

**October
2013**

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D.A. Delegates Flock To Phoenix To Forge Annual Group Conscience

About 100 recovering debtors gathered in Phoenix, Arizona from August 14th to 18th to reflect on the state of Debtors Anonymous and, to forge our Fellowship’s conscience going forward.

The General Service Board reported to the GSRs and ISRs, and, through them, to the Fellowship. The Board committees, WSC committees, and caucuses presented 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 took time off from work to be there. With the continuous support of the GSB Conference Support Committee, the local Host Committee worked for over a year, selecting the hotel, planning meals, seeing to audiovisual and other tech needs, and organizing the Saturday Fellowship Day, gala and talent show. Beginning days before the Conference, the Host Committee and numbers of volunteers, some of them from hours away, supported 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 is the central annual event of Debtors Anonymous worldwide, the product of many thousands of hours and dollars. While the law requires the Board to report to the Fellowship once a year, our real purpose in gathering together is much more urgent than a stockholders meeting. To support the debtor in recovery, whether newcomer or not, and to reach

the debtor devastated by this ruthless compulsion but still unaware of Debtors Anonymous, perhaps living but one mile away from the hotel – this is our real purpose for meeting. Beginning on a Wednesday early evening, more than a hundred people gave themselves up to the process of determining the group conscience, our highest authority. We drew on our recovery, imagination, talents, generosity, and goodwill to labor together for a common purpose. Many of us experienced the deep rewards of service: the light heart of unselfishness, the love for sufferers we will never meet, trust built with people who were strangers just a few days before. On departure, Sunday afternoon, each delegate and trustee took with them the experience of a lifetime and a mandate for action from the whole Fellowship of D.A.

A first year delegate shared on our first committee call about her conference experience, ***“I thought I was going to the conference to collect information for my little group, and I came back entirely transformed in my view of the whole DA Fellowship.”***

Another delegate shared how amazed he was that we can get work done in a way that is respectful. Returning for his 2nd year on the same committee, imagine his surprise when he was the only returning member. Eight brand-new members brought a fresh new way to look at the issues. New ideas and broad thinking now motivate this energetic group. This experience has gotten him to look at things in new ways.

Working within the committee process at times seemed interminable before bearing fruit. Yet, those sometimes glacially slow procedures left room for many views and thereby for a power greater than any of us. In the end, seemingly miraculously, unity—substantial unanimity—was achieved.

General Service Board Committee Reports

Communications

Ways & Means Publishing Schedule and Proposed Content. The committee agreed that each issue of the W&M have one "seasonal" topic and one "committee-based" topic, whenever possible. Predicted publication dates are listed here. Please submit stories at least one month prior.

November 15, 2013 **February 15, 2014**
Solvent Holidays & HIP Taxes & BDA

May 15, 2014 **August 15, 2014**
Solvent Vacations Back To School & RDC
& History of D.A.

Conference Support

Welcome to our new ACM – Marcy E. and thanks to her for volunteering to be the committee secretary. WSC 2013 was a well-run conference – many thanks to the Phoenix Host Committee and their liaison (Alexandra B-W). The WSC 2014 site contract is signed! WSC 2015 was awarded to the DA NJ/PA (New Jersey / Pennsylvania) Inter-group with Philadelphia as the possible site. The GSB Chair has appointed Lawanda as the liaison to the WSC 2015 Host Committee.

Finance

A separate report is provided in this mailing and on the website – See "Member News"

International

The International Committee has undertaken actions that reflect D.A.'s increasingly international membership and are intended to reach the suffering debtor speaking languages other than English. A meeting's language can now be added to the meeting registration form; languages will also be added to the information on meetings that are already registered. Because only a fraction of foreign meetings are registered with the General Service Office (GSO), the General Service Board approved an international outreach letter intended to encourage foreign groups to register with the GSO. Int'l Com is shepherding the statement of pur-

pose and the changes to the Promises through the Spanish translation so that the updated "Deudores Anónimos" pamphlet can be reprinted. (The change to Tool Eight only requires deleting the second sentence.)

Literature Publications

The Literature Publications (Lit Pub) Committee of the General Service Board (GSB) is looking forward to a busy and productive Conference year. Some of the projects we will be focusing on are first and foremost, completing the publication of the second edition of *A Currency of Hope*. We will also work closely with Literature Services and the World Service Conference (WSC) Literature Committee to further the completion of D.A.'s Twelve and Twelve. Lit Pub also reviews pamphlets as they come up for reprint and will be including the newly approved statement of purpose on all pamphlets at that time. Also, members can download the newly approved version of the Tools and the Promises from Debtorsanonymous.org.

Literature Services

The second edition of *A Currency of Hope* continues through the editorial process. Literature Services is reviewing the WSC Literature Committee's comments on the final version of the Twelve Steps and has begun reviewing the second (final) draft of the Twelve Traditions. LitServ is collecting existing material for the Step and Tradition study guide, but further work on it has been tabled until LitServ completes its priorities. Writers have been approved for the "BDA: Clarity in Business and Personal Finance" and "Health Issues" pamphlets.

Long-Range Planning

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the General Service Board (GSB) is looking forward to a busy and productive Conference year. The major projects we will be focusing on are the future of the GSO. A lease was signed for five years in 2012, and we will be working with the Office committee to decide whether to continue in Needham, or move the office to another location. We will also talk about D.A.'s upcoming 40th anniversary and how to celebrate the event. LRPC also works with the archivist to

maintain D.A.'s history. There will also be four "Ask the GSB" calls this year.

Office

The Office Committee includes Joan R., secretary, Lawanda C., Alex B-W., and Pat B., chair. They meet once a month, per conference call, and twice a year face-to-face, to discuss ways in improving the functions of the office, to best serve the D.A. Fellowship. The calls do include Howard S., the general service office manager, during the first fifteen minutes of the discussion. Current and future items to discuss, but are not limited to, include:

- Aid the office manager, as he secures the part-time employee for office.
- Complete new employee handbook.
- Review, and discuss with Finance committee, possible upgrade or replacement of 2nd computer.
- Encourage board to establish reserve fund to prepare for possible expansion/or relocation of GSO. Current office lease expires October, 2017.
- Continue to improve procedures concerning international literature orders.
- As per Issues and Concerns 10-13: Have asked I.O.C. to review other Fellowship's policies, procedures and cost factors for call in phone meetings.
- Researching ways to establish online registrations, literature orders, and contributions.
- Aided office manager in establishing a plan for storage of the 2nd edition of *Currency of Hope*.
- Is establishing remote access with Finance committee to aid in their work, as they serve the D.A. Fellowship.
- Recommended to Com Com, that all mailings included with the D.A. Focus, be posted on the website.
- Continue to cooperate with all WSC and GSB committees, as they try to improve the communications and function of the office.

WSC Committee and Caucus Reports

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE COMMITTEES AND CAUCUSES

Diversity Caucus

One of our most ambitious initiatives is to create a visual map of all current DA groups in the US, to support us in identifying the underserved areas of the US that need support in starting DA meetings. We are intending for this map to be available as part of the ongoing process to increase diversity of our membership at all levels.

We are also creating a process for new meetings to be generated in underserved areas. We have begun discussions with community leaders in the Fruitvale and West Oakland neighborhoods to get a first DA meeting in each location by the end of November 2013. We will announce the date, time and location once it is secured.

As part of our ongoing discussions, we are looking at ways to reach out to the debtor who still suffers among folks of a variety of backgrounds: low income, LGBT, African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific, and others. We will continue to reflect on best practices and report on our results at the 2014 conference in Skokie.

Other initiatives are under discussion, and we will report on them as the year progresses. If you have any further questions or you would like to get involved, please contact me at 510.467.4460 or andrewjackson-davis2010@gmail.com

Fellowship Communications

The Fellowship Communications Committee (FCC) facilitates communication and promotes collaboration among the debtor who still suffers, the Debtors Anonymous membership, the World Service Conference committees and caucuses, the General Service Office, and the General Service Board.

The 2013-2014 FCC has decided to focus on the following initiatives during the present service year.

1. The FCC will continue to develop and co-host Fellowship-Wide Conference Calls and recommend the following additions to this service:

a. Determine the parameters of success of these teleconference calls, and find ways to

measure the progress that the FCC is making.

b. Develop and implement an evaluation form to go along with each teleconference call, that members could complete after they participate on the call.

c. Continue collaboration with members of the other D.A. WSC Committees/Caucuses when planning Fellowship-wide teleconference calls.

2) The FCC will continue to monitor and publicize the Group Sponsorship service, respond to all group inquiries sent to the gsponsorship@gmail.com email address and follow up with the GSO in regards to possibly transferring this service to them. Group Sponsorship is a DA resource that:

- * Provides new, less experienced or struggling D.A. groups with resources that can help to grow or strengthen their meetings.
- * Assists new, less experienced or struggling D.A. groups to find a Sponsor Group.
- * Assists more established D.A. groups to become a Sponsor group for a less experienced group.

For more on Group Sponsorship, send an email to gsponsorship@gmail.com. Once you send your email, you will receive an auto-response containing resources and suggestions for potential Sponsor Groups, Sponsee Groups, and new or struggling groups. If you require further information you can reply to the auto-response with your questions. Someone will reply to your questions as soon as possible.

3. The FCC Accessibility Sub Committee will work to resolve issues regarding electronic and international access to (a) D.A. information and (b) D.A. Literature.

4. The FCC Survey Planning Initiative aims to support development of effective D.A. surveys.

5. The FCC's D.A. 40th Anniversary Planning initiative will explore ideas for this celebration and the process may include the collection of D.A. group success stories.

6. The FCC will continue its work to support distribution of information to the D.A. Fellowship at-large.

7. The FCC will work to refine the FCC

Mission Statement to include D.A. groups / meetings (in addition to "the debtor who still suffers, the Debtors Anonymous membership, the World Service Conference committees and caucuses, the General Service Office, and the General Service Board."

Additionally, the FCC is now also coordinating periodic teleconference calls between WSC Committee / Caucus chairs in the interest of fostering collaboration, communication and efficiency of action between the WSC Committees/Caucuses.

Internal Operations

The IOC (Internal Operations Committee) is currently working on obtaining information on the following:

- outsourcing WSC registration
- currency conversion costs for overseas groups and IGs ordering literature (will coordinate with the International Caucus)
- following up on WSO computer and networking upgrades (GSB is considering options)

When this information is collected, the IOC will share the data with the appropriate committee/caucus.

The IOC continues to work with its Board Liaison to respond to GSB Office Committee needs.

Note: Howard, the Office Manager, has hired a part time employee!

International Caucus

The caucus is currently researching website-related initiatives of previous WSC committees, to help generate a formal list of recommendations for new website content. The goal of this initiative is to help add value and provide support for non-US groups/members.

The International Caucus is communicating with and offering feedback to the GSB and UK Intergroup, as the concept of a European Regional Intergroup is being explored and discussed. Part of this work will include research into 12-Step/non-profit entities in various European countries.

The caucus is developing the format of a fellowship-wide conference call that will focus on

Continued on page 4...

WSC Committee and Caucus Reports and Office Reports

Service Positions

The D.A.GSB Is Seeking

One Class A (recovering-debtor) Trustee, One Class B (non-debtor) Trustee, and several Appointed Committee Members (ACMs).

All positions are on a volunteer basis.
See "Open Service Positions"
at www.debtorsanonymous.org



"Other" Contributions?

During the World Service Conference this year, a General Service Representative approached me and asked, "Isn't the General Service Board held to our 7th Tradition to decline outside contributions?"

He was pointing to a line item of the financial report that showed several hundred dollars in "other" donations. Group and individual donations, and income from interest have clarity. But what is "other"? I suggested he ask the GSB treasurer for clarification. However, time was running short and his question was never asked or answered.

Since I didn't know the answer either, I sent an email to Allen T., our Treasurer. Here is his reply: "**Other Contributions** is an income category used when the GSO cannot identify whether a contribution was made by a group or an individual."

Dear anonymous GSR, thank you for asking. As a Trustee, this was a question I didn't know needed to be asked. Keep the questions coming.

Love & Service
Sue F., GSB trustee



GSO Report

The GSO is pleased to report that a second employee has been hired and began work on October first. Our first part-timer has been with us since January 2010 and works 5-6 hours per week. Her primary responsibility is literature fulfillment. The new hire will work 15 hours / week and will have responsibility for contribution processing, database maintenance, email and telephone responses, and other duties as needed. Both employees are active members of the DA Fellowship. Our new hire came into DA in the Boston area in 1998, and later moved to a rural part of New England where she started a DA meeting. Fortuitously for our Fellowship, a desire to be near family brought her back to the Boston area. She was one of twenty-six people who responded to our Help Wanted posting on a local online job board (and it was posted for only two days).

The GSO is working with Finance and Lib Pub awaiting the delivery of the second edition of *A Currency of Hope*. Because of our limited storage space, the plan is to receive a partial delivery of the 4000 book print run, and have the printer hold and store about 1500 copies until needed, perhaps in Spring 2014.

We look forward to seeing the delivery truck back up to our door!

the *Growth and Support of DA Internationally*.

Literature

The Literature Committee has responded to two out of eight I&Cs: definition of unsecured debt and the creation of a DA for teens and/or families. We have chosen to respond to the two I&Cs from Spain in Spanish, out of respect for them and to increase the feeling of inclusion in an international organization.

We continue interviewing old timers for a series of articles on the history of DA. Please submit any names you think are relevant and we will reach out to them. We are closely examining the results of the Health Issues and Solvency survey, which are extensive and expose a large community of member debtors who struggle with solvency due to severe and ongoing health and health care cost challenges. Our call is on the 2nd Sunday of the month, 9 pm EST, 6pm PST. Please feel free to listen in.

Technology

For the 2013-2014 conference year, the Technology Committee is dividing our work amongst four sub-committees, whose mission statements are as follows:

(1) RFP - The RFP sub-committee's mission is to produce a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the creation of a new Debtors

Anonymous website that supports its bership and our primary purpose in reaching out to the newcomer. Special consideration will be given to budget, user experience, functional requirements, technology, content management and opportunities for expansion. (2) Paperless Conference - In order to support the primary purpose of Debtors Anonymous, and to honor and protect our planet, our mission is to present digital options of written communications, provide efficiency, convenience, and simplicity with up-to-date information, and reduce costs and environmental impact. (3) Usability - To allow users to find the information they need on the DA website as quickly and painlessly as possible. (4) Tech Research - To research and recommend electronic literature, mobile apps, podcasts and other technologies to reach the newcomer, strengthen the DA fellowship and contribute revenue to DA.

2014 WSC Host Committee

The 2014 Host Committee is now developing their plan of action. They arranged their first committee meeting on September 28, 2013, to establish officers and sub-committees. This meeting will take place at the selected hotel, so the full committee can see the meeting rooms, lobby, etc. to aid in their planning.



Results of the 2013 World Service Conference

WSC BUSINESS DEBTORS ANONYMOUS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend that the publications committee consider changing the name of the Ways & Means® publication. "Ways and Means" is the name of the chief tax writing committee of the House of Representatives and may suggest government affiliation and create confusion. We suggest changing the name to more closely reflect the mission of the publication and improve engagement with the D.A. fellowship.
2. We recommend to the Technology Committee that the new website contain a BDA page with the following capabilities: (1) Links to other pages, (2) Upload audio clips with links, (3) E-commerce, (4) Blog, (5) Surveys, and (6) Post stories.

WSC CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MOTIONS:

1. That the bid by the D.A. NJ/PA Intergroup for hosting the 2015 WSC be accepted. MOTION PASSED unanimously.
2. That the WSC allow non-delegate D.A. fellowship members to audit the general session of the conference, with the purchase of a registration. MOTION RECOMMENDED.
3. That the WSC accept the revised John H. Scholarship Fund Guidelines. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the board creates and distributes a nationwide request to hotels for proposals for a 3 year contract for the WSC for 2016, 2017, and 2018. Bring the best proposals and cost benefit analysis to the 2014 WSC conference committee
2. Continuance of the 2013 WSC caucus meeting schedule as a permanent change.
3. Continuing the mid-year progress report conference call as an annual event as stated in Conference committee Motion 4, WSC 2012.

WSC FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The FCC recommends the addition of a check box on the annual group registration form to purchase copy(s) of the *D.A. Manual for Service*. For example, "Please send ___ copies of the current *D.A. Manual for Service* at the cost of US\$ [xx.xx] per copy including shipping" with the amount to be determined by the General Service Office.
2. The FCC recommends that the DA GSO provide a copy of the *D.A. Manual for Service* for all new groups for 2013/14 gratis. FCC will contribute up to \$240 towards this effort from its spending plan.

WSC HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, AND PRISONS COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We request all DA members to solicit and submit stories to our committee from HIP members or about relevant HIP work for future publication.
2. We recommend that our committee, in coordination with the Technology Committee, create a searchable database of Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons for the Western U.S. (CA, OR, WA), to be expanded to include other regions in future years.
3. We recommend that all of the D.A. Fellowship's efforts to connect with members in Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons proceed in an organic and respectful fashion, developing procedures and templates for future HIP committee and Board action.

Results of the 2013 World Service Conference

WSC INTERNAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend that the GSB continue to upgrade the office equipment. This upgrade would include replacing the second, outdated computer and establishing peer-to-peer networking.
2. We recommend that the GSB pursue outsourcing for the World Service Conference registration process, while payment for registration continue to be sent directly to the World Service Office.
3. We recommend that the GSB establish a designated fund as part of long-range planning for the expansion of the World Service Office in order to meet the needs of the growing fellowship.

WSC LITERATURE Committee

MOTIONS:

1. That the WSC accept the Responsibility Pledge: "I pledge to extend my hand and offer the hope of recovery to anyone who reaches out to Debtors Anonymous." MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
2. That the WSC accept the following statement of our purpose: "In D.A., our purpose is threefold: to stop incurring unsecured debt, to share our experience with the newcomer, and to reach out to other debtors." MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
3. Remove references to AA literature from the Tools. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
4. That WSC approve the Newcomer's Packet. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
5. Approve concept of revision and update of "Compulsive Spending" pamphlet to treat compulsive spending as a symptom of debting. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
6. Approve the concept of revision and update of "Anonymity" pamphlet. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity.
7. Remove the plagiarized section of the D.A. Promises. MOTION PASSED with substantial unanimity. New version to read:

In the program of Debtors Anonymous, we come together to share our journey in recovering from compulsive debting. There is hope. In working D.A.'s Twelve Steps, we have developed new ways of living. When we work D.A.'s Twelve Steps and use D.A.'s Tools, we begin to receive these gifts of the program:

- 1. Where once we felt despair, we will experience a newfound hope.***
- 2. Clarity will replace vagueness. Confidence and intuition will replace confusion and chaos. We will live engaged lives, make decisions that best meet our needs, and become the people we were meant to be.***
- 3. We will live within our means, yet our means will not define us.***
- 4. We will begin to live a prosperous life, unencumbered by fear, worry, resentment or debt.***
- 5. We will realize that we are enough; we will value ourselves and our contributions.***
- 6. Isolation will give way to fellowship; faith will replace fear.***
- 7. We will recognize that there is enough; our resources will be generous and we will share them with others and with D.A.***
- 8. We will cease to compare ourselves to others; jealousy and envy will fade.***
- 9. Acceptance and Gratitude will replace regret, self pity, and longing.***
- 10. We will no longer fear the truth; we will move from hiding in denial to living in reality.***
- 11. Honesty will guide our actions towards a rich life filled with meaning and purpose.***
- 12. We will recognize a Power Greater than ourselves as the source of our abundance. We will ask for help and guidance and have faith that it will come.***

All this and more is possible. When we work this program with integrity and to the best of our ability, one day at a time, a life of prosperity and serenity will be ours.



Results of the 2013 World Service Conference

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Use the health issues survey data to create a Health Issues and Solvency pamphlet.
2. Continue writing a series of articles documenting D.A.'s history, to be published in the Ways & Means® and to be considered for inclusion in [any future] Basic Text.
3. Continue to solicit writers, especially those with diverse stories.
4. Liaise with International Caucus regarding translations and Technology Committee regarding literature.
5. Regarding 2011 WSC motion on "Symptoms of Debting and Other Issues" prepare one or more articles for W&M on a description of the 'debtor and on other issues' (matters which left unaddressed lead to debting).

WSC PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

MOTION:

The PI Committee moves to replace the 2006 PI Manual with the revised 2013 PI Manual as service material for a free download from the website. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board work with the PI committee to find affordable solutions to have existing public service announcements broadcast nationally and internationally.

Meet the Board

Joan R., Class B Trustee

The 2013 Conference ratified four new Board members. The three new Class A trustees are Lawanda C. from Philadelphia, PA, Maureen C. from Berkeley, CA, and Michael A. from San Francisco, CA. The new Class B trustee is Joan R. from Albany, New York. Joan R. introduces herself in this issue.

I received a call one day from Arnold R. stating he would like to submit my name to serve as Class B Trustee on D.A. Board. We met while serving the General Service Conference of A.A. I told him I was available but would have to pray and talk with my service sponsor. He informed me of another past delegate I served with was on the D.A. Board and if I had questions I could speak with him.

My Higher Power really has a sense of humor. A few months prior my service sponsor and I had a conversation about continued service. She stated spiritual principles can be applied universally and you have experience and knowledge of Steps, Traditions and Concepts. After twenty-one years of sobriety I know there are no coincidences and service is vital to recovery.

Being unfamiliar with Debtors Anonymous, I spoke with current Board Members, a past Board Member, surfed the D.A. website, took the Debt Quiz and read D.A. literature. With excitement, I submitted my resume, was elected and ratified, by phone, at the W.S.C. 2013. It is an honor and privilege for this newcomer to serve the growing fellowship of Debtors Anonymous.

As I now focus on service to Debtors Anonymous, I am grateful for the opportunity. I pray this life-saving message and this Fellowship will continue to grow and be available to debtors around the world!

Concept 3

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the groups, the World Service Conference, and the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, it is suggested that we endow these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision" in order to ensure effective leadership.

The "Right of Decision" refers to the right of every person in service to act in accordance with her or his best understanding of the will of the Higher Power in carrying out duties that have been assigned. Except in the most extreme cases, as where an employee refuses to carry out the direct instructions of the GSB acting within its delegated authority, each member of D.A. is responsible to his or her conscience. Again, the ideal of "trusting our trusted servants" plays a role.

Even more important in understanding this Concept is the idea of honesty. The Right of Decision can be exercised only in the context of a true dedication to honesty in all things. Each person seeking to exercise this right must perform a thorough examination of conscience and honest evaluation of motives in doing so. All too often, what seems at first glance like a prompting of principle turns out to be an exercise in rationalization. Motives such as pride or anger can be disguised in the cloak of this Concept. Sometimes our character defects like sloth or a desire to please prompt our actions. Anyone who seeks to stand on this right must be clear in her or his own mind as to what they are doing and why.

This right is exercised most frequently by the GSR or ISR. A GSR who has actively sought out the conscience of the group and who comes to the Conference with a clear idea of what the group wants may be presented with new facts or arguments that did not occur to the group's members in their discussion. The GSR may learn of needs of other groups or regions of the country or world which the group did not consider. In such a case, the GSR may appropriately exercise the Right of Decision to reach a conclusion different from that of the group and vote contrary to the group's direction. In doing so, the person exercising that right must be prepared to justify his or her actions to the group.

However, the right applies to all levels of service. Thus a group officer has the right of decision in carrying out the functions of the office she or he occupies. At the most mundane level, the group setup person has the right to choose the cookies to be served. At a more important level, the group Chair has both the duty and right to prevent an individual from disrupting an ongoing meeting. In each case, the decision maker must operate within the constraints of delegated authority: if the group has determined that chocolate cookies must be served, the setup person cannot choose to serve lemon cookies; the Chair cannot ban an individual from group meetings without consulting both the group and the Third Tradition.

Similarly, a Trustee who has attended the Conference and voted in favor of a motion may find, upon further consideration, that the needs of D.A. would be seriously undermined if the motion were implemented. Facts later discovered may make a course of conduct appear harmful to the Fellowship. Or, the same Trustee may have voted against the motion and continue to conclude that its implementation would violate a Tradition or Concept of World Service. In such cases, the Trustee would be free to refuse implementation. In that event, the Trustee, and the whole Board if it agrees with him or her, should be prepared to explain and justify the decision.

This duty to report back to the group is extremely valuable in ensuring that the Right of Decision is exercised appropriately. The person who seeks to invoke this principle should always consider the report that must be rendered and the duty of accountability.

In the end, the Right of Decision provides insurance against the dangers of micromanagement and second guessing. When an individual has been entrusted with the authority to perform a function, he or she should ordinarily be able to act without fear of unjustified criticism because someone else might have decided differently. While acting within the scope of her or his authority, one should reasonably expect to be allowed to act as seems fit. Honest decision making should never be condemned, if it is the result of careful, considered, and prudent thought.

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