

THE DA focus

The Quarterly World Service Newsletter for the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

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The DA Focus is published quarterly on a fiscal year basis by the DA General Service Board. It is mailed to all registered DA groups and emailed to all subscribers of the DA eNews.

Farewells and Welcomes

Following seven years on the Board, two of them as chair, Willie W. of California rotated off the GSB. His legacy includes D.A.'s first Service Manual, now in draft form, and a responsibility statement for D.A. The Conference accepted it in concept and it has gone to the Literature Committee.

Paul S. of Florida and California, a Class B trustee, also rotated off the Board. In his farewell to the fellowship he served for six years, Paul spoke eloquently of Debtors Anonymous as "this glorious fellowship," predicting that, if D.A. maintains its course, it has the capacity to make a great spiritual contribution to the world.

The Conference ratified four new Board members. The two Class A trustees are Alexandra B-W of New York and Beth P. of California. The two Class B trustees are Francis G. of Massachusetts and Sue F. of Indiana. Alexandra and Sue introduce themselves in this issue; "Meet the Board," on page 4, will be an ongoing feature of *The D.A. Focus*.

DA Comes of Age

"Deudores Anónimos es una comunidad de hombres y mujeres . . ." Trustee Allen A. opened the 2010 World Service Conference with the D.A. preamble from "Deudores Anónimos," the Fellowship's first foreign-language pamphlet. The moment signaled a turning point in the growth of Debtors Anonymous. The pamphlet, a project of the WSC Literature Committee, represents a material effort to reach the many North American Spanish-speaking debtors seeking recovery. The planned development of Spanish- and French-language pages linked to the D.A. website will draw on the expertise of the Trustee Information Technology Committee and the WSC Technology Caucus—the latter to become a committee at the start of the 2011 World Service Conference.

Groups worldwide have also been translating D.A. literature. In the last year alone, the General Service Board has communicated with groups and members concerning existing translations into French, German, Icelandic, Portuguese, and Spanish, and future translations into Braille. There are associated intellectual-property issues; because the literature belongs to Debtors Anonymous, the translations do, too. This means that D.A. is responsible for assuring that all translations render the original texts accurately.

As D.A. becomes better known, questions of copyright arise more often. For example, in the world outside the Twelve Step fellowships, "fair use" usually permits a writer to use a small, representative portion of a text. However, the Sixth Tradition suggests that if D.A. material is quoted it could imply an endorsement of the project in which the quote appears. One recent example was the use of D.A.'s Twelve Steps by an online religious recovery network. This was settled amicably after the GSB sent letters informing the

church that it was in violation of D.A. copyright. The frequency of such issues has spurred the Board to change the Subcommittee on Copyrights/Ad-hoc Committee for Legal Issues to a Trustee committee entitled the Legal Affairs Committee, effective the start of the 2010 WSC.

The WSC committees continue to hone the focus of D.A. literature on the primary purpose of not incurring unsecured debt and reaching out to the still-suffering debtor; raise the Fellowship's awareness of existing resources, especially the website; streamline processes; and encourage groups and individuals to contribute more so that D.A. may be financially self-supporting.

Another sign of the Fellowship's maturity was the prominence given the Twelve Concepts of Service at the 2010 WSC. These principles, unique to Twelve Step fellowships, explore the delicate, ever-shifting balance of responsibilities between the delegates and the Board, the notion of leadership that does not govern, and the placement of ultimate authority with the Debtors Anonymous groups.

Results of the Vote on Amending Tradition 11

On August 11, the consulting parliamentarian delivered to Willie W., the Chair of the General Service Board, the "Teller's Report on Debtors Anonymous Group Voting on February 1, 2010, Mail Ballot on Amending Tradition 11." The following is a summary:

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General Service Board Reports

In 2010, the GSB established a Legal Affairs committee, much of whose mission will be to handle questions concerning copyright and translations. This brings the total number of GSB committees to ten. The Board is increasing its use of Appointed Committee Members (ACMs) to accomplish the work of a thriving fellowship. Here are some highlights of the work the GSB did at the WSC and after.

Office Committee

The Office Committee oversees the operation of the General Service Office in Needham, Massachusetts.

- Howard S., the Office Manager, reported that 15 new meetings registered in September (believed to be a record for a single month), including one in England.

Literature Publications Committee

- *D.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*: Draft chapters through Step 8 have been received.
- D.A. meditation book: A request has been sent out for an Appointed Committee Member (ACM) to edit the material in hand.

Literature Services

The committee has received drafts of the BDA Numbers booklet and the DA Newcomers booklet for review and edits. The PRG/PRM pamphlet is being revised include more “nuts and bolts” direction on how to conduct a Pressure Relief Meeting. Also under review is the BDA Signposts and Tools pamphlet.

Nominations Committee

The committee searches for candidates to reach the full complement of 15—11 Class A trustees and 4 Class B board members—mandated by the By-Laws.

To volunteer or nominate someone to be a trustee, see “How to Become a GSB Trustee” online at <http://www.debtorsanonymous.org/service.htm> as well as in the “2010 GSR/ISR Service Manual,” pp. 17–20).

InfoTech Committee

InfoTech has made a lot of headway with a major redesign of the website www.debtorsanonymous.org.

- Following the WSC, Info Tech has been active in updating the website, especially with Conference-approved and service literature bearing copyright information and the D.A. service mark, current Board officers, material available for free download, and information on the 2011 WSC as it evolves.

Public Information Committee

- Increasing roster of trained D.A. members to respond to requests for interviews from the media.
- Planning to hold media trainings at each year’s Conference

Communications Committee

- Sends out E-News requests for ACMs, publishes *The D.A. Focus* (from the GSB and WSC) and *Ways & Means* (member newsletter); oversees content of website.

Finance Committee

- Everyone who applied to the John H. Scholarship Fund received money; at least one delegate was funded in full.
- Because it is a pass-through expense, the John Henderson Fund was removed from the Profit and Loss statements and is now accounted for as a separate restricted fund.

Conference Support Committee

The Conference Support Committee continues its work on the structure of the annual World Service Conference, identifying ways in which the Conference can work more smoothly and productively. It also works with the Host Committees of the 2011 and future Conferences on specific Conference details.

Long-Range Planning Committee

- The GSB approved six Regional Forums in the next two Conference years: Phoenix, New York City, and San Francisco in 2010–11, and Houston, Washington, D.C., and Chicago in 2011–12

The draft of D.A.’s own Service Manual was submitted to the GSB for approval.

Legal Affairs

This new committee, dating from the 2010 WSC Face-to-Face meeting of the GSB, was established in response to the upsurge in copyright questions, especially relating to translations.

Results of the Vote on Amending Tradition 11

Continues from p. 1.

Number of possible votes (total number of registered groups, area groups, and Intergroups corrected for undeliverable mail and disbanded groups).....504
Number of positive “yes” ballots necessary for adoption (3/4 of registered groups, area groups, and Intergroups).....378

Total legal votes.....174

Votes for motion.....125

Votes against motion.....47

Ballots returned marked “abstain”...2

Conclusion: There being 378 positive votes necessary for adoption of the motion to amend Tradition 11, and 125 legal positive votes having been received, the motion failed for lack of a sufficient number of positive votes.

The 2010 WSC counted 102 GSRs and ISRs—representing approximately 20 percent of the known D.A. groups worldwide (see the report from the parliamentarian, above)—a proportion that has remained virtually unchanged for more than a decade. Of the 102 in attendance, 95 signed up for a committee. The delegates worked on committees and caucuses during the five days of the WSC and are continuing their activity throughout the 2010–11 Conference year.

At the Convocation, the Conference voted to make the Technology Caucus a committee. This enables the members of the committee to make motions, as opposed to recommendations, and receive operating funds. When the Tech Caucus becomes a committee at the beginning of the 2011 WSC, D.A. will be served by nine committees and two caucuses. Below are some of the highlights of projects undertaken by the delegates.

Literature Committee

- Will publish a new edition of *A Currency of Hope* following the committee's review of the stories in light of our primary purpose. Replace deleted stories with recovery stories from the website.

Business Debtors Anonymous

- Voted to withdraw from the 12-Step-Study website, which will continue as a self-supporting D.A. online group.

Conference Committee

- Exploring time management at the WSC.
- Established a standing subcommittee, the Conference–Board Resolution Subcommittee.

Fellowship Communications

- Creating a letter to be sent to all D.A. groups to raise awareness of the D.A. communications media.
- Developing a piece of service literature concerning anonymity and social-networking groups.
- Actively supporting the Intergroup Caucus.

Public Information

- Continuing program of introducing D.A. at conference of professional associations

Hospitals, Institutions, Prisons

- Discussing what D.A. literature would be useful and of interest to the incarcerated member.
- Reviewing existing H.I.P.-related literature of other fellowships for awareness and education of the com-

mittee and for ideas of what D.A. H.I.P. literature might be developed for the future.

- Developing guidelines for HIP people contacting institutions.
- Following up on mailing of 111 copies of *A Currency of Hope*

Internal Operations

- Rethinking meeting-list database to make it more flexible.

Resource Development

- Working on updating and drafting appeal letters for the seventh tradition, the John H. Scholarship Fund, and World Service Month. RDC is also collecting personal sharings about the benefits of contributing financial support to D.A. These sharings are intended to be submitted to *Ways and Means* for publication.

Intergroup Caucus

- Resuming study of regionalization

Technology Caucus

No report.

Diversity Caucus

Requested that meeting lists provide more information about accessibility

WSC Host Committee

With the GSB Finance Committee, the 2011 Host Committee is beginning to prepare for the WSC, which will take place in the Detroit area.

Would Your Area Like to Host the 2013

World Service Conference?

For more information, please contact the Conference Committee at

office@debtorsanonymous.org

Archives Issue A "Wish List"

DA's Archives have a wish list.

Since the General Service Board created an Archives Committee a little more than 3 years ago, Board members have been busy collecting, sorting, and cataloguing the thousands of bits of DA history that have been donated to the Fellowship. The cataloguing process has reached the point where they are beginning to identify which specific items are missing from the Archives collection.

Among the most-prized items that would help close some of the gaps in the current collection are issues of the G.S.B. Quarterly News, a newsletter that was published from 1997 to 1999 by the GSB. Some issues are missing, while others are in poor condition. Also being sought are issues of Board Call, another GSB newsletter that was published from 1999 to 2004. Again, a few issues are missing and clean copies are needed of others.

Another category of items being solicited are meeting directories. DA published several national and international meeting directories during the 1990s and early 2000s, and contributions of these would be greatly appreciated, along with older copies of local meeting lists.

Contributions to the Archives are always appreciated, and should be sent to the Archives, care of DA General Service Office, PO Box 920888, Needham, MA 02492.

Questions and comments can be directed to the office e-mail at office@debtorsanonymous.org

The DA Focus

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Sue F., Class B (non-debtor) Trustee

I first learned of Debtors Anonymous in the fall of 2009, when a Class B (non-debtor) trustee asked if I might be interested in serving as a board member, also as a non-debtor. We live in the neighboring States and had crossed paths many times in our service to another fellowship. After several conversations and email exchanges, having visited the D.A. website a number of times, and taking the question to prayer, I submitted my resume and letter of intent to the General Service Board. I was elected by the G.S.B. in the spring of 2010 and ratified at the W.S.C. in Denver. This makes me a newcomer.

Though my service to D.A. is only beginning, my background includes almost 30 years of Twelve Step service at all levels. I am also blessed with the opportunity to carry a Twelve Step meeting into a woman's prison once a week.

Badges bearing the phrase "Service Is the Secret" are frequently seen around my home region. This has proven to be true in my own life and growth. We in recovery receive clear direction that we need to "perfect and enlarge our spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others."

It is through service that I have come to a deeper communion with myself, others, and my Higher Power. It is through service that I have learned about relationships, loyalty, responsibility, accountability, commitment and trust. Most religious and spiritual practices encourage dedication to service. My experience proves out the benefits.

So I now shift my service focus to Debtors Anonymous, a fellowship I knew nothing about less than a year ago. In my brief encounters with D.A. so far, I have learned a tremendous amount about debting as a disease, met a new group of friends walking a spiritual path, and, as I mentioned at the W.S.C., have fallen in love with this fellowship. I am renewed.

Love and Service, Sue F., Class B Trustee

Alexandra B-W, Class A Trustee

I came into Debtors Anonymous, desperate but defiant, twenty-five years ago this coming January. I can't say I never debted again, that's not my story. The result is that I know I never have to incur unsecured debt—just as I heard on Day 1. I've been through the Steps twice in D.A., once on debting, once on underearning, and gradually some of the self-protectiveness has fallen away. I have regular pressure-relief meetings, which keep my willingness open.

After serving as a GSR at the turn of the millennium, I promised myself that if my income stabilized I would make myself available to serve on the Board; I was elected this past April. At this year's WSC, I was dazzled by the delegates and my fellow Trustees. Our task is a gift: to seek in faith to follow the principles of the program. My fellow Board members wear their deep recovery lightly, there is much kindness, patience with the newbie, and good humor. The Class Bs' belief in our Fellowship and dedication to it are profoundly moving and inspiring.

My surrender continues to be progressive. Once upon a time, the power greater than me was the unexpected check. It has become love and the unexpected experience, in the light of the Tools, Steps, Traditions, and now, in baby steps, the Twelve Concepts. It is the knowledge that, come what may, there is help, as long as I reach out for it.

Love and service, Alexandra B-W