

**April
2013**

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The DA Focus is published quarterly on a fiscal-year basis by the D.A. General Service Board. It is mailed to delegates and emailed to all subscribers of the D.A. eNews; it is also available to download from the D.A. website at www.debtorsanonymous.org

**PLEASE SHARE
THE DA FOCUS
WITH YOUR GROUP.**



**Is Your Group Aware of
the "Preamble" Situation?**

For background and possible avenues of discussion, see the March and July 2012 issues of *The DA Focus*. Present and past issues of the *Focus* are available on the home page at www.debtorsanonymous.org.



**The revised pamphlet
"Pressure Relief Groups &
Pressure Relief Meetings"
is available for purchase.**



**The first edition of
A Currency of Hope
will soon be out of stock.**

The Twelve Traditions: "For others more qualified"?

A moving transformation occurred recently in a meeting, an evolution that is surely happening throughout our Fellowship. It was the fourth Wednesday of the month, a group's Tradition meeting. The format calls for a speaker, but that evening there wasn't one. Disconcerted at first, faces manifesting that strange mix of guilt and alarm that even the mention of the Traditions seems to inspire, the members nevertheless voted to read the long form of the Tradition from A.A.'s *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and share on it. The Tradition—an episode of A.A.'s history—was passed around, each person taking a paragraph. Then came the sharing. One after another, members brought in specific examples from D.A.'s past and present. The expressions changed, became thoughtful, illuminated, confident.

D.A. worldwide is vigorous and maturing, growing in compassion for the debtor who still suffers and awareness of the debtor who doesn't know about D.A. Many groups have Traditions meetings in their line-ups. But many, many more do not, as if the Traditions were somehow optional, or arcanelly technical—as if the Twelve Traditions weren't in fact being practiced daily, by hundreds of groups and thousands of D.A.s.

The Issues & Concerns available on the "Service" page at www.debtorsanonymous.org reveal a Fellowship's hungry and ready for the Twelve Traditions. Over and over, in these notes from the front, members request or demand that the General Service Board adjudicate the behavior of individuals and groups, that the Board make decrees about non-Conference-approved literature, declare this to be a debt or that not to be a debt. These questions arise

passionately from the hearts and minds of people who know this is a matter of life and death for individuals and for groups. And over and over the reply from the Board is some variation on "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern."

Government in the sense of Tradition Two, weakens our Fellowship, individuals and groups alike, whereas when we seek unity through the exercise of our group conscience we become stronger. Our widest group conscience takes place at Convocation at the yearly World Service Conference. (Our literature and service material, products of this group conscience, provide answers to many questions about the nature of debt.) Increasingly, GSRs and ISRs remain on their committees and caucuses throughout the Conference year, performing extraordinary service and in the process constantly seeking the group conscience and turning to the Traditions for guidance. And increasingly D.A. groups are focused on our common solution—not incurring new, unsecured debt, a day at a time. Are these coincidences?

We often hear that the Twelve Steps are about the individual, while the Twelve Traditions are about the group. But a group is just a collection of individuals, and so every Tradition invites personal action. What greater gift can there be than the opportunity to continue the adventure of the Twelve Steps, improving our ability to work together, caring for others as well as ourselves? Preserving the groups that save us? The reality of our condition is that we can't afford to stop recovering. We can't even coast very long. Our lives and happiness depend on our reaching out and carrying the message. What comes after Step Twelve? Maybe Tradition One?

An apology

An eNews went out in April announcing a General Service Board Phone Forum on April 7, on the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, but unfortunately there was no moderator nor had speakers been assigned for the call. On behalf of the Board, I apologize for this error and any inconvenience it caused for those who called in. The call has been rescheduled for Sunday, May 12, 5-6:00 EST. An eNews will announce the event and provide more details.

Allen A., Chair, D.A. General Service Board

General Service Board Committee Reports

Audit Committee

No report.

Communications

The Communications Committee has asked that a meeting's language be added to meeting-registration forms. Spanish-speaking in-person and telephone meetings will be listed on the "En Español" page of the web site. There are calls for recovery stories on paying for higher education without debting and coping with health issues without debting, as well as stories reflecting the diversity of the D.A. membership, a WSC Literature Committee initiative. ComCom has received healthy-meeting submissions and stories from WSC HIP and RDC. In the interest of unity, as expressed in Traditions One and Two, ComCom continues to investigate and implement ways to expand distribution of *The DA focus* and *Ways & Means*. The number of eNews opened hit a record high of 802 for the "Additional Issues & Concerns" eNews. Members can subscribe on the home page at www.debtorsanonymous.org. ComCom continues to encourage GSB discussion on whether posting recorded conference calls violates Traditions.

Conference Support

No report.

Information Technology

The Information Technology committee continues to work with the WSC Technology Committee toward development of a new and improved website, with user-friendly architecture. A "shopping cart" that can calculate the amount due on a printable form has been developed and is under review. There is ongoing focus on an online group / Intergroup registration form. We are discussing ways to improve the quality of the WSC Fellowship Day phonecasts. We have made thirty-seven updates to the site so far this calendar year, from fixing broken links, to posting upcoming events and the new literature price list.

We worked with one of our IT vendors to resolve a malicious warning that was cropping up when members searched the database. If you encounter a warning, please make a screen shot of the warning and email it to office@debtorsanonymous.org.

International

The International Committee has compiled a list of all translations received from groups and members outside the U.S., as well as all AAWS-approved translations of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, which the D.A. GSB has permission to adapt. Int'l is preparing its spending plan for the 2013–14 fiscal year, which will include the costs of paying a commercial translation agency to sample received draft translations for accuracy. Some literature received from groups and members outside the U.S. is original material, which will be reviewed and, if appropriate, will be submitted for the Literature or Service Material approval process.

Legal Affairs

The Legal Affairs Committee has established a copyright-filing procedure; with the Finance Committee, Legal vetted the hotel contract for the 2013 WSC. The committee thoroughly reviewed the GSB By-Laws and quorum requirements, with outside counsel; developed a "Library of Shared Experience," to ensure consistent responses from committee to committee, year to year; and developed a password-protection policy. Legal Affairs responded to members' concerns about the use of the D.A. name on other web sites and copyright infringement of our literature by another fellowship. The committee answered numerous requests to reprint the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Tools, and Twelve Concepts. Legal Affairs centralized the digital storage of writer waivers and other releases.

Literature Publications

The following are highlights of the Literature Publications committee's activities: The Preamble and the plagiarized sections of the "Debtors Anonymous" pamphlet have been removed in the English version of the pamphlet. The Spanish translation will be ready

when it comes up for reprint later this year; the revised "Pressure Relief Groups and Pressure Relief Meetings" is with the printer; the draft of the Twelve Steps is with Literature Services before going to the WSC Literature Committee for review, as is the "BDA Tools" pamphlet; the manuscript of the second edition of *A Currency of Hope* is with a proofreader. We hope to bring the Newcomers Packet (pamphlet holder) and the Twelve Bookmarks to the 2013 WSC for approval. We have been working with the WSC Literature Committee on collecting diverse stories for the website and D.A.s basic book and on a "Health Issues" survey.

Long-Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Committee planned three regional forums (Houston, December 2012; Saint Louis, February 2013; Washington, D.C., March 2013) and four "Ask the GSB" phone forums. The committee developed a guidance document, "Who may attend WSC calls," which the Board approved. This was published in the February 2013 issue of *the D.A. Focus* and will be included in the next printing of the *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service* (DAMS). Oversight of the D.A. archives has been vested with LRPC, following the appointment of Jan S., former trustee and GSB chair, as D.A. archivist.

Nominations

The Nominations Committee has been actively working to fill three Class A (recovering debtor) and two Class B (nondebtor) trustee positions by following up with potential candidates from its records. This resulted in the receipt of four applications, via the GSO, for Class A trustee positions. These applications are being reviewed. The committee is continuing to search for and follow up on Class B candidates. The committee has also been collecting detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of Board officers and will be adding these to the Trustee Manual. The committee has begun reviewing recommendations from an outside counsel, on request from the

Legal Affairs Committee, for revisions to the By-Laws in order to make them clearer and more in line with New York State not-for-profit law.

Office

Recent Office Committee activities include: completing installation of a new computer and updated software; working with the office manager to hire the approved part-time worker; continuing to review and update the Personnel Manual; investigating cost of an international 800 number; continuing to identify ways to improve filling international literature orders; developing, with the GSB Legal Affairs committee, a new contribution acknowledgement stating that individual contributions may be tax deductible; drafting an e-commerce policy, which has been sent to Finance for review; an audit of all conference-approved DA literature including revisions and re-order accounting; recommending that Finance establish a separate debit-card account for ongoing expenses paid by GSO; establishing remote access to office computers; developing a Media Contact policy for GSO management of all media requests.

Public Information

No report.

Finance

The following report is for the first seven months of our fiscal year, that is, July 1, 2012, through January 30, 2013. Total revenue was \$154,623.93, and total surplus, after all expenses, was \$12,962.54. This is \$13,566.66 ahead of plan. The primary factors driving these numbers are: group, individual, and John H. Scholarship contributions are on plan, as are general, Office, and Board expenses; pamphlet sales are running 20 percent below plan, and book sales are 30 percent below plan.

Expenses for the 2012 World Service Conference (WSC) in Seattle were

less than expected. We elected to carry forward \$3,000 of the 2012 conference surplus to the 2013 WSC. This will result in a reduction of the 2013 registration fee of approximately \$30 per delegate.

The Finance Committee filed D.A.'s 2012 federal and NY State tax returns; completed the spending plan for the 2013 WSC, working closely with the Phoenix Host Committee; provided financial approval for a number of reprints; and continued training our bookkeeping service.

WSC Committee Reports

Business Debtors Anonymous

No report.

Conference

No report.

2013 WSC Host Committee

We participated in the first WSC mid-year conference call in March. There we talked about the journey so far and what has been accomplished. The contract with the hotel was signed in February 2013. The Fellowship Day topics were approved with some minor changes. We submitted our portion of the Spending Plan to the Board and by March the entire Spending Plan had been approved. We then contacted a vendor to record Fellowship Day and Convocation, and a DJ for the Fellowship Day dance. Both of those contracts have been signed. We provided the final piece needed from us to the Board for the registration packet, so that is nearly complete. The Fellowship Day flyer is next on the list, along with actively seeking our volunteers to work the hospitality and technology rooms and registration tables, and be our recording secretary for Convocation.

Diversity Caucus

The Diversity Caucus is actively reaching out to the debtor who is sometimes underserved. The Caucus recently contacted an organization for the deaf that has shown interest in learning more about D.A.

Fellowship Communications

The FCC continues in its efforts to establish a systematic approach to facilitating Fellowship-wide conference calls. The first of a series of calls—"How to Create and Maintain Healthy D.A. Meetings"—was held on February 17. This call offered all members of D.A. an opportunity to share their *group's* experience strength and hope and learn about D.A. resources that can help strengthen and grow meetings. The committee has hopes that this forum for Fellowship-wide service will become more widely adopted by other committees of the World Service Conference, that they might take advantage of this opportunity to gather information, spread awareness, and carry the message of recovery. The FCC will continue this initiative by hosting another conference call, on May 19, on the topic of using social media to carry the message.

Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons

The Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons Committee (HIP) forwarded three stories to the *Ways & Means*. Sixty-five letters have been sent to institutions, and HIP's "Outreach Letter to HIPs and HIP Professionals" has been approved by the GSB. Other projects are the creation of a "Follow-up Response/Phone Script," to go to county jails, federal and state prisons, and inpatient rehabs, and a "Letter to D.A. Members in a HIP," as well as the protocol for its usage. Literature, including a copy of *A Currency of Hope*, was sent to the Monroe County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania, and four copies of *A Currency of Hope* were sent to the Pitchness Detention Center and the North County Correctional Facility in the Los Angeles area. New D.A. meetings were started at both facilities, another is being founded at the Edna Mahan Women's Prison in New Jersey, and the meeting at the Chester Community Hospital in Chester, Pennsylvania, celebrated its third anniversary. An HIP member corresponded with an inmate at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola,

WSC Committee and Caucus Reports and Office Report

and literature was sent directly to him.

Intergroup Caucus

No report.

Internal Operations

The Internal Operations Committee is still researching cost-effective ways to process international literature orders. Linda G. of IOC visited the General Service Office in March, and the Office Manager showed her how orders, contributions, etc. were processed through the Office.

International Caucus

Our work is based around the Twelve Reflections presented at the 2012 WSC in Seattle (see the February 2013 *DA focus*). We offer support to worldwide meetings in registering with the GSO. We have recommended a banner on debtorsanonymous.org website to highlight the benefits of groups registering with the GSO. The caucus formally nominated a trustee from outside the US. We sent a draft proposal to the International Committee for a Regional Forum outside the U.S. We're discussing starting a European Intergroup as a step toward a General Service Board. We provided a detailed explanation to the International Committee on the problems the UK have with ordering and paying for literature. We have researched other Twelve-Step groups' ways of purchasing and distributing literature outside the US and forwarded this to the International Committee. We are in the process of researching how other Twelve-Step groups have grown internationally.

Literature

The Literature Committee reviewed all D.A. pamphlets and found them to be compliant with the 2007 WSC-approved motion to make all literature gender neutral. We have composed a D.A. "Responsibility Pledge" and will recommend to the 2013-14 Literature Committee that it be presented at Convocation. We will be working with D.A.'s archivist, Jan S., to create a series of articles documenting the founding and history of D.A. These articles will be submitted to *Ways & Means*, and we hope they will contribute to the history portion of the projected D.A. Basic Text. We cre-

ated a "Call for Writers" to expand the number of writers vetted and available to the GSB when needed. We recommended changes to the "Annual B.D.A. Business Plan" pamphlet. The 2011-12 Literature Committee's "Health Care Survey" and "Call for Diverse Stories" are being sent out. We are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to review the drafted Twelve Steps.

Public Information

The PI Committee participated in the Problem Gambling Summit in March 2013. The committee's "Public Information Representative Survey" has been approved by the GSB and will be distributed to every D.A. group for feedback.

Resource Development

We have maintained a dozen of our original members still committed to service, including our very helpful Board liaison, Allen T. During the past quarter, the 2012-13 RDC has made headway on the following key initiatives: We provided proposed design and content for the World Service Month Letter, which has been distributed to the fellowship by mail and email. The GSB Finance Committee has approved RDC's Online Bill Pay Awareness Letter, with revisions, and forwarded it to the full GSB for review and approval on the April 7th GSB call. The letter is intended to explain how easy and convenient it is to donate to the D.A. GSB using online banking. We are excited about initiating a Fellowship-wide conference call on "The Culture of Service in D.A.," which we intend to coordinate with the Fellowship Communication Committee (FCC). We intend to have three speakers on the benefits and importance of service, and to allow time for open sharing and questions. Allen T. has submitted our written proposal to the GSB Finance Committee on our behalf. Still more on our agenda and we will keep at it. After all, service is its own reward.

General Service Office

The Office Manager reports that as of April 10, there were 425 face-to-face meetings in the US, 70 outside the US, 34 telephone meetings, and 6 Internet meetings.

Events

Media Contact Training
Saturday, April 27

**"Ask the GSB"
Phone Forums**
"D.A. Traditions and Concepts"
Sunday, May 12

**"D.A. Literature, Copyrights,
and the World Service Website"**
Sunday, June 23

**A Fellowship-wide
conference call on the
Traditions**
**"Using Social Media to
Carry the Message"**
Sunday, May 19

For more information, see
the "Events" page at
www.debtorsanonymous.org



Service Positions

The D.A. GSB Is Seeking
three Class A (recovering-debtor)
Trustees, two Class B (nondebtor)
Trustees, and several Appointed
Committee Members (ACMs).

**All positions are on a volunteer
basis.**

For more information, see
"Open Service Positions"
at
www.debtorsanonymous.org
and the
*Debtors Anonymous Manual for
Service (DAMS)*.