

July, 2017

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT

The World Service Conference (WSC) will be asked at its August meeting to approve amending the Conference Charter by adding the italicized language to Paragraph 6 of the Charter:

6. The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in a location selected by the Conference. *The Conference may adopt a policy permitting some or all otherwise-eligible delegates who are unable to attend in person to participate remotely. The Board, in implementing the policy, may modify it if necessary to ensure its effectiveness.* The site of the annual meeting will be selected yearly, at least two years in advance. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may render advisory opinions at any time by mail, email, or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.

The amendment has been proposed by this year's WSC Conference Committee (CC), which has written these answers to frequently asked questions about it.

Why is remote participation in the WSC being entertained? Doesn't it raise thorny issues of anonymity, procedure at the WSC, and how to keep remote participation from draining the conference of a critical mass of in-person delegates?

Many of these issues were debated in August, 2016, at the most recent WSC. The proposal has come up in the context of the need to find ways for delegates from meetings in Europe and Asia to participate in the critical work of the WSC and its committees, as the ability of such meetings to send a delegate to the United States is a rare exception. The Conference decided to do a *small-scale* trial of remote participation in order to see if it is workable. The various potential challenges are now on the table not as reasons to avoid trying it out — a decision already made by the WSC — but as matters to be worked out in the course of doing so.

Moreover, DA is operating at a significant deficit this year, relying on part of our prudent reserve. We think that better supporting the international character of the Fellowship could potentially increase our membership and, therefore, improve our finances.

Why is there a need for a Charter Amendment?

This, too, was debated at last year's WSC. The group conscience accepted a ruling of the Chair that the current language of Paragraph 6, in referring to "meetings," implicitly requires delegates who have the right to vote to meet together physically.

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PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT (cont.)

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The motion mandating a small-scale trial of remote participation was, therefore, amended to call for a 2018 trial, rather than a trial this year, in order to allow time for the Charter to be amended. Thus the CC believes that the 2016 WSC tasked us with proposing an amendment.

Why is the proposed amendment so vague about who may participate remotely?

The “some or all” language permits flexibility in implementation without a need for further amendment of the Charter, which is a cumbersome and expensive process. Without such flexibility, the only way to limit the 2018 experiment to a small-scale trial would be to put that in the charter, and any future change would then require yet another amendment and a consequent delay of two years before remote participation could be expanded (or terminated if it turned out to be unworkable).

Moreover, there is a question of whether to permit remote participation by delegates from North American groups that are too small or otherwise unable to raise the funds to send an in-person delegate. This is an interesting question with serious pros and cons. For example, it may be unfair to permit a small Malaysian meeting to have a delegate participate remotely, while a small Alabama meeting that similarly finds sending a delegate economically out of its reach is not given the same opportunity. And yet how could we let economic considerations alone determine eligibility without permitting so many delegates to shift to remote participation that the WSC becomes a shadow of its former self, given that it now mobilizes such powerful energies for hard work, creativity, and respectfully arriving at a group conscience because delegates are assembling together?

We believe that these, too, are matters that future WSCs, with the help of study and recommendations from the CC and the Conference Support Committee of the General Service Board, need to have the flexibility to work out, as well as change when necessary. Otherwise, further deliberation and experience would require having to once again change something that was inflexibly enshrined in the Charter when we lacked enough foreknowledge to know how to handle it.

Why does the second added sentence give the Board the right to change a remote-participation policy adopted by the WSC?

Numerous parts of the Charter and the Concepts for World Service give the Board day-to-day operational authority over the affairs the Fellowship, including, in unusual circumstances, to directly overrule decisions taken at the WSC. This is a power that we have seen exercised rarely and with great caution.

With new and ever-changing technology and procedures available to organizations which permit some members to join deliberations remotely, the process of implementing a policy adopted at the WSC may disclose particulars in which the policy is unwise or unworkable. The sentence in question is meant neither to make the WSC's policy merely advisory nor to shift any work that would normally be done by the Host and Conference Committees to the Board. Rather, it recognizes the Board's oversight over what we do and allows that body to authorize the committees involved to make necessary adjustments between the annual meetings of the Conference, as they seek to implement its policies.

What should we do if we still have questions or concerns?

Email them to the General Service Office (office@debtorsanonymous.org), with a request that your message be forwarded to the WSC Conference Committee. We will contact you directly with our reply.

General Service Board Committee Reports

Audit Committee

The GSB Audit Committee's primary responsibility is overseeing the accounting and financial reporting processes of the GSB and the annual review or audit of the GSB's financial statements. Additionally, the Audit Committee has oversight responsibility for selected GSB policies and internal controls.

The Audit Committee is responsible for retaining an Independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to prepare the annual financial statement review or audit and to complete the GSB's federal and New York State tax returns.

The committee is required to seek competitive bids for CPA services every five years. We have used our current CPA firm for four years, so we will be begin that process in the spring of 2018. The GSB Audit Committee has recommended that we use our current CPA firm for review and tax preparation for FY18.

The committee is also responsible for ensuring that the Finance Committee, together with the CPA firm, have filed the tax returns each fiscal year by the November 15 deadline.

The Audit Committee also reviews and updates, as needed, the Composition, Scope and Procedure document, following guidelines for non-profit organizations incorporated in the State of New York.

Conference Support Committee

The Conference Support Committee has been busy getting organized for the upcoming World Service Conference this August 23-27 in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. We've been getting reports ready for the GSRs, ISRs, Trustees, and Office Manager; assisting the DFW Host Committee; counting registrations and registration fees; and working with the hotel staff to en-

sure a healthy and productive conference.

You may also know that the WSC Conference Committee is looking for a host for the 2018 and/or 2019 WSCs. If your group or intergroup is interested, please see the last two pages of this year's Registration Packet on the D.A. website.

We hope to see you in Texas!

Finance Committee

Overview

The members of the Finance Committee are Alexandra BW, chair and GSB treasurer; Michalene R., GSB assistant treasurer; and Allen T., secretary and ex officio member as chair of the GSB. The Committee welcomes Jackie D., who joined the committee in June as an Appointed Committee Member (ACM). The committee is active in several ongoing projects. One, with the GSB Information Technology Committee (Info Tech), is the debit-card option for the website. Another is the exploration of licensing the publication of literature; members of Finance will be meeting with members of the two English-language intergroups to discuss this. Third, the committee continues to improve our record-keeping. It was in the course of this that Finance discovered an oversight that probably contributed to the projected size of the FY17 deficit. This will be reported in more detail below.

Balances

Prudent reserve: \$83,837.65
Basic text reserve: \$20,000
Step-Study Guide reserve: \$15,000

The 2017 Fiscal Year Deficit

The total taken out of our prudent reserves in FY17 was \$10,000. This is obviously much less than the projected \$48,000, and there are several reasons for this significant difference.

- The Board began the fiscal year on July 1 with a positive balance of **\$13,709.21**.
- The Board spent less than the plan.
- The Board paid its registration fees in FY18 this year, not FY17. This would

have added another \$6,270 to GSB expenses.

- In a related development, there was a record-keeping error in FY 16 that the Finance Committee believes resulted in a double-counting of the cost of the Board's attendance at the 2015 WSC. This was corrected because of increased clarity about how the Board spends to attend the WSC. We estimate this amount to be in the \$18,000–\$20,000 range, and are investigating in order to correct this error. Beginning with the 2015 WSC, the GSB paid the costs of attending the WSC out of our general fund, rather than the registration fees paying the Board's WSC-related expenses. However, the record-keeping wasn't updated to reflect this until this year.

Although much less, and of an order comparable to past withdrawals from our prudent reserve, it's clearly not desirable to do so. The treasurer, Alexandra BW, and the assistant treasurer, Michalene R., have been building the spending plan for FY18 to present to the Board, and it incorporates several of the suggestions of the GSB Ad Hoc Committee on the Spending Plan, on which both Michalene and Alexandra served.

The D.A. GSB's Profit and Loss Statement for FY17—July 1, 2016–May 31, 2017

The Profit and Loss Statement above shows income and expenses for the 2017 fiscal year to date, that is, July 2016 through May 2017, the last month we have complete numbers for as of this writing. The "Net Operating Income," though \$8,937.74 lower than the projected amount, is a negative \$35,830.91, but remember that this report is a snapshot, while the reality is a continuous situation of inflows and outflows.

- Individual contributions were \$6,828.33 ahead of plan, while group contributions were \$9,114.80 less than the plan.

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General Service Board Committee Reports

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• The net literature sales were close to plan, and the gross profit was almost exactly on plan.

Note: In the expenses section, the numbers in parentheses are positive.

International Committee

The International Committee (IC) is continuing to work with countries from Europe, Central and South America in getting Conference Approved D.A. Literature translated into German and Spanish. The committee is happy to report that a review of the Vision's pamphlet which was translated into Spanish, has been completed and will be forwarded to the Lit Pub committee which is the next step to making this Spanish translation of DA Literature a reality. More international countries will be hopefully forthcoming with their own translations for the future. We are in contact with the European Regional Intergroup and the Asian Pacific Intergroup, working together on ideas for lowering the shipping costs for much-needed D.A. literature from the General Service Office(GSO). We're also working with the Finance Committee in setting up the capability of debit card payments for international literature orders which are becoming very close to being a reality.

Literature Publications

The GSB Literature Publications Committee is responsible for the creation, publication, revision, and reprinting of D.A. literature, including books, pamphlets, and other items such as book-marks and newcomer packets.

D.A.'s literature creation process starts at the World Service Conference. It's the Conference, acting as the voice of the D.A. Fellowship, that develops and approves new literature concepts. Once a concept is approved by the conference, the General Service Board is then tasked with developing the approved concept into an actual piece of literature. This involves supporting the Conference's Literature Committee in their development of an

outline; finding a writer and reviewing drafts of the new pamphlet or book; editing and finalizing the manuscript; and guiding the new piece of literature through the literature approval process (which is itself conference approved!). Service literature requires board approval; recovery literature requires board approval and conference approval.

Once a piece of literature is approved by the conference, it is then reviewed by a professional proofreader, and sent to a graphic designer to be "built" into an actual piece of literature. Finally, it is sent to a printer for printing.

It's a challenging task to keep the various active projects moving through this development, approval, and production process. It takes a lot of focus and communication by many people—most of whom are doing this as service to the Fellowship.

All this said, the board's Literature Publications Committee is hoping that several pieces of literature will be ready for possible conference approval at the upcoming 2017 conference, and we will keep the Fellowship updated in our post-conference reports.

Information Technology

The committee has been working closely with WSC Tech Com in order to ensure that the digital binder will be available to all attendees at the WSC who desire it. It is also assisting Finance with regaining the option for online donations and literature sales through the website.

Communications

The Communications Committee has worked to update the D.A. website throughout the year. We've also added an Events Page to the website and we are hoping to initiate one universal call-in number and access code for all Fellowship-wide conference calls. The Communications Committee has also sent numerous eNews announcements to support upcoming events. It

prepared the 2016 annual report for dissemination and posted it on the D.A. website.

Long Range Planning Committee

One of the primary responsibilities of the Long Range Planning Committee is to plan and conduct four "Ask-the-GSB" phone forums during each conference year. Each one-hour calls consist of three or four presenters, followed by time for questions and answers, or comments. The presenters are recorded for playback; the questions and answers are not.

During this past conference year, we conducted this series of calls:

- WSC 2016 Recap (October)
- Sponsorship (January)
- The Traditions (May)
- D.A.'s Finances (June)

Usually, there are around 25 to 35 attendees for each call; the Sponsorship call was larger, at approximately 60 people. While these numbers aren't huge, there is almost always some positive feedback from people on the call about their gratitude for the forums. It seems that people wanting to enrich their D.A. experience benefit from the calls: they learn about the Fellowship and/or strengthen their own recovery. From the perspective of board members that attend, it always feels like a rich experience for us as well—the calls strengthen our recovery as we learn more about sponsorship, the Traditions, etc.

In September or October of this year, we will start a new round of forums. Please consider joining one (or all!) of the calls . . . they're an opportunity to deepen your D.A. experience.

World Service Conference Committee Reports

Resource Development Committee

The RDC for 2016-2017 is composed of eight members. Amina Z. (Chair), Craig L. (Vice Chair), Jeannine W. (Secretary), Linda Y (Treasurer), Chris S., Chris A., Susan F., Gail D. This year the RDC group focused on three projects. First we worked on creating a fellowship wide conference call/workshop entitled "What in the World is an ACM?" It is scheduled for June 4th at 12 pm PST. The call is focused on three main topics: (A) What an Appointed Committee Member (ACM) is (B) How to become one (C) What serving as an ACM can do for one's recovery. Second, we worked on updating the John H. Scholarship letter and replying to the two Issues and Concerns. Finally, we worked on creating content and flyers about the link between spirituality and service. The content is currently underway. In addition to the three projects, the group has spent the year exploring ways to encourage individual monthly contributions to the General Service Office with a focus of encouraging every member to contribute every month.

WSC PI Committee Report

The WSC Public Information Committee is an enthusiastic group which includes members from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

WSC Public Information Committee Statement of Purpose:

"The Public Information Committee works to carry the message of D.A. to the still suffering debtor by interfacing with the media, helping professionals, and the D.A. Fellowship at large, in person, on the telephone and through written information. The Public Information Committee:

Utilizes the Debtors Anonymous Public Information Manual and other D.A. Service Literature available to the entire D.A. Fellowship as a tool for outreach efforts.

Supports and trains regional PI Committees (PICs) and PI Representatives

(PIRs) as guided by the 12 Traditions of Debtors Anonymous"

The WSC PI Committee has three subcommittees who meet monthly: the Helping Professionals Subcommittee, the Media Subcommittee and the General Public Subcommittee. The subcommittees have been working on the following projects since the last issue of the D.A. Focus was published.

Media Subcommittee

The D.A. whiteboard video was approved by the Finance Committee and its development is moving along quickly. D.A. has signed a contract with a production company, and the Media Subcommittee and several other members of the WSC PI Committee are providing feedback on the initial storyboards. The video is expected to be completed by the end of this Conference year. It was approved to be placed on the D.A. website as a test run. Further distribution to intergroups or other websites are possibilities for its use.

This subcommittee has also created outreach letters, two versions each for the UK and North America, to send to companies and organizations that might be willing to put a link to the D.A. website on the Resources page of their website. The letters were approved by the GSB, and the Media Subcommittee is currently sending out these letters as a test run before making them available to the entire Fellowship.

General Public Subcommittee

The General Public Subcommittee worked on a proposal that was submitted to the GSB to distribute contact cards to intergroups to make groups aware of the newly designed cards and to help kick-start outreach. The GSB Finance Committee approved funding for the distribution of 50 cards to each registered intergroup. WSC PI will provide the GSO with a letter to send with the cards that explains why the intergroups are re-

ceiving them. The cards are expected to be mailed in the near future.

Public Information Handbook Submission

The WSC PI Committee submitted a proposed Public Information Handbook for approval earlier this year and it was not approved by the GSB. No further work has been planned for the Handbook.

Public Information Manual

Members of the of the WSC PI Committee have discussed updating some of the material in the existing Public Information Manual and making the Fellowship aware of its existence and availability to all D.A. members. It is currently available to download from the D.A. website under Fellowship Services > Public Information > Public Information Manual.

Literature

The 2016-17 WSC Literature Committee continues work on significant literature projects. Since the December report, Lit Com has approved the following drafts and forwarded them to the General Service Board for review:

- **New D.A. Closing Statement** (to replace the closing statement in use with its copyright concerns)
- **Beginner's Meeting Format** (literature concept approved in 2007)
- **Twelve Promises pamphlet** (literature concept approved in 2011)
- **Compulsive Spending pamphlet revisions** (literature concept approved in 2013 to revise and update the pamphlet "to treat compulsive spending as a symptom of debting.")

The six subcommittees have made the following progress:

- **'Step Study Guide' subcommittee** (Point Person: Brandi, Members: Amy, Gisela, Kelly, Lolly, Marysia, Tom) -- A rough draft outline of the entire Step Study Guide with an addendum to work the steps in BDA is now being reviewed, and a first draft of a sample chapter for Step One was submitted to LitCom for notes.

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World Service Conference Committee Reports

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'Daily Meditations Book' subcommittee (Point Person: Rae, Members: Debbie, John, Kelly, Lolly, Maiya) -- A format for the Daily Meditation book has been approved. D.A. will seek submissions from members. An outreach effort is being planned.

· **'Stories for Basic Text' subcommittee** (Point Person: Andrea, Members: Diana, Kelly) -- Two D.A. recovery stories from members have been received, and the subcommittee is now developing a plan for continuing work next term.

· **'Diversity Pamphlet' subcommittee** (Point Person: Diana, Members: John) -- This subcommittee is cooperating with the WSC Diversity Caucus to develop a concept for a D.A. pamphlet to consider and celebrate diversity in Debtors Anonymous.

· **'Closing Statement' subcommittee** (Point Person: Maiya, Members: Jeff, John, Marysia) -- Having completed its work, this subcommittee is dissolved. We thank the members for their service to our fellowship.

· **'Beginners Meeting Format' subcommittee** (Point Person: Amy, Members: Debbie, Tom) -- Having completed its work, this subcommittee is dissolved. We thank the members for their service to our fellowship.

These are the pieces of literature currently in review by the WSC Literature Committee:

· **'D.A. Basic Text' outline** -- Lit Com is close to approving a 3rd draft to return to the Board for review (as outlined in the Literature Approval Process in the DAMS.)

· **'Health Issues' pamphlet** -- Lit Com has provided notes on the latest draft of the Health Issues pamphlet, approved as a concept in 2011, and the project has been returned to the Board.

The Literature Committee is also reviewing past literature concepts that were shelved, and has voted to

rescind two projects so other projects can take focus. The Time Issues pamphlet concept, approved in 2005, has been rescinded. The Twelve Bookmarks concept, approved in 2012, has been rescinded due to financial considerations regarding production maintenance. Although these concepts will no longer be developed, they can always be submitted again for Conference approval. This will be announced in greater detail at the D.A. Conference.

This year's Literature Committee has started carrying on the tradition of Thursday Drop-In meetings -- our weekly hour-long teleconferences to work on literature projects that need focused and prolonged attention. There is so much talent and enthusiasm on the committee this year, it is continually inspiring. In turn, I hope this report of Lit Com activities inspires the D.A. Fellowship.

Diversity Caucus

Caucus Officers & Members
Chair – Chris Anderson
Vice-Chair – Kristen Klein-Cechettini
Secretary – Open
Treasurer – Diana Gray
Members: Chris A., John C., Patrick C., Kristen K.C., and Diana G.

Key Milestones

We hosted a fellowship-wide call on diversity in partnership with the World Service Conference International Caucus and the General Service Board Public Information and International Committees. The meeting was attended by a total of 65 callers. Most attendees were from the US, with 3-4 from the U.K.

A few highlights and activities from the fellowship-wide call:

- One hybrid meeting (phone and F2F) converted their call-in number to allow international members to attend for free.

- Invited members from other geographical areas and use a free service to join their hybrid meeting. Posted on the D.A. website, it will be announced that this is an open, international-friendly meeting
- Re-connected with a member and highlighted the need for content for visually-impaired members
- Deaf member is looking for a sponsor who is willing to use a service to translate.

Partnered with the Basic Text subcommittee of the WSC Literature Committee to finalize an eNews announcement requesting stories for D.A.'s upcoming Basic Text literature project that is actively being developed.

Worked with the Diversity Pamphlet sub-committee of the WSC Literature Committee:

Reviewed and provided feedback on the mission statement which reads to develop a piece of literature that welcomes and offers hope to members from underserved populations and locations. Made suggestions on the Diversity Pamphlet proposal

Reviewed the WSC Public Information Whiteboard sub-committee project

Created a draft version of the Best Practices for Outreach to Underserved Populations and Locations