

## July 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](http://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](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org).



#### The revised pamphlet “Pressure Relief Groups & Pressure Relief Meetings” is available for purchase.



Individual contributions made out directly to the GSO or GSB are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

## The 2013 World Service Conference

On Wednesday evening, August 14, the 2013 Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference will begin. The General Service Board will report to the GSRs and ISRs, and, through them, to the Fellowship. The Board committees and WSC committees and caucuses will present their reports to the delegates, along with recommendations to the 2013–14 committees.

Many committee members worked throughout the 2012–13 Conference year, attending monthly conference calls, addressing their agendas, and responding to the Fellowship’s Issues & Concerns. Tens of thousands of dollars went into collection baskets to bring the voting members of the Conference—the Office Manager, delegates, and trustees—to Phoenix. Delegates and trustees will have used their vacation time or foregone income to be there. With the continuous support of the GSB Conference Support Committee, the 2013 WSC Host Committee will have worked for a year, selecting the hotel, planning meals, seeing to audiovisual and other tech needs, and organizing the Saturday Fellowship Day. Beginning days before the Conference, the Host Committee and numbers of volunteers, some of them from hours away, will support the Conference members from early in the morning (the first Conscious Contact sessions) until late at night (when the Tech and Hospitality rooms close).

The World Service Conference—affectionately known as the Mother of All Business Meetings—is the central annual event of Debtors Anonymous worldwide, the product of thousands of hours and dollars in resources. And for what? To support the debtor in recovery, welcome the newcomer, and reach the debtor devastated by this ruthless compulsion but still unaware of Debtors Anonymous. For four and a half days, more than one hundred people will give

themselves up to the process of determining the group conscience, our highest authority. We will draw on our recovery, imagination, talents, generosity, and good will to labor together in a common purpose. Many of us will experience the deep rewards of service: the light heart of unselfishness, the love for sufferers we will never meet, trust in people who were strangers just a few days before.

The tremendous achievements of the 2012–13 Conference reflect a process born of profound humility, as committee members seek the group conscience that is our ultimate authority, freely accepting the constraints of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts—constraints that are only suggestions, often ambiguous, sometimes paradoxical, but always practical and expansively spiritual. After all, what do we learn from the daily experience of going to any length to refrain from incurring unsecured debt if not about the freedom on the other side of constraint?

We are no more “saints” than the early A.A.’s cited in chapter five of the “Big Book.” Working with others is difficult, and the processes may at times seem interminable before they give fruit. Yet, those sometimes glacially slow procedures leave room for many views and thereby for a power greater than any of us. In the end, seemingly miraculously, unity—substantial unanimity—is reached.

And perhaps no principle requires more faith and more humility than the principle of rotation, the willingness to walk away, to change committee, when our time is up and *know* that the work may or may not proceed as we envision it, but that it abides and thrives through our collective endeavor over time and in the steady, enduring light of a power greater than ourselves.

## General Service Board Committee Reports

### Audit Committee

No report.

### Communications

ComCom voted to mail the “Web Site Resources List” (available on the home page) with *the DA Focus* once a year. A letter summarizing the “preamble situation” was also mailed with the current issue of the *Focus*. ComCom hopes that the group contacts will share mailings with their groups. The committee continues to study the possibility of making recordings of Fellowship-wide calls available entirely or in part, in order to reach more members, especially outside the US and Canada. Another ComCom task is to inform members accessing links to Intergroups that the presence of the links does not imply a blanket Board endorsement of all Intergroup activities. This is in response to reports of some Intergroup-sponsored activities that don’t observe the Twelve Traditions; two examples are sales of non-Conference-approved literature at Intergroup-sponsored events and charging for service such as giving Pressure Relief Meetings. ComCom invites all D.A. members to subscribe to the eNews.

### Conference Support

No report.

### Finance

Financial reports have been completed for July 2012 through May 2013. As a reminder, the reason why we’re reporting on that period is because our FY13 fiscal year started on July 1, 2012. For the eleven-month period, Total Revenue was \$204,960.97, and the Total Surplus, after Cost of Goods Sold and all Expenses, was \$14,722.82. This is \$16,530.95 ahead of plan.

- Group Contributions are slightly below plan, while Individual and John H. Contributions are ahead of plan.
- Pamphlet sales are 12% below plan, and book sales are 33% below plan, but these amounts are offset by lower Printing, Pro-

duction, and Shipping expenses. The offset preserves our Gross Margin, which is only 1.5% below plan.

- General and Office Expenses are on plan.
- General Service Board Expenses are \$5,000 below plan.
- The 2012 World Service Conference generated a net surplus of \$8,700. The Board applied \$3,000 of the 2012 conference surplus to the 2013 conference. This resulted in a reduction of the 2013 conference registration fee of approximately \$30 per delegate versus what it would’ve otherwise been.

The Finance Committee looks forward to working with and learning from new and returning GSRs and ISRs at the upcoming World Service Conference (WSC). As Tradition Seven says, spirituality and money can mix—in the basket!

### Information Technology

We have made a number of short-term fixes to the site so far this Conference year, such as fixing broken links as they are found, and moving material to more appropriate pages. Updates have also included additions to the “En Español” page, and a greatly increased use of the “Events” page. In all, we have made more than 50 changes to the site, most of which would not be noticed by the average visitor.

The number-one request from the Fellowship is for greater searchability of the meeting database. There are appeals for options that the current database is not equipped to handle. These include time zones, area codes, language, A.D.A. accessibility, BDA meetings, and more. The GSB Information Technology Committee is working in conjunction with our General Service Office and database-management vendor to accomplish all that is being requested. A complete revamp of the meeting registration form will be required.

### International

International has picked up the Communication Committee’s project—originally a response to several committees’ recommendations—to post Spanish-language texts and meeting information on the D.A.

web site, [www.debtorsanonymous.com](http://www.debtorsanonymous.com). In accordance with the Board’s legal responsibility, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are adapted from A.A.’s approved translations. Members will also find a translation of “A Word to Newcomers,” which some groups are using in place of the adapted A.A. Preamble. The International Committee’s long-range plan is to follow these with translations of the same materials in French, followed by the other languages of the Fellowship: Danish, German, Hebrew, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian. With the International Caucus, the committee is looking for a way to use the web site to encourage groups and Intergroups outside the US and Canada to register with the General Service Office. Welcome to three new Intergroups: Australasia, Italy, and Northern Spain!

### Legal Affairs

The committee vetted the hotel contracts for the 2013 and 2014 WSC; proposed and coordinated a thorough review of the GSB Bylaws and quorum consultation with outside counsel; and developed a “Library of Shared Experience” to ensure consistent responses from GSB committee to GSB committee, year to year. The Board approved the “Password Protection Policy” developed by the committee. Legal Affairs responded to use of the D.A. name on other websites and in chatrooms and to copyright infringement of our literature by another fellowship; clarified the use of the D.A. trademark by Intergroups; and responded to requests from groups, Intergroups, and other countries to reprint the Steps, Traditions, Tools, and Concepts, as well as to other requests to print the D.A. logo on anniversary chips, buttons, T-shirts and other paraphernalia. Legal Affairs formulated the “Tax-Deductible Statement” that the General Service Office will use on receipts for contributions from individual members. The Committee is still seeking an Appointed Committee Member; please see “Open Service Positions” at

www.debtorsanonymous.org.

### Literature Publications

Here are some highlights of the Literature Publications Committee's current projects: The pamphlet "Deudores Anónimos" has been revised to accord with the English version. We hope to print before current stock is depleted. Lit Pub has received the final draft of the Twelve Traditions. The Twelve Steps are currently being reviewed by the World Service Conference (WSC) Literature Committee (Lit Com). The manuscript for the second edition of *A Currency of Hope* is with a designer. We have received bids from printers. We have sent out the "Health Issue" survey; the results will be sent to the 2013–14 WSC Lit Com. The "Newcomer's Packet" will be submitted to the 2013–14 WSC Lit Com for approval. We continue to review our literature for plagiarism; we will ask the 2013–14 WSC Lit Com to approve our suggestion to remove the A.A. language from the D.A. Promises and to bring that as a motion to the 2013 World Service Conference.

### Long-Range Planning

We discussed audio recording of national call-in events and conferred with the Information Technology Committee on the logistics of doing so. There were numerous updates made to the 2013 *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service*. 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. The archivist provides monthly reports to the committee. The committee began preliminary planning for D.A.'s 40th anniversary celebration in 2016. For a small monthly expense, 20 GB of memory were added to the Board's GoogleDrive repository for audio files and long-term archival storage. In terms of international outreach, Allen A. attended a D.A. meeting in a suburb of Tokyo and answered members' questions about

World Service.

### Nominations

The Nominations Committee recommended and obtained the Board's approval of three Class A candidates for ratification at the World Service Conference in Phoenix this August, Lawand C., Maureen C. (no relation), and Michael A. NomCom is currently reviewing an application from a Class B (non-debtor) candidate. There is one more opening for a Class A trustee and two for Class Bs. The committee has also recommended that the Board explore the financial and practical consequences of approving one or more candidates from outside the U.S. and Canada. The committee has begun revising the GSB By-laws in accordance with recommendations from a counsel hired by the Legal Affairs Committee, in order to make it adhere more clearly to New York State not-for-profit corporate law.

### Office

The Office Committee continues to work closely with the General Service Office (GSO) Manager, to find ways to improve the services given to the groups, and D.A. as a whole. The following are some ways in which we are moving toward achieving those goals. The GSB approved hiring a part-time employee to aid the Office Manager (OM) in the daily operations. The OM is actively seeking someone with the level of expertise and reliability needed to serve the D.A. Fellowship. The Office Committee continues, with other GSB committees, to work toward greater efficiency in receiving online contributions and literature orders, as well as the registration process of groups and Intergroups, and developing online registration for all D.A. WSCs. Office continues to strive to meet the needs of communication and services to the international community who may be reaching out to D.A.

### Public Information

The GSB PI Committee has spent this conference year focused on revising and updating the Public Information Manual. The final touches are being added and will get a final review in July. We hope to have the manual complete and posted on our D.A. web site in time for the 2013 World Service Conference.

## WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE COMMITTEES AND CAUCUSES

### Business Debtors Anonymous

The 2012–13 BDA Committee comprises three subcommittees: Spiritual Marketing, Visions and Vocations, and Debtors with Variable Income (DVI).

The Spiritual Marketing Subcommittee performed a pilot test, applying the Twelve Steps to marketing oneself or one's business. The subcommittee is also exploring how to formalize an ongoing support system for group action and accountability planning, to reinforce healthy, spiritually aligned marketing actions.

The Visions and Vocation Subcommittee is reviewing a document that will apply the Twelve Steps to actualizing visions and vocations that suit us spiritually and financially.

The DVI Subcommittee addressed the issue of fluctuating incomes. The subcommittee studied D.A. literature and prepared a questionnaire that they disseminated to a cross-section of our Fellowship to determine how our members deal with this situation without incurring unsecured debt. An article based on this study was published in the April issue of *Ways & Means*.

### Fellowship Communications

In the past quarter, the FCC has continued its initiative of exploring the Fellowship-wide conference-call format as a tool for information, inspiration, and ultimately carrying the message to the debtor who still suffers. The FCC has requested that the GSB look into and consider the possibility of posting audio recordings or portions of these valuable calls on the D.A. web site. In keeping with the FCC's redefined mission of "facilitating communication and promoting collaboration" among all facets of the fellowship, they have shared the conference-call format, offered support, and encouraged other WSC committees to co-host (with the GSB) their own Fellowship-wide calls. June 30 marks the second



## WSC Committee and Caucus Reports and Office Reports

Fellowship-wide call this year. The topic was "Outreach Through Social Media"—exploring the topic of how social media are being used, or might be used, to carry the message within the guidelines of D.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

### Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons

Three HIP-related stories were forwarded to the *Ways & Means*; one has been published so far. The committee also sent out a Fellowship-wide call for further HIP-related D.A. stories. A standard outreach letter to HIPs/HIP professionals created by the committee was approved by the GSB. The committee also drafted a follow-up response/phone script. A standard "Letter to a D.A. Member in a HIP" and the protocol for its usage were also approved by the Board. To date, 83 letters have been sent to various HIPs, including county jails, federal and state prisons, parole offices, courthouses, and in-patient rehabs. The HIP committee generated a list of all jails and prisons in the UK.

### Intergroup Caucus

No report.

### Internal Operations

No report.

### International Caucus

No report.

### Literature

The 2012–13 Literature Committee completed their agenda, including responding to the Issues & Concerns assigned to us. Lit Com made recommendations about the draft "BDA Annual Business Plan" pamphlet; drafted a Responsibility Pledge; began a series of articles on D.A.'s history; created a Lit Com manual outlining how we operated, to be passed on to the 2013–14 Literature Committee; combed previous years' WSC motions and recommendations for items that had fallen by the wayside; got out a Health Care and Solvency survey that will determine the need for a pamphlet on the subject, and published a Call for Writers that resulted in an immedi-

ate response from three writers. Perhaps most importantly, the 2012–13 Literature Committee reviewed the Twelve Steps in final draft form. We made very few recommended changes to the writing, but did craft a small number of questions to follow each Step in an effort to increase ease in working them.

### Public Information

No report.

### Resource Development

We have maintained most of our original members. During the past quarter, the 2012–13 RDC has made headway on several initiatives. The GSB approved the RDC's On-Line Bill Pay Awareness announcement and sent it out as an eblast on June 6, 2013. The announcement is intended to explain how easy and convenient it is to contribute to the D.A. GSB using on-line banking. As a follow-up to the Bill Pay announcement, we have commenced efforts to contact telephone and on-line meeting secretaries to announce this contribution option as part of their meeting format, since Seventh Tradition contributions for such meetings are typically sent to the D.A. GSB. We reviewed and approved minor edits to the D.A. Treasurer's Manual, including a section relating to on-line Bill Pay options.

### Technical

Our Website Subcommittee created a site where they are testing the functionality of different elements for the new website. From this the subcommittee will prepare recommendations for what the GSB Information Technology Committee should include in a Request for Proposal to website developers. The Usability Subcommittee is conducting usability tests of the current D.A. site and will present recommendations for the new site based on their findings. The Web App Subcommittee completed their research and presented their report to the full Technology Committee, with plans to introduce a motion or recommendation to the full Conference at the WSC in August.

### 2013 WSC Host Committee

We have been very busy over the past few months. The Fellowship Day flyer was created and sent to D.A. groups around the region including southern California, whose Intergroup has put it up on their website. Volunteers are filling various positions. We have a Recording Secretary. The John H. Scholarships have been awarded. Lastly, we met via conference call with the hotel, going over their process leading up to the Conference and during.

Moving forward, we are gathering / creating the materials and getting ready to print these for the delegate binders. A binder party is scheduled for the second week of August. The Logistics and Host committee chairs will be meeting at the hotel to go over the detail of events and rooms needed. The Registration/Convocation chair and her committees are also meeting at the hotel for a rehearsal. The recording company has been sent the Fellowship Day and Convocation schedules.

### Events

#### 2013 World Service Conference Orientation Calls

The GSB invites all D.A. members to a 90-minute phone meeting in preparation for attendance at the 2013 WSC. The call will be offered on two dates, **July 14th** and **August 4th**. For details, see the "Events" page at [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org).



### Service Positions

#### The D.A. GSB Is Seeking

1 Class A (recovering-debtor) Trustee, 2 Class B (nondebtor) Trustees, and several Appointed Committee Members (ACMs). **All positions are on a volunteer basis.**

See "Open Service Positions"

at

[www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org)

and the

*Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service (DAMS).*

### Lawanda C., Class A Trustee

When I came to D.A., no one but me knew how bad things had really gotten. I was very good at pretending, keeping secrets and keeping up appearances. I owned my home and I had a nice car that I was making payments on and a nice job. I was earning just under \$48,000 a year. My bills seemed to be getting paid, and my children seemed to have all they needed.

What no one knew was that I was struggling financially every day of my life. I was three months behind on my mortgage, two months behind on my car note, and two months behind in all my other bills, including the utilities. I was living paycheck to paycheck, robbing Peter to pay Paul. I had no savings or contingency fund. I got paid on Friday and was broke by Saturday because I used 90 percent of my income to pay my creditors. I didn't take vacations or buy new clothes or shoes.

In 2004 it all started to fall apart. All the years of overspending and debting were finally catching up with me. I was expecting my third child and convinced myself that I needed a bigger home. I was already in debt—I had taken out two separate loans from my bank, borrowed from my 401K, and gotten loans from two family members just so I could get this house. In November I went on maternity leave. All along I had been misreading my benefits information. I thought I would collect 100 percent of my salary for four weeks before the baby was born and 60 percent for the eight to ten weeks after. I was wrong: it was 60 percent for the entire leave.

I had failed to save money for the time when my salary would be cut. I couldn't keep up with the mortgage payments, but, you know, somehow I wasn't worried. I figured I would get help through various programs to catch me up. I returned to work in January 2005. My mother offered me a loan. I happily took the money and caught the mortgage up.

The mortgage fell behind again. I was able to catch it up with my federal tax return, but the next month I couldn't make the payment. I stopped making mortgage payments altogether, thinking somewhere there existed some "magic" help for people like me. Through housing counseling I discovered my income was insufficient for any of the programs. You see, what I didn't know was that these programs worked on the principle that once the help was given, the person would assume normal payments on their own. I was shown that my expenses far outweighed my income, so even if help was given me I would end up falling behind again.

By now I was in D.A. I was honest about not being able to afford my mortgage payments. In the end I decided to put the house up for sale. A bank appraised the house and agreed to accept the appraised amount as payment in full.

I had further to fall. In 2005 I "borrowed" \$700.00 that didn't belong to me. I was sponsoring a trip to Niagara Falls, collecting money for the trip and placing the money in my personal savings account. I was writing bad checks, but they were not bouncing because the bank was taking the money from the savings account to cover them. I had every intention of paying the money back, but stuff just kept happening.

In April 2005 I was involved in a car accident. When the insurance company sent the checks directly to me, I couldn't help but "borrow" from that money. I knew it was for the car, repairs yet I felt compelled to take it. Finally my car was repaired, and I was short \$700.00. I stole the \$700.00 from the Niagara Falls money to pay for my car. I knew then for sure I was in serious trouble, where money was concerned. I wish I could say, this was it, I was done, but I wasn't. My life continued to spiral out of control. The insanity came to an end December 16, 2008. I was plain sick and tired of being sick and tired. This was no way to live, and it was hell on my children.

I kicked my D.A. recovery into high gear. I started having regular PRGs, taking my Steps, and using the Tools. I had a sponsor. The thing that really made a difference to my recovery was doing service. I started small, setting up the literature for my meetings, creating a template to be used for our calling sheet, setting up the chairs. The service grew to me chairing meetings, being part of PRGs, and sponsoring others. I took on more service, being the GSR for my group and attending WSCs, becoming the Business Chair of the NJ/PA Intergroup. Being Chair of the NJ/PA Intergroup, I thought that was it for me, servicewise. However, HP had other plans, and I was asked point blank if I had ever considered being a Trustee. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would reach this level of service, but today here I am, a Class A Trustee of the General Service Board. I am moved beyond words to serve in this capacity.

### Maureen C., Class A Trustee

My name is Maureen and I am a debtor and a new member of the D.A. General Service Board. I LOVE being a Trustee. It is a dream come true, and I want to tell you why, to inspire you to do service at every level at some point in your recovery in D.A.: personal, group, Intergroup, and World Service. Every level I have worked on has been gratifying and rewarding and I am not special, meaning I am a compulsive debtor through and through. Only through the Tools and the Steps, and now the Traditions and Concepts of D.A., have I been able to maintain and achieve solvency and practice these spiritual principles in all my affairs, minute-to-minute.

When I came into D.A. in Burlington, Vermont, ten years ago, I was surrounded by members there and in New York who gave fantastic, endlessly generous service to me, the groups, and D.A. as a whole. They were role models and encouraged me to believe that I could and must do the same. To quote one of those “old-timers,” “If you have a spiritual awakening in this program, you can’t stop you from carrying this message of recovery.” That is what happened to me. Doing service in D.A. has changed me, and it continues to be a joy and a privilege. The same will happen for you.

The “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous tells us to describe our “personal adventures.” I was Twelve-Stepped by a D.A. member in another fellowship after I shared/joked about bouncing checks and living beyond my means. She told me I “thought like a debtor.” I had no idea what she was talking about but I followed her to the D.A. meeting which immediately followed the meeting we were in. I was hooked from the beginning. These people spoke my language, explained my pain, and were compassionate, wise, and strict.

There were three meetings a week, which I attended. I bought *A Currency of Hope* (after I got the \$8 I needed to buy the book because they wouldn’t let me “borrow” it) and read it cover to cover. I was blown away that I was not alone in my thinking, behaviors, confusion, bafflement, isolation, and fear. I was also blown away by the hope and recovery I read about. It seemed like a miracle to live without debting but also to travel, buy cars, go on vacation, also all with cash. Most importantly to laugh and have fun and have a Higher Power who also wanted those things for you.

With members from Burlington D.A. I attended retreats at the Bill Wilson House and went to Share-a-Day in New York, the New England Intergroup Conference in Boston, and the 2005 WSC Fellowship Day in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. I was in love with D.A., and my life changed very quickly. I got PRGs and then amazingly I started giving PRGs. I sat in on PRGs with my sponsor and learned from her how to read numbers, how to offer solutions, how to be compassionate, clear, and firm about what solvency was and the ultimate importance of it. Because of a PRG where I mentioned I had no savings, retirement, or health insurance I was told to finish a professional licensing process by the end of the year. When I did that I moved to Manhattan when I was two years in D.A., and that is when I started moving service to a new level.

I began to carry the message of all that I had learned about solvency and service and the literature. I joined a new home group, sponsored, put my name on the We Care sheets to give PRGs, took Step-study groups, and led a Step study. I chaired meetings, helped with the treasury and the literature tables. It was huge for my self-esteem and happiness to feel I could contribute to D.A. and break my sense of isolation and loneliness.

I was nominated to be a GSR in my home group in New York, the Writers Group, and that led to huge new evolution in my knowledge of D.A. Attending the 2010 World Service Conference in Denver was incredible, fascinating, informative, and fun. Again I was even more hooked. I joined the Resource Development Committee and learned even more. Because of the confidence, financial reserves, and courage I was attaining in D.A. I moved to the West Coast, the San Francisco Bay Area two and a half years ago.

I served as an Appointed Committee Meeting on the Finance Committee. I attended those monthly conference calls for one and a half years, and four months ago I was accepted as a Trustee. I love everything about it: the people, the work, the history, the processes, learning the Concepts and Traditions more deeply. On a personal level, I am working with a Concepts and Traditions sponsor, a former trustee, to guide and teach me. With my regular D.A. sponsor I am working Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve on a daily basis to be “happy, joyous, and free,” in addition to free from compulsive debting.

If I can do this, so can you. Please do service to support D.A.

### Michael A., Class A Trustee

The year 2007 was a very difficult one for me. The depth and breadth of my compulsive debting had finally caught up with me. I was nearly \$100,000 in credit-card debt. I owed \$80,000 in taxes. I had a mortgage payment of \$6,500 a month, which left me with little or no money for monthly expenses. To make myself feel better, I used my credit cards to go on trips or dine at fine restaurants or shop and shop and shop. By December of that year, my badly worn veneer of normalcy cracked, leaving me isolated, hopeless, ashamed, and suicidal.

By a miracle, I was offered the hand of Debtors Anonymous. It coaxed me out of isolation. It enveloped me with hope and compassion. I was told there was a program to help me with my problem, a program based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. In my powerlessness, I began to want to live again. With my faith in the Twelve Steps, day by day, I am returning to a place of spirit and light.

Aside from getting a sponsor and working the Steps, one of my biggest tethers to D.A. has been service. From the very beginning, I started doing anything I could do to help out . . . tea service, set-up, and signage. I wanted to be of service because I didn't want to debt. I suppose that's just how things work for me. I haven't had to incur new unsecured debt since January 7, 2008. I didn't think much beyond service at the group level until one of the long-timers from my home group suggested that I take on the group's GSR position. I was nervous and scared and bewildered that anyone would even trust me to do that job. After much mental deliberation, I placed my faith in the hands of my Higher Power and accepted the position. The experience has been amazing and gratifying. It is an experience for which I am immensely grateful.

I understand that the position of Trustee to the DA GSB can be a delicate balance of significance and humility. The idea of applying to the position has been swirling around the very back of my consciousness for a couple of years now. For a long time, I didn't think I would ever be capable of that kind of service, and my heart closed to the idea.

Every day that I have lived in a place of spirit and light, my ego crumbles, and my willingness to be of service grows. Today, right now, my heart is wide open to the beloved Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous and to being of service as a GSB Trustee. Today, just as in the beginning of my D.A. journey, I am willing to be of service as my Higher Power sees fit.

# Concept Two

*The D.A. groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to the General Service Board. The groups have made the Conference the voice and conscience for the whole Fellowship, excepting for any change in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and in Article 10, the General Warranties, of the Conference Charter.*

The idea of trust is basic to this Concept. It informs us that the groups have made the decision to place their trust in the World Service Conference and the General Service Board to make the best decisions for the Fellowship in all matters of administration and operation of D.A. The Second Tradition points out that our leaders are “trusted servants.” They do not order or direct members or their groups. Instead, they are to listen and try to carry out the will of the groups, but they receive the trust of the groups to discern the best ways, within the context of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, to implement that will. Under this Concept, the General Service Board is given great freedom and flexibility in carrying out the business of the D.A. Fellowship. The Board has the corresponding obligation to act carefully and prudently.

It is obvious that, in most matters, the groups can exercise neither policy-making nor operational authority directly in implementing the group conscience. Because of this, this Concept recognizes that the groups must act through the Conference, which they have made the voice and conscience of the whole Fellowship. This Concept thus trusts the Conference to act in a way that represents the informed opinions of the groups and their members.

As Concept 8 states, primary leadership in overall policy matters rests with the General Service Board. However, leadership that acts without listening to advice is neither wise nor prudent. Since the Conference is the collective voice and conscience of the Fellowship, the Board has an obligation to listen to and, in all but the most extreme cases, to heed that advice. (For example, when the Conference adopted a motion to direct how outside literature should be used at meetings, the GSB refused to implement this directive on the ground that it violated several Traditions.) It is expected that this duty will arise whenever the Conference acts with substantial unanimity, that is, by a two-thirds vote. Even in those cases where the Conference is unable to muster a two-thirds vote for a course of action, the General Service Board has the duty to listen to the opinions expressed and, in appropriate cases, to moderate or change course to reflect what has been discussed.

In three areas, however, the groups have retained their authority over the Conference and General Service Board. These matters are regarded as so basic to the D.A. Program of recovery, to D.A. unity, and to the effectiveness of service that no action should be taken without the expressed consent of the groups. These three areas are changes to the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and Article 10 (the General Warranties) of the Conference Charter. Here, the Conference Charter recognizes that the World Service Conference may not act to change these fundamental principles unless three-quarters of the D.A. groups grant their permission to do so.

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