

THE DA focus

The Quarterly World Service Newsletter for the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

June
2009

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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.

Windowshades: Not Affordable

There have been numerous requests for the creation of two DA banners or pull-down window shades for use in meeting rooms, one with the 12 Steps and the other with the 12 Traditions. Such products are often available for purchase in other 12-Step Fellowships.

The Literature Publications Committee of the General Service Board has investigated what it would take to create them for DA, and found that, given our relatively small size, the cost to produce them would be prohibitive.

The committee has decided to remove them from DA's current publishing plan, and recommends revisiting the issue at such time as the Fellowship grows enough to make their production and sale financially feasible.

A Cleaner, Clearer Look Is Coming For DA's World Service Website

A major redesign of the Debtors Anonymous World Service website with a less-cluttered appearance and improved organization is expected to go online later this year.

The new design, which features a completely reorganized information architecture as well as a fresh look, has been the major project during the 2008-2009 Conference year for the General Service Board's Information Technology Committee.

Prototypes of the new design and architecture are being tested, and will go to the GSB for approval shortly. If approved, the committee will then "build out" the site with dozens of pages of content, some of it imported from the existing website and some newly created.

DA has long sought to use the latest technology to carry its message to the debtor who still suffers. In 1993, the General Service Office created a "computer pen pal" group to bring users of the then-unusual computer technology together to share their recovery. Five years later, DA's first website was created at www.debtorsanonymous.org by a former trustee, Fred F. of North Carolina.

At first rudimentary, the website has grown with the times and with technology. Greater amounts of information have been added each year, and periodic redesigns have taken place. But with a large increase in the amount of information, the site's home page and some interior pages have come to be cluttered with dozens of links, making it sometimes difficult for users to find what they're looking for.

Another important aspect of the redesign is a move to a more modern website development and delivery platform called a Content Management System (CMS). Rather than a conglomeration of dozens of unrelated individual pages featured under the current design, the CMS offers a database driven system that will enable global interface changes and virtually synchronized production for web people doing DA service from multiple locations.

A fresher, more modern look with fewer links on the home page will be one of the keys to clarity. Users will enter an area of interest through a small number of "channels" each with a number of related sub-areas. For example, one channel or area will contain all the information of interest to newcomers; another will detail the various types of services offered by DA to members and groups, and a third will explain the DA message to all who seek to learn more.

While all the details have not yet been finalized, the new site will sport a cleaner, more attractive typography and additional information on how to contact DA and details on upcoming DA events.

In related news, the World Service Conference's Technology Caucus has also been working for much of the year on a template that can be used by DA Intergroups for their own local websites. The template would allow Intergroups with limited resources and expertise the tools to build professional-looking local websites with up-to-date, accurate information about DA and its 12-Step program of recovery.

Office Committee

The most exciting thing that has happened for the Office Committee this quarter is that we have invited Howard S., the GSO Office Manager to joined us for the first half of our monthly Office Committee call. His initial participation was on April 26, 2009. He brought us valuable insight as to the function and the needs of the General Service Office. We feel that this move will allow us the board (GSB) to receive first hand information and allow us to act on issues related to office more timely.

The Office Committee has open discussion on a second employee being added to the staff at the General Service Office (GSO). This new employee would have to be fellowship and service oriented vs. administrative. The Office had further discussion of the scope of volunteers working in the office.

Literature Publications Committee

The Literature Publications Committee is in the final stages of approving a contract writer for a book to be written about the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of DA. The DA pamphlet entitled "AA Literature" is now a free download on the DA website. We have hired a professional translator to translate the Debtors Anonymous pamphlet to Spanish and anticipate that available for purchase soon.

We are also reviewing volunteer submissions of pamphlets translated into French that have been offered to DA. Ensuring that the proper contracts and assignments of rights are obtained by writers and translators is part of the duty of this committee and we have sought legal advice in that area to be certain that DA's interests are protected with regard to applicable copyright and contract laws.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee (NomCom) proposed a region structure change so that more potential trustee candidates could be available and the Canadian Provinces would correlate better with nearby states. The revision was approved by the General Service Board. Two trustee candidates were interviewed by NomCom and recommended to the GSB. Both candidates were approved- Eileen N. (NJ) and Marci W. (UT). A slate of trustee officers for 2009-2010 is being prepared.

InfoTech Committee

Info Tech has been spending most of its time with the website re-design. We have a working draft of a design that Jon L (our ACM) and Alan (Chair) have been working on. Our goal is to have a demonstration of the website re-design to show at the 2009 World Service Conference in August.

We have also had numerous Find A Meeting

edits that our programmers had to make to tweak the database and the actual Find A Meeting page. We have also made sure that website statistics are a part of our reporting. Here is a breakdown of our stats:

Date Range: January 1, 2009 - April 30, 2009

Hits: 727,079 (A 'Hit' is simply a successful request to your web server from a visitor's browser)

Page views: 331,417 (A 'Page view is defined as a request from a visitor's browser for a displayable web page)

Downloads: Top 3 downloads:
The 12 Steps - 3,029
The Tools - 2,537
The 12 Concepts - 1,611

Public Information Committee

The Board's Public Information (PI) committee has been working to increase the number of DA's who have volunteered to be contacts in response to requests from the media. A number of volunteers were signed up for the DA media training phone meetings that have been organized by the World Service Conference's Public Information committee.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee continues to expand the quarterly recovery newsletter, Ways & Means. Another 14-page issue, longest in DA history, is in the works. An article of great historical significance to DA is also planned, as is a comprehensive history of the General Service Office.

The DA eNews continues to inform more members of the Fellowship. Subscribers have grown from a few hundred to more than 5000 in less than two years. The DA Focus is considering running regular updates on the status of DA literature projects

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets monthly via telephone to review and discuss all aspect of DA's finances. In addition, the Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer meet weekly with the GSO office manager to review upcoming invoices and bills due. The committee continues to work with the 2009 WSC Host Committee as the Conference draws near, along with its work to finalize various documents and policies and procedures to ensure that the GSB and DA are in compliance with all relevant state and federal statutes. A Group Treasurer's Manual, originally drafted and proposed by the WSC Resource Development Committee, is going through the final stages of revisions within the Finance Committee.

Conference Support Committee

The Conference Support Committee (CSC) has

been working on a number of fronts over the last few months. With the assistance of the Finance Committee and the Dallas Host Committee, we finalized the 2009 Registration Packet for distribution to GSRs and ISRs in April, the earliest completion date yet. This Packet is available on the DA website for downloading. In preparing the Packet we were also able to help keep registration costs for the WSC in line by reducing the cost by \$100.00 per registrant from the amount originally planned.

We have also prepared a document outlining the composition, scope and procedure of the Committee's work, for future approval by the GSB. Currently, we are working on a revision of the credentialing process for the WSC and an updated Service Manual for GSRs and ISRs. We are helping with the planning for two telephone training sessions in the next few months, and updating the list of Motions and Recommendations from the WSC and its Committees over the last twelve years.

We are also looking into preparation of a WSC Committee starter kit and future improvements in telephone conference calls to introduce newcomers to service at the WSC level.

Long-Range Planning Committee

At the 2008 World Service Conference the Five Year Plan became the responsibility of the Long Range Planning Committee. The World Service Conference requested that the Five Year Plan "shall include but not be limited to" a vision for DA Fellowship, a mission statement, goals, objectives, capability analysis, trend analysis, action plan and prosperity spending plan".

This has proved a major undertaking for a Board three members shy of its full complement of Trustees. While the World Service Conference of Debtors Anonymous has, since the first Conference in 1987, provided yearly reports to the Fellowship, until recently there has been neither the manpower nor the finances to allow for a systematic collection of relevant statistical information.

The Long Range Planning Committee has been compiling information for the various elements of the Five Year Plan and expects to have a working document available for the review of the full Board by the end of May.

ACMs Sought

Several committees of the General Service Board are accepting applications for the position of Appointed Committee Member. ACMs are DA members who have special areas of expertise and have served successfully in World Service level positions. The qualifications and application procedures for ACM positions are available in the GSR/ISR Manual, which is posted on the DA website.

There are eight committees and three caucuses that meet at each annual World Service Conference to work on DA's business. Here are some highlights of the work the 2008-09 committees and caucuses have undertaken over the past few months.

Literature Committee

The WSC Literature Committee continues to review all existing DA pamphlets for their relevance to DA's primary purpose, as requested by the GSB. They anticipate having their review of all pamphlets complete by the upcoming WSC, along with their related recommendations. They will also review A Currency of Hope, but there is a good chance that this will not be completed prior to the Conference.

The Literature Committee meetings are well attended and the committee has remained on task and focused throughout the year.

Business Debtors Anonymous

The 2008-2009 Business Debtors Anonymous committee now has working drafts of two, WSC concept approved pamphlets: The Annual BDA Business Plan and the BDA Numbers Booklet. Individual writers have been assigned for both pieces. These designated writers will work with Literature Services throughout the literature approval process. The committee has voted to recommend to Literature Services that the BDA Newcomer piece be combined with the proposed DA newcomer pamphlet. While work continues on the BDA Step Study Guide Supplement the committee is aware that no action will be taken until the DA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book is written. The BDA Group Sponsorship subcommittee reports that a Dallas DA group is now sponsoring two groups from Oklahoma City. The BDA Matching Individuals for Sponsorship and PRGS subcommittees has created two telephone sponsoring groups. These groups are using the AA Big Book to work their way through all Twelve Steps.

Conference Committee

The WSC 2009 packet is complete and on line. I like to personally thank Peggy R. & members of the CSC Committee, WSC 2009 Host Committee, WSC 2008 Host Committee Chair, and Steve Booth and Brian Funk, Sheraton Hotel Staff, for their tireless effort to get this done. Our primary issue was to come with a menu that was both affordable and

accommodating to all who attend this conference. I want to also thank Chris S. for his work on this committee, too.

FCC

The FCC is hard at work to complete it's Issues and Concerns that were assigned to them at the 2008 World Service Conference. The FCC has also created a subcommittee to deal with the development of the Adopt A Loner program. This sub committee meets on Mondays and is doing a great job. The FCC is also creating an Action plan to take over the Literature Grant administration.

Public Information

Spanish Outreach has created a flier to inform people about the Spanish language online meeting "Tesoro." A motion was passed to ask the board to approve putting the flyer on the DA website, to be submitted for the GSB meeting in May.

The Group Sponsorship flier that was voted on and approved by last year's PI committee was presented to this year's committee. They agreed that it should be published in the DA Focus as originally planned.

Hospitals, Institutions, Prisons

Responded to a prisoners letter by sending him a copy of A Currency Of Hope.

H.I.P. Committee voted in a new member, Carolyn H. who brings a weekly D.A. meeting to woman incarcerated in Wyoming. H.I.P. committee agreed to supply this meeting with some literature. Pat B. is in the process of being "screened" as a volunteer to bring D.A. to a prison in South East Pennsylvania. Committee continues to search for ways to carry the message of D.A. to those suffering with compulsive debt.

Internal Operations

The WSC Internal Operations Committee has spent the past several months working on an e-commerce proposal that Could provide for

electronic payments for contributions to the General Service Office as well as literature sales. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the proposal and has forwarded it to the General Service Board for its consideration.

Intergroup Caucus

The Intergroup Caucus meets monthly and its members are reaching out to DA telephone meetings to see if there is an interest in creating an Intergroup for telephone meetings, with the intent to assist in the creation of such an Intergroup if need be. Members of the caucus represent Intergroups from all over the US and they work together to address questions and concerns that come up in various local areas.

Technology Caucus

The Tech Caucus has gone through some loss of membership but continues to press on. One project that Tech Caucus has taken on is the development of a DA website template for any intergroups or individual groups who want an Internet presence. This template would be a standardized template with the correct versions of the steps, tools and promises.

Another project is to have workshops by phone. There are a lot of DA members that attend phone meetings that don't have the capability to attend a share-a-day so the idea is to have workshop on the phone. The workshop last approx. 2 hours and can be on any topic. The moderator decides on the topics and finds speakers for that workshop.

Diversity Caucus

The Diversity Caucus continues to create and discuss questions to give to the WSC Committees/Caucuses concerning diversity issues. They have also discussed the possibility of proposing the concept of a diversity pamphlet and creating a diversity webpage for the DA website.

WSC Host Committee

No Report

Sponsorship: Groups Offer Mutual Support

Group sponsorship is a tool that is being used increasingly throughout DA. It is a simple and informal process defined as an established DA group sponsoring another group that expresses a desire to be sponsored, and/or working with individuals who want to start a DA group.

Modeled on the sharing of experience, strength, and hope that happens in individual sponsorship, group sponsorship could include such actions as providing Pressure Relief Meetings, sharing literature, exchanging phone lists, giving support with business meetings or share-a-days, offering temporary individual sponsorship to newcomers, mentoring trusted servants in service positions, and providing guidance in the use of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

In DA, there are many effective tools to help in working a solid program. For many members, it's most powerful when they can hear firsthand from others that the program works, how it works, and how meetings learn to thrive.

Groups that would like to sponsor or be sponsored can contact another meeting they think would be a good fit or contact the Public Information Committee at gsponsorship@gmail.com

The DA Focus

Produced by the General Service Board of Debtors Anonymous

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Debtors Anonymous Spending Plan to Actual

	PLAN 7/1/2007 to 8/31/2008	ACTUAL 7/1/2007 to 8/31/2008
REVENUE		
Literature Sales	\$ 59,925	\$ (3,081)
Group Contributions	\$ 32,250	\$ 606
Individual Contributions	\$ 18,750	\$ 5,168
Other sales	\$ 600	\$ 7
Invitation to Prosperity	\$ -	\$ -
World Svc. Month Contributions	\$ 1,875	\$ (1,600)
12 & 12 Book Appeal	\$ -	\$ -
JH Scholarship Fund	\$ 5,250	\$ (4,040)
Interest Income	\$ 2,475	\$ (866)
Misc. Income	\$ 75	\$ 265
World Service Conference	\$ 5,250	\$ 48,400
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 126,450	\$ 44,859
COST OF GOODS SOLD		
Phamphlet Printing	\$ 16,530	\$ (3,280)
Book Printing	\$ 3,420	\$ (517)
Audio Visual Cost	\$ 285	\$ (11)
Production Cost	\$ 570	\$ (465)
Shipping & Postage	\$ 6,555	\$ (247)
Shipping Supplies	\$ 1,140	\$ (644)
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 28,500	\$ (5,164)
GROSS PROFIT	\$ 97,950	\$ 50,023
EXPENSE		
Board Administration	\$ 4,988	\$ (2,584)
Board Travel	\$ 15,000	\$ 579
ACM Admin	\$ -	\$ -
General Administration	\$ 34,695	\$ (23,171)
Office Administration	\$ 10,856	\$ (4,516)
Payroll Expense	\$ 35,667	\$ 1,872
Other Related Expenses	\$ 11,625	\$ 41,208
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 112,830	\$ 13,119
NET INCOME FROM OPERATIONS	\$ (14,880)	\$ 36,904
Other Revenue & Expenses		
Funds Transferred from Reserve Account	\$ 19,339	\$ (19,339)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ 4,458	\$ 17,566

Note: Unaudited—for information purposes only.