

THE DA focus

The Quarterly World Service Newsletter for the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

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Committee Responds To Article Concerns

Since publication of the front-page article in the December 2009 issue of the DA Focus entitled "The Conference Stands Behind Steps, Traditions; Endorses Plan For DA's Long-Term Growth," we have received correspondence expressing concern that the article was not an objective report of the 2009 WSC in Dallas. We would like to thank those members who took the time to share their opinions with us. Some of them felt we did not adequately present a minority opinion on the Charter amendment issue. That was certainly not our intention.

We respect and appreciate the participation of all the GSRs and ISRs at the Dallas Conference and recognize that all who voted in Convocation did so with the best of intentions. As our First Tradition states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on DA unity." If any part of the article offended anyone, this threatens our unity, and for this we apologize.

Note also that the DA Focus is the voice of the General Service Board and strives to reflect the Board's perspective on the Fellowship. Ways & Means, on the other hand, is the voice of the Fellowship at large and provides a forum for all DA members to openly express their opinions. We invite all DA members to do so on this or any other issues that concern the Fellowship as a whole.

In Service,

The GSB Communications
Committee

New Regional Forums Are A Success In Boston, Minneapolis; L.A. Is Next

DA's first two Regional Forums have made history. About two dozen members from seven states flocked to Brookline, Mass., just outside Boston, in December, and an equal number came to Minneapolis, Minn. in April for the first-of-their-kind events. Members at each location spent a full day listening to presentations, asking questions, and getting to know some of the Fellowship's trusted servants.

The three General Service Board members present gave presentations covering a wide variety of topics, including the DA service structure, literature, technology, history, and DA's primary purpose. (They were joined in Boston by GSO Manager Howard S.) But the most lively activity came during the numerous question-and-answer sessions throughout the day, as members expressed a hunger for knowing more about their "Beloved Fellowship".

The December and April forums were the first two of three scheduled to take place as a pilot program during the 2009-2010 Conference year. The third is planned for Los Angeles on June 5. Once the three Forums for this year are complete, the GSB will decide whether they were successful enough to make them a permanent feature of the DA landscape, with one Forum scheduled each year in the Eastern part of North America, one in Mid-America, and one in the West.

The Forums are a key component of the Five-Year Plan for DA's growth

adopted by the 2009 World Service Conference in Dallas. They are modeled after the Regional Forums and Regional Service Seminars used successfully in Alcoholics Anonymous and AI-Anon for many years, and are designed to give DA members who want it extensive exposure to information about the Fellowship, and the means to be more effective in service at all levels. The Forums also will make it possible for large numbers of members who can't attend the annual World Service Conference to gather information and have input on the future of the Fellowship.

The Boston Forum featured participation by trusted servants of the New England Intergroup as well as the chair of the GSB and two other trustees. The Minnesota Intergroup participated at the Minneapolis Forum by putting on a panel discussion of Intergroup service opportunities.

A questionnaire filled out by the participants in Boston revealed a great many positive comments about the depth of the topics that were discussed, the amount of information presented, and the large amount of time (at least 50 percent of the total time) devoted to questions from the members present. Complaints centered on the need for more advance publicity and the quality of the coffee served by the GSB. Questionnaires from the Minneapolis Forum are still being evaluated.

Board Literature Committees Move Ahead On Projects

The DA General Service Board has two committees that oversee the production of new and existing DA literature.

Literature Publications

The Literature Publications Committee reviews all matters pertaining to the creation and publication of DA literature, including inventory maintenance and copyright protection. The committee has been tackling a number of important issues this year that will have an impact on the future of the Fellowship and its success in carrying the message to the still-suffering debtor.

Translations

The past year has seen good news in the fast-growing number of translation issues

--The committee proposed and got GSB approval for the translation and publication of our first Spanish-language pamphlet (the Debtors Anonymous pamphlet), and plans to propose further Spanish translations dependent on the success of the piece.

--DA groups in France and Argentina have already published

materials in French and Spanish for their groups. However, those well-meaning gestures run counter to the Fellowship's rights of ownership of those materials. The committee has made it a priority this year to sort out the legal issues and clarify policies and procedures for moving forward with these translations and others in a manner that protects DA copyrights in the future. Guidelines will be posted on the DA website.

--The content of a website created in the U.S. with Spanish and German translations of the Steps, Traditions, and some DA materials is in the process of being transferred to Debtors Anonymous so it can be integrated into the main website.

Copyright Protection

DA has recently become much more cognizant of the legal issues involving requests for permissions and contracts from a non-profit organization. A subcommittee of Literature Publications has been working to review and make recommendations around a number of legal issues related to our literature.

--Every year the General Service Office gets numerous requests to place excerpts from DA literature on websites and in books, research papers, etc. The committee is creating a clear and consistent policy that

can be used to address these types of requests.

--All writers and other contributors to DA literature and the website now sign a release, assuring that what they produce becomes and remains the property of Debtors Anonymous.

--A subcommittee is reviewing all situations in which a legally binding contract is required, such as work-for-hire, paid services, translations, etc.

Literature Services

Literature Services is a subcommittee of Literature Publications, and is charged with overseeing the production of DA literature that has been proposed by the World Service Conference Literature Committee, and approved by the Conference. It does this by inviting, interviewing, and choosing writers for projects, reviewing samples or first drafts, and passing them on to the Literature Publications Committee for review and approval. If necessary, the completed project also goes to the General Service Board for approval.

Literature Services works with writers on an ongoing basis, providing feedback and editing as needed. Following is the status of ongoing projects that are being handled by Literature Services.

Completed Projects

--Spanish translation (Deudores Anonimos) of the pamphlet Debtors Anonymous: Complete and now for sale through the General Service Office.

--Communicating With Creditors/Debt Repayment: The consolidation of what were two separate pamphlets was completed and approved by the 2009 Conference. It is now being formatted for printing.

--A Guide To Special Events: This is a piece of service literature that is complete, and now available as a free download from the DA website.

--How To Start An Intergroup: This piece of service literature was approved by the GSB in January and will soon be available as a free download on the website.

Literature In Process

--Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions book: A writer was chosen in 2009, and to date has submitted drafts of the first five Steps. The first three Steps have been reviewed by Literature Services and returned to the writer with suggestions. Literature Services will soon be seeking to find an editor who can focus exclusively on the book.

--Twelve Step Study Guide: This project is on hold until the

completion of the Twelve & Twelve.

--DA Daily Meditation Book: This huge project was moved to Literature Services in 2009 from its former home, a sub-committee of the WSC Literature Committee. It was put on hold pending publication of the Twelve & Twelve, while the committee attempts to find ways to handle a huge number of separate files created by different writers using different styles and formats. It has recommended that the GSB ultimately hire an editor/writer to complete the book.

--DA Basic Text/Big Book: Another very large project, this has been put on hold until publication of the Twelve & Twelve.

--Newcomers Packet: After extensive feedback on the first draft, the writer has agreed to start this pamphlet over from scratch. When completed, this will also incorporate material pertaining to Business Debtors Anonymous.

--PRG/PRM pamphlet: A revision of this pamphlet was requested and approved by the WSC. A new writer is being sought to perform the revision.

--BDA Clarity in Business Finance pamphlet: A first draft is being reviewed, and recommendations for changes will be given to the writer shortly.

--BDA Numbers pamphlet: The writer is expected to submit a first draft in the near future.

--Annual BDA Business Plan: A second draft has been submitted by the writer. Both literature committees are encouraged at the direction the publication is taking.

--BDA Signposts & Tools: A first draft of this pamphlet is currently being reviewed.

--Beginners Meeting/Business Meeting formats: Literature Services is soliciting feedback from groups about the way meetings are run. A writer will be selected after sufficient experience is collected.

Tabled Projects

--Relationships, Debt, and Money: This project was tabled by the 2007 WSC. Some ideas relative to this topic may eventually be included in the Basic Text/Big Book project.

--Income Plan pamphlet: Tabled by the WSC Literature Committee due to a lack of interest and because an income plan is not one of DA's Tools.

--BDA Newcomer pamphlet: In the spirit of DA unity, this material will be included as part of the DA Newcomer Packet.

DA Pioneer Donald A. Meets With Trustees

During its visit earlier this year to the Washington, DC area, the DA General Service Board had a special opportunity to visit with Donald A., one of the giants of DA history. Donald was one of the founders of both the Pro-Tem Board of Trustees in March 1982 and the permanent General Service Board established in September 1982. He served as the first chair of the GSB for several years, and is widely regarded as the DA member most responsible for the establishment of the annual World Service Conference in 1987.

Donald, who had joined DA when there were only four meetings in the entire world, regaled the board with stories of the program's early days, during a dinner in his honor. Trustees learned a great deal about the Fellowship's early history, and heard Donald express his gratitude for DA's strict focus on its singleness of purpose in its early years. "If DA hadn't been so strict about not debting, I would not have the incredible life I have today," he said.

Donald was one of the earliest original members to leave the New York area, where DA was founded, to bring the program to other parts of the country. He was active in forming DA groups in Baltimore and Washington, and instrumental in the founding and growth of the Capital Area DA Intergroup. He says that as the result of his involvement in Debtors Anonymous over many years, he has work that he loves, the opportunity to travel and live in beautiful places, and a very enjoyable life.

The DA Focus

Produced by the General Service Board of Debtors Anonymous

PO Box 920888
Needham, MA 02492-0009

Phone: 781-453-2743
1-800-421-2383 in the U.S.
Fax: 781-453-2745
Email: office@debtorsanonymous.org
www.debtorsanonymous.org

General Service Board Meets Past, Plans For The Future At DC F2F

DA's General Service Board traveled to Washington DC in January for a look at DA's past and some decisions on its future. The board met for four days of business meetings at its annual Face-To-Face session, normally held in the late winter or early spring. The board also meets in person at the annual World Service Conference each August to conduct business in a concentrated manner.

The trip to the nation's capital was the first for the trustees since 1989, when Washington was the location for the third annual World Service Conference. Washington was one of DA's four early growth centers in the U.S.

As is its custom, the board visited a local DA meeting in suburban Virginia on Friday night, and dined with members of the local DA Fellowship afterward. It received feedback from members on a number of issues of concern, and answered many questions.

The board also had a chance to revisit some of the earliest days of DA's history, by meeting with the first chair of the General Service Board, dating from the GSB's founding in the early 1980s (see related story).

During several business sessions, the board conducted its annual inventory, in which it discussed in detail what it is doing well to serve DA, and the things it could be doing better. It also tackled several important pieces of business. It:

--Allocated \$1,600 for a project by the WSC HIP Committee to mail copies of A Currency Of Hope to all federal prisons.

--Rejected as a violation of the Traditions a proposal by the WSC Internal Operations Committee that DA accept credit cards, but left the door open to the expansion of eCommerce options for literature sales and contributions if systems become available to distinguish debit or check cards from credit cards.

--Finalized the official report of the 2009 World Service Conference in Dallas, and the registration packet for the 2010 Conference in Denver. Both have since been posted on the DA website.

--Developed a tracking system for funds allocated for WSC scholarships under the John Henderson Scholarship program.

--Revised the Board's 2009-2010 spending plan to reflect midyear financial adjustments.

The annual Face To Face is held in a different city each year. The GSB, in addition to carrying on its administrative role, attempts to act as ambassadors to the Fellowship, particularly in areas where DA groups and Intergroups are growing or need support. Recent F2F meetings have been held in Florida, Toronto, Houston, and Portland, Oregon.