tasks which will take more than 1 or 2 years.

The goal of the General Service Board this year is to establish, physically, a national office in New York and to staff it. In order to do this, the Board must be supported by the fellowship -- spiritually, financially and in service.

The legal business of establishing DA as a not-for-profit organization, securing exclusive use of the name "Debtors Anonymous," and having our logo established as a Service Mark (as opposed to a Trademark) is close to being completed.

The Board was then introduced along with a brief description of the type of service each Board member has focused on.

1. Donald A. - Works with form and structure. Rewrote by-laws.
2. Bill C. - Newly reinstated on Board after some time had elapsed since he last sat on the Board. Is heading up the Literature Committee of the Board.

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3. John S. - Treasurer for the Board. Also has handled legal affairs of DA.
4. Leila B. - Public Information and organization of volunteers to answer DA's mail.
5. John H. - DA's founder. Makes nominations to the Board and does fundraising.
6. John C. - Chair and overall coordinator for all matters affecting DA as a whole.
7. George D.)
8. Bob P.) Two non-debting Board Members who, all agree, add tremendous balance and insight into policy and decision-making processes.
9. Timothy G.)
10. Sheelagh McC) Newly added Board Members from Southern California.

Donald A. then took over leadership of the Conference in his position as Chair of the Conference Committee of the Board.

There followed a brief historical description of DA's development over the past 11 1/2 years. Some of this history was as follows:

The first DA meeting was held for 3 or 4 years in the Ryan Room of St. Ignacius Church in New York City. Donald's first DA meeting was in 1980. There were two DA meetings, both in New York City at that time. Soon there were 5 meetings. Donald A., John H. and 2 others met and appointed themselves as sort of "interim trustees." They were at that time, the members that people looked to when they had questions about DA issues. In 1982, every member of DA was invited to a meeting and officially elected those Interim Trustees to be the Trustees of DA.

Leila B. took DA to Los Angeles. Annie W. took DA to Boston.

The Board meets for two days, four times a year.

1986 was the first national gathering of DA.

1987 was the First World Conference.

All in attendance were urged to get the AA Service Manual and Pass It On and study the concepts in order to get an understanding of how DA is organized. We are adapting

our structure in large part based on these AA Concepts, since they have proven successful to AA and were developed over a long period of time. Ours is not exactly a democratic organization, especially the relationship between the Conference and the Board. Study the literature mentioned in order to grasp the concepts.

Also discussed was the issue of money to pay for transportation and expenses to bring the trustees who are not in New York City to New York City for the quarterly Board Meetings. Early on, a precedent was set when the Board was quite small. It flew in a trustee for the quarterly meetings and paid for it with Board funds. Later, it was discovered that either literature funds had been spent for these expenses or else a non-debting Board member had just made contributions in order to cover this. Both of these methods of funding were found to be unsatisfactory and were discontinued. However, based on current contributions received by the Board (\$700 per quarter -- \$500 in a dedicated fund for literature and \$200 group contributions) there are not the funds to meet these costs.

Therefore, the Board is asking that local Intergroups consider raising the money to pay for costs of sending the Trustee(s) from their area to New York for the quarterly meeting.

Conference Matters:

There was a lengthy discussion about what the exact function of the Vice Chair of the Conference is, and what, if any, qualifications to serve the person should have. The position was finally defined as the person coordinating the event of the Annual Conference and also coordinating communications among the people called "The Conference," which goes on all year. In terms of qualifications, each candidate for office of Vice Chair was eventually asked to qualify themselves by stating their name, city or area of the country they are from, length of time in the program, length of time they have been solvent, and what types of service they have done both in 12-step programs and in personal life that they felt would qualify them for the responsibility.

Next came elections of officers to serve as Conference Secretary and Vice-Chair for the next year.

Marjorie M. from San Francisco Area was elected
Conference Secretary;
Norman B. from Chicago Area was elected Vice Chair
of the Conference;
Donald A. remains Chair of the Conference
Committee for the Board.

There was also a lengthy discussion on the organization of DA as related to the organization of AA and where DA is currently in its development. It was suggested that all group reps go back to their groups and ask that they purchase a copy of the AA Service Manual and Pass It On, and that these materials be studied in order to increase our understanding of our organizational structure and the hows and whys of it.

Next we discussed the 1988 DA Conference which the Board has decided to hold in Los Angeles.

The Board had asked Jamie M. from Los Angeles to be the local coordinator of the Fellowship Day, but this was unresolved because of the position he currently holds in the local Intergroup. The Board has been maintaining a policy that if a person has major leadership responsibilities in their local DA structure, they should not also take on major coordinating responsibilities in the national Conference days' events, because either position would be a full commitment by itself.

SESSION II of the 1987 Conference:

The dates for the 1988 Conference were set at Friday, September 30, Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, 1988.

Donald commented that the draft of the DA Charter is not yet ready for submission for approval. It may be ready next year.

Next, we discussed and defined the purposes of the various Conference Committees as follows:

1. Literature Committee: Development of literature and assisting the Board in information gathering.
2. Conference Committee: Interim Committee to review draft of charter and recommend any other committees we may need next year.
3. Public Information - Develops methods we use to carry DA's message to press, radio, media, as well as employee assistance programs and helping professionals.
4. Fellowship Communications: Study and help prepare a fellowship magazine; look into the use of tapes in DA.
5. Service Committee: Organizing to respond to letters and mail DA receives. Help support "loners."

6. Finance Committee: Concerned with the finances of the fellowship -- how funds can be raised; obtaining an office for the General Service Board.

John H. spoke to the Conference about the position of the Committees being that of advisors to the Board of Trustees. Each Committee will advise the Board as to actions it feels should be taken in a given area. The Board then will study the matter, especially as it relates to our Traditions and how DA as a whole would be affected. The Board is responsible for seeing that the actions are approved, then carried out.

The Committees then met for an hour and established action plans for each Committee. Committee chairs were asked to submit their action plans to the Conference Secretary.

A few individuals addressed the Conference about their experiences at the Conference.

The Conference adjourned at 5 p.m. with the saying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,