

THE DA focus

The Quarterly World Service Newsletter for the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

March 2012

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The DA Focus is published quarterly on a fiscal year basis by the D.A. General Service Board 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

Seeking Class A and Class B Trustees

Thirteen Trustees are currently serving on the General Service Board: eight Class As (recovering debtors) and five Class Bs (non-debtors). The Conference is looking for three Class As and one Class B to help do the work of the Fellowship. Please go to www.debtorsanonymous.org for the qualifications for this rewarding service.

"Debtors Anonymous" pamphlet

Groups who wish to place correction stickers on their stock of "Debtors Anonymous" and "Deudores Anónimos" pamphlets should send a self-addressed envelope stamped with "Forever" postage to the General Service Office. **Please specify the desired number of stickers in each language.**

Becoming Ourselves

As many D.A. members are now aware, "Debtors Anonymous," our basic pamphlet, borrowed language from page 30 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.'s "Big Book") without attribution. The Literature Publications Committee noted that the pamphlet read well—better, in fact—without the passage. In consultation with the WSC Literature Committee and the D.A. General Service Board, LitPub determined that the pamphlet could continue to be sold, but when it came up for reprint, the passage would be removed, and the D.A. Promises inserted at the end. The GSB composed a statement correctly attributing the passage, and the General Service Office will make stickers bearing the statement available to groups who send in a stamped, self-addressed envelope (see sidebar at left). The GSB wrote Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., making amends for what was, however unintentionally, theft, and informing AAWS of the provisions undertaken. There has been no reply so far.

"Deudores Anónimos" is the first D.A. publication in a language other than English, and the stickers are available in Spanish. Introduced at the 2010 WSC, the pamphlet represents the will of the Fellowship to respond to the diversity of those affected by the problem of compulsive debting. In 2011, several committees came up with actions to make D.A. and D.A. materials available to non-English-speaking debtors. When the GSB Communications Committee contacted AAWS to clarify D.A.'s rights to adapt the Steps and Traditions into other languages, the committee and the GSB were stunned to learn that D.A. does not hold the

right to adapt the so-called preamble. Our contact at AAWS kindly but clearly told us it was time for D.A. to formulate our own mission statement.

Many of the Class As on the Board were dismayed, finding it impossible to think of an introduction to D.A. that did not use the beloved language that welcomed us into recovery, indeed into life. But this is not the first such change our Fellowship has envisioned. D.A. experienced something similar with A.A.'s "Promises." AAWS refused us permission, encouraging us to write our own. The result was the D.A. Promises. D.A. groups demonstrated their commitment to Tradition One and unity by exchanging the Preamble using "solvent" and "solvency" for the version most groups use today. The wording of the D.A. Tools has also changed.

Perhaps the wording of Tool 8 ("D.A. and A.A. Literature") suggests that A.A. material is somehow ours for the "borrowing." Certainly D.A. members are not required to understand the sometimes arcane "fair use" provisions of the copyright laws. It is part of the GSB's legal and fiduciary responsibility to increase its own awareness then make that awareness available to the Fellowship.

At present, the GSB is working on a system that will allow the greatest number of groups and individuals worldwide to contribute to composing D.A.'s mission statement. As Debtors Anonymous enters its thirty-seventh year, the Fellowship will continue finding our own language to express clearly and compassionately our dual primary purpose: to not incur new unsecured debt and to reach out to the debtor who still suffer. Discovering that language will take time, but time makes room for a power greater than ourselves.

**The 2012 WSC Host Committee
is pleased to announce that the
Debtors Anonymous World Service Conference
will be held in Seattle, Washington, at
Seattle Pacific University, August 15–19, 2012.**

General Service Board Committee Reports

Audit Committee

No report.

Communications

The Communications Committee (ComCom) has determined that 540 to more than 600 people regularly open the eNews. Given that there are some 500 registered D.A. and B.D.A. groups worldwide, the committee is seeking ways to expand the number of people signed up to receive these electronic announcements. eNews announcements include the publication of *Ways & Means* and *the DA Focus*, Media Contact Trainings and other service opportunities, and GSB- and WSC-sponsored teleconference calls. Anyone may sign up for the eNews on the web site home page.

Following a suggestion from the WSC Literature Committee, ComCom will make Conference-approved and other service material from the web site available in other languages, beginning with Spanish and French. The first phase will be to verify that the presentation of the Steps and Traditions in those languages meet the conditions of D.A.'s agreement with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

ComCom converted D.A.'s three Public Service Announcements from a CD format to mp3, to facilitate making them available to radio stations and other appropriate outlets. These files will be posted on the web site along with the information currently printed on the CD.

Conference Support

In addition to working with the Conference Committee (CC) and the Seattle Host Committee for the 2012 World Service Conference, the Conference Support Committee (CSC) continues seeking an Appointed Committee Member (ACM).

An ACM will aid in a number of tasks, not the least of which is tracking and updating the Host Committee Manual. They may also help compile the post-WSC survey results, share their personal conference experience, and use this experience to lend support to the CC, host committee and CSC.

To view this and other open ACM positions, go to www.debtorsanonymous.org and select "Open Service Positions" from the menu on the left side of the page.

Information Technology

Info Tech plans to repeat last year's successful broadcast (via telephone conference call) of the one the modules at the annual Fellowship Day of the World Service Conference in August. Last year's first-ever broadcast attracted well over 100 listeners.

Info Tech is also carefully studying recommendations from the WSC Technology Committee for enhancements to the World Service web site www.debtorsanonymous.org

Legal Affairs

No report.

Literature Publications

As requested by the 2011 Conference, Literature Publications has created a plan to address a section of the "Debtors Anonymous" pamphlet that was taken almost verbatim from the A.A. "Big Book" without permission. Temporary stickers will be applied to the back of remaining stock of the pamphlet, in English and Spanish, providing the citation for that section. The section will be removed in subsequent reprints. Reprint changes in the "Visions" pamphlet were submitted to correct some citations of sections quoting A.A. material. The committee recently got the General Service Board's approval for a definition of, and process for approving and publishing, D.A. service material. It is currently reviewing and making recommendations for improving, and accurately describing, the Literature Approval Process.

Literature Services

Lit Serve has approved the Newcomer's Packet sleeve and has almost completed its review of the "Annual BDA Business Plan" pamphlet. Lit Serve has received all twelve revised Traditions and is reviewing them. Also in hand is the revised "Pres-

sure Relief Groups/Pressure Relief Meetings" pamphlet. Calls for writers have been sent out by eNews for several projects, including "The Twelve Promises of D.A." and three BDA pamphlets, "B.D.A. Tool Ten," "B.D.A. Clarity in Business Finance," and a "B.D.A. Numbers" booklet.

Long-Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Committee has hosted two well-attended phone "Meet the GSB" Forums. The first Forum included presentations on the results of the WSC, the literature approval process, and the new *D.A. Manual for Service*. The second Forum featured presentations on D.A.'s finances. Additional Forums are scheduled for April 1 and June 17, 2012. Advance notice will appear via e-News with the call-in number and other details. The new *D.A. Manual for Service* is now available in its second printing from the General Service Office. The committee continues its work fine-tuning the Issues & Concerns reporting system, and hopes to integrate reporting the WSC Motions and Recommendations outcomes into this system in the future.

Nominations

Nom Com continues to look for qualified candidates to fill the two open positions for Class A (recovering debtor) trustees. The committee also reviews and recommends any additions, changes, or updates to the GSB By-Laws, and recently created a Leave of Absence Policy.

D.A. members who are interested in serving on the board as Class A trustees can go to www.debtorsanonymous.org and look at the qualifications necessary to perform this gratifying service. Please see "How to Become a GSB Trustee" under the Service tab.

Office

No report.

Public Information

GSB PI updated and finalized our Composition, Scope, and Procedures (CSP) document, answered several media re-

General Service Board Committee Reports

quests, and had a final proof of a Spanish-language outreach flier. Our Appointed Committee Member (ACM) is updating the list of D.A. members trained and available to respond to media requests.

Special Committee on the Service Structure

No report.

Finance

Since the 2011 World Service Conference (WSC), the General Service Board (GSB) Finance Committee has brought on a new Appointed Committee Member (ACM), Maureen C.—Welcome Maureen! We have also contracted a new professional bookkeeper and a new CPA firm. Our new CPA firm has completed our Fiscal Year 2011 tax return and review.

The GSB Finance Committee is happy to report that the combined efforts of the GSB Chair's Report at WSC 2011, the recent appeal letter asking individual D.A. members to contribute directly to D.A.'s General Service Office, and the efforts of the WSC Resource Development Committee have yielded a small but noteworthy increase in recent contributions. The GSB Finance Committee would like to express heartfelt thanks to the groups and individual D.A. members who have sent in recent contributions. Because of your generosity, the GSB will now be able to approve a few of the Spending Plan requests that had previously been denied due to lack of funding.

The financial report shown here compares planned and actual income and expenses. Note that the planned figures are for the entire fiscal year (July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012), while the actual inflows and outflows are for July 1, 2011, through January 31, 2012.

	Jul '11–Jun '12 Annual Plan	Jul '11–Jan '12 7-Month Actual
Inflows		
Group Contributions	47,500.00	30,515.74
Individual Contributions	28,891.00	24,735.08
Other Contributions	300.00	0.00
John H Scholarship Fund Contributions	0.00	1,152.82
World Service Month	2,462.00	129.71
Literature & AV Sales	57,110.00	34,028.65
Shipping	10,000.00	5,682.35
Conference Income	55,600.00	50,573.47
Interest Income	350.00	141.99
Total Inflows	202,213.00	146,959.81
Outflows		
Cost of Goods Sold	38,294.00	19,513.69
Payroll Expense	61,000.00	35,186.38
Office Rent & Administrative Expense	16,076.00	10,004.08
Board Expense	19,110.00	7,980.68
General Administrative Expense	8,123.00	4,628.01
WSC Event & Committee Expenses	59,475.00	48,132.16
John H Scholarship Fund Expense	0.00	2,494.35
Total Outflows	202,078.00	127,939.35
Surplus / Deficit	135.00	19,020.46

**APRIL IS
WORLD SERVICE MONTH**

Service is gratitude in action.

**How can you help reach the debtor
who still suffers?**

World Service Conference Committee Reports

Business Debtors Anonymous

B.D.A. Committee chair Karen B. participated in the February Intergroup Caucus conference call as the first step in the B.D.A. Committee's efforts to create a B.D.A. Intergroup this year.

The committee will send its "wish list" to the WSC Tech Committee, as input to Tech's and GSB Info Tech's planning for the revamped D.A. web site.

Among the B.D.A. subcommittee activities, (1) Members of the Spiritually Based Marketing Action Plan (SAP) Subcommittee completed a cycle of Step work and adapted a marketing business-plan template for small businesses; the subcommittee is formulating a pilot SAP document to be tested by the B.D.A. Committee before the 2012 WSC. (2) The B.D.A. Innovations Subcommittee has begun contacting registered B.D.A. groups to solicit ideas, tools, and effective practices in order to disseminate them to the wider B.D.A. membership. (3) The BDA Clearinghouse Subcommittee has compiled a database of phone and email contact information for about one-third of the eighty-some registered B.D.A. groups; the subcommittee has turned over its objective of creating a B.D.A. Intergroup to the larger B.D.A. Committee.

Conference

A significant achievement of the 2011–12 Conference Committee (CC) is our completion of the updating of the Host Committee Handbook; the final draft has been submitted to the GSB for a final edit and formatting. The Handbook will greatly facilitate local organization of future World Service Conferences.

CC continues to work on the guidelines for awarding the John H. Scholarships, in order to insure that each year's applicants are consistently and fairly reviewed. This agenda item is nearing successful completion.

CC's document entitled "Would Your Area Like to Host a DA WSC?—Site Bidding Guidelines," which lists the information the GSB needs to make an informed decision to award WSC hosting privileges, has been approved by the GSB. These guidelines will be sent to every D.A. Intergroup with a cover letter asking each intergroup to consider hosting a future WSC. We plan on having this

letter and the Bidding Guidelines in the mail by March, as we hope to review bids for the 2014 conference at the 2012 WSC in August. It is the Conference Committee's goal to review and recommend WSC proposals at the annual conference two years in advance.

2013 WSC Host Committee

As of March 2012, we are on a major learning curve, concentrating right now on subcommittees. We are putting together "job descriptions" and identifying potential chairs for those subcommittees. We are also working on a detailed timeline checklist, a document that, if accurate, will help keep us on track.

We are also looking for opportunities and ideas about generating enthusiasm for 2013 amongst the fellowship here. Brain-storming ideas at our last meeting, from possible t-shirts to a "Place your affirmations for 2013 Conference" in a fish bowl, to be placed at the registration desk at our DA Day in April.

We don't have a hotel selection yet from the GSB. At this point, not that important.

The most important thing is that we, the 2013 Host Committee and GSB Liaison, are learning about each other, how we work, and how we work together. We are looking forward to adding subcommittees to our group.

Diversity Caucus

The Diversity Caucus is hard at work establishing new Debtors Anonymous meetings in underserved communities. We're concentrating our efforts on Southeast Washington, D.C., and Harlem. A new group, Harlem DA: Steps and Traditions and Underearning, began in early March. Our caucus continues to contact diverse organizations, including African-American, American Indian, Asian-American, gay & lesbian, and Latino associations. We're exploring ways to reach still-suffering debtors who are hearing or visually impaired or physically disabled. Our caucus also recognizes that socioeconomic background or class identity need not be barriers to recovery. Because of the need for diverse voices, and to foster a sense of inclusiveness, we caucus members are writing our personal stories, all in the context of our diverse backgrounds. To date, we've written

four personal stories, and two have been submitted to *Ways & Means*.

Fellowship Communications

The recent activity of the FCC included the further development of a "D.A. Resources" document (PDF), the completion of an auto-response to gsponsorship@gmail.com, and the organization and facilitation of a Fellowship-wide conference call on the topic of anonymity, the Traditions, and social media.

The "D.A. Resources" document will catalog all resources available on the D.A. website, and contain direct hyperlinks to help quickly navigate the current site. The Group Sponsorship auto-response contains a wealth of resources and suggestions for new and struggling groups, as well as tips on how group sponsorship might be started in areas with minimal access to other face-to-face meetings. The Traditions and Social Media conference call was held on March 4, attended by approximately 70 D.A. members, and widely regarded as a successful forum for discussing the ever-changing concerns of anonymity in digital media.

The FCC will continue work on the "Resources" document and the Group Sponsorship concept, and intends to organize another conference call focusing on the topic of anonymity, the Traditions, and social media.

Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons

No report

Intergroup Caucus

No report

Internal Operations

The Mission of the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) is to support the General Service Office (GSO) of D.A. The committee focuses on the overall operation of the GSO and interacts with the Board Liaison and Office manager to support the ongoing work of the GSO.

This year's theme for the IOC is "Clarity and Action."

Two members of the IOC visited the GSO, met with the Office Manager, and

were warmly greeted and shown the office and its resources. As a result of this visit the IOC identified some items that could be added to the Board Spending Plan for the office. The Board has considered these suggestions and has taken action to incorporate them into the 2012–13 Spending Plan.

The IOC has also contacted and—through monthly conference calls—met with a representative of the Tech Committee. It is hoped that combining the talents of the Tech Committee and the IOC, two online forms, the [Group Registration form](#) and the [Literature Purchase form](#), may be streamlined so that communication between groups, individual members, and the Office manager will be made more efficient.

Literature

Lit Com is proud to announce that we only have one agenda item remaining from the 2011 WSC to attend to: forming a recommendation for the format of D.A.'s basic text. We have read and approved the stories for inclusion in the second edition of *A Currency of Hope*. Our Translation Subcommittee has reached out to A.A. and S.L.A.A. for their experience, strength, and hope on the translation of literature and web-site material and shared a wealth of very valuable information from these fellowships with Literature Publications. Continuing agenda items for the rest of the year are: setting up a D.A. literature writers pool, working with Lit Pub to advance translations of D.A. literature, working with the Diversity Caucus to increase representation of members outside D.A.'s current demographic in D.A. literature, approving upcoming pamphlets from Lit Services, and supporting more contributions to the GSO to cover future literature costs. We have had six highly successful, well-attended phone meetings.

Public Information

WSC PI continues to revise the PI Manual. The committee has sent 132 letters to helping professionals.

Resource Development

The Resource Development Committee (RDC) has completed several goals since the 2011 WSC. RDC has sent out this year's John H Scholarship appeal letter and submitted the annual World Service Month appeal letter to the GSB so that it can be mailed to groups in time to celebrate D.A.'s 36th birthday on April 15, as well as submitting to the GSB a document listing fifty ways to do service and proposed revisions to the D.A. Treasurer's Manual.

RDC is creating a tool to communicate to the Fellowship how contributions are used and a visual for the web site depicting the funds needed to fulfill D.A.'s goals. The committee is working with the GSB to add more RDC-related elements to D.A.'s next five-year plan. Several RDC members have written articles for the *Ways & Means* on how D.A. service has changed their lives.

Regional Forum in North Carolina

Members from across the Tarheel State attended the most recent Regional Forum put on by members of the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board on February 18 in Charlotte.

The forum, held in conjunction with the Carolinas Intergroup, featured presentations on D.A.'s primary purpose, service structure, literature, communications, Steps and Traditions, finances, and the General Service Office. Participants also questioned the Trustees on a variety of service-related topics. The presentations were preceded by a delicious pot-luck supper organized by the Intergroup.

The Charlotte forum was somewhat different than the six other Regional Forums that have been held around the U.S. since 2009. In contrast to the usual all-day schedule, it featured a new type of short format lasting only 2½ hours. The GSB plans to offer both all-day and short-format, or "modified," forums in other locations in the future, depending on local resources.

The Trustees were in North Carolina for their annual four-day winter "face-to-face" business meeting, held midway between World Service Conferences. The face-to-face also includes meetings with D.A. groups, Intergroups, and members in various areas of the U.S. and Canada.

The next Regional Forum, an all-day session, will be held Saturday, April 21, 2012, in Park Ridge, Illinois, just outside Chicago, in cooperation with the Great Lakes D.A. Intergroup. Further details will be announced shortly.

Open Service Positions

Three Class A (recovering debtors)
General Service Board (GSB) Trustees

One Class B (non-debtor) GSB Trustee

Appointed Committee Member (ACM)
for Finance Committee

ACM for Legal Affairs Committee

ACM for Conference Support
Committee

ACM to Edit D.A.'s *Twelve Steps and
Twelve Traditions*

Two ACMs for Literature Publications
Committee

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

For more information, see

**"Open Service Positions" at
www.debtorsanonymous.org**

The D.A. General Service Office Goes Green for Our World

The “greening” of the modern-day office is a global trend, and in 2011 the D.A. General Service Office (GSO) took steps toward becoming a more environmentally friendly office by emphasizing energy conservation and waste reduction.

The GSO, D.A.’s operations center, is located in Needham, Massachusetts. The office’s staff serves thousands of D.A. members worldwide, processing approximately 1,000 literature orders each year, sending publications to active D.A. members and groups around the U.S and around the world, including Canada, France, England, Ireland, Italy, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia.

In the past, the GSO used foam “peanuts” and plastic bubble wrap when shipping literature orders, neither of which is easily recyclable. Starting in 2011, the GSO began using unprinted, 100% recycled newsprint sheets as packaging filler for most shipments.

As part of a *waste reduction* program implemented over the past several months, the GSO

- uses paper containing at least 50% recycled content for internal use and for group contact/mailings
- contracts with a printer who uses paper containing a minimum of 30% recycled content for producing the D.A. pamphlets. Our printer is local—less transportation saves energy and reduces CO₂ emissions—and uses soy-based inks and chemical-free plate processing. The firm has been recognized within the graphic-arts industry for excellence in environmental printing.
- has eliminated the use of plastic “jewel” cases for CDs and DVDs and now uses paper sleeves
- collects paper waste, and our office manager transports the paper to a local recycling pick-up location
- recycles ink-jet and toner cartridges to our suppliers

As part of an *energy conservation* program implemented in 2011, the GSO

- shuts down our monitors and computers at night. We use power strips at work stations and switch them off each night. This resulted in impressive reductions in electric usage of 25% to 35%.
- replaced its seven-year old air conditioner with a model certified to be energy-efficient

What can you do to help with waste reduction and energy conservation as a D.A. member?

- Print double-sided when you download the literature order form from the D.A. website www.debtorsanonymous.org.
- Recycle D.A. packaging and outdated D.A. materials.
- Get a discount on shipping with larger literature orders. If there are other D.A. groups nearby, consider working together to combine your literature orders. Not only do you save, but it conserves our world’s natural resources.
- Sign up for an electronic contribution acknowledgement. When you send an individual or group contribution to the GSO, let us acknowledge it via email instead of by letter, or simply let your cancelled check serve as a receipt. Just add your email address on the contribution envelope under “Send receipt for this contribution to:”

Have a question? Some ideas to share?

The GSO is here to serve you. Contact us any time at:

781-453-2743 or 1-800-421-2383 or office@debtorsanonymous.org

Marci W., Class A Trustee

My name is Marci. I am a compulsive debtor from Salt Lake City, Utah. Through the grace of God, the Twelve Steps, and the program of Debtors Anonymous, I have not incurred any new unsecured debt since February 2005. I have a sponsor and I am a sponsor. The Twelve Steps not only saved my life but have given me a life I enjoy. During my time in D.A., I have experienced many miracles. I have survived getting fired from a job, increased my earning potential, pursued a college education, purchased a car, purchased a home, got married, and had my first child—all without incurring new unsecured debt.

Service is my favorite tool. Service to D.A. is the bridge that took me from feeling like an outsider looking in to feeling that I am part of the D.A. fellow-

ship. This service started small, at the group level, and has turned into a stunning and rewarding journey. I attended my first World Service Conference in 2006, I was host committee chair of WSC 2008, and I am presently privileged to serve the fellowship of D.A. as a General Service Board Trustee. I am also the current Board treasurer. I get great pleasure from participating in service at the World Service level. I have developed friendships with many D.A. members around the world. I appreciate the legacy of service left by those who have come before me. I look forward to continuing to serve D.A. in whatever capacity my Higher Power puts in front of me. I trust that new D.A. members will take their turn carrying the banner of service when I rotate out of service at this level.

Allen A., Class A Trustee

My name is Allen A. and I was invited to join the General Service Board as a Trustee in 2007 at the World Service Conference in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. I currently serve as vice chair. I came into my first D.A. room on July 14, 1990, desperate and at my bottom. I remember how it felt to go day by day, not being sure how I would survive financially to the next one without debting. I consider that a blessing, because I really “got it,” and I have not incurred any new unsecured debt for over twenty-one years.

Thanks to my beloved program, D.A. recovery has taken me to places that were unimaginable to me when I first entered the rooms. I faced my creditors on the phone, face to face, and in court and learned to not make any promises I couldn't keep. I increased my income steadily over the years from a deprivational \$23K a year. I bought a home and paid off a mortgage. I bought a car and paid for my son's college expenses in cash. I paid off all my debts over

time. But most importantly I've survived and thrived without incurring any new unsecured debt.

I recognized the value of service to my recovery early on and said “yes” whenever I could. I was editor of the New York Intergroup newsletter for two years. I served as chair of its annual Share-A-Day for two years. And now the GSB. Every time I've increased my service, my recovery has taken me to new unimaginable places. Recently I quit my job of nineteen years (another gift from D.A.) and am now self-employed, generating my own income.

The wonderful thing about service is you don't have to be an expert, a workaholic, or a saint. Ours is a spiritual Fellowship. We have the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts to guide us in our thoughts and actions. We show up. We do our best. And we let Higher Power guide us.

I am humbled and honored to be serving this Fellowship which has given me so much.