

JAN/FEB 1989

Ways & Means

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"STATE OF THE UNION" LETTER FROM THE GSB

Dear Fellow DA's:

Those of us currently serving as your Board of Trustees voted at our last meeting in January to use *Ways & Means* to communicate with you about the current state of our national finances. As most of you know, a small group of DA members dubbed the Development Fund Committee has been actively working to make DA's members aware of the current financial needs of the fellowship and to ask groups and individuals to contribute to national fundraising efforts.

There are three primary goals of this fundraising: (1) to provide start-up funds for a DA national office, including funds for equipment, etc., (2) to provide a prudent reserve for the on-going running of the office, and (3) to provide funds for trustee travel so that our Board will reflect a national rather than a regional viewpoint and so that communications can be enhanced.

As of January 14, 1989, our

treasury was as follows:

Literature acct*	\$5,997.81
Gen'l acct**	424.36
Development Fund***	3,101.64
TOTAL \$9,523.81	

* For development and printing

** Contributions from groups

*** Purpose described in previous paragraph.

To the best of my knowledge, after review of old records, this represents the most solvency and prosperity that Debtors Anonymous has ever had as an organization. It's something we can all feel very proud of since we are the ones who, "one dollar at a time," have created it.

GSB Vote in January

Of course, our organization continues to grow and its needs, especially the need for a place to house our Central Office, are also growing. The board voted at its January meeting to form a committee in New York to begin to look for such an office. We hope to rent one soon. We also voted to begin to give each trustee (continued on p 4)

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DA's "LANGUAGE" AND THE GSO VISION

We try to speak in the "language of the heart" in Debtors Anonymous. It's a language familiar to any of us who have suffered under a burden of debt, a language of compassion for those who still suffer from feeling that "there is not enough."

Our common language is helping us learn how to build prosperity in our lives and to build this fellowship to the point where we're quite "grown up" now. We can look with excitement at our realistic needs for a General Service Office (GSO) to answer inquiries, reach out to people still living with the burden of debt, coordinate our conferences, keep our trustees working, print literature, keep the channels of communication within DA open, and support our fellowship in the process.

That's a tall order, isn't it!! Yes, but it's a worthy Vision for a fellowship of people who are learning to experience the miracle of abundance of pocketbook and spirit.

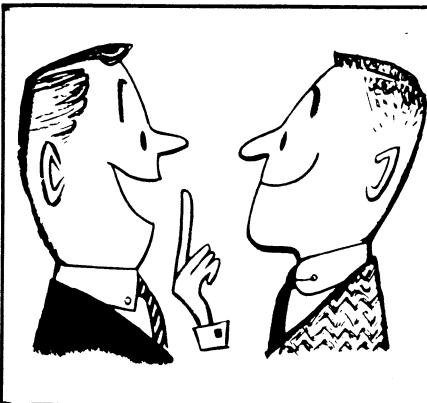
John H., founder of DA, talked about the importance of having a "Vision" of what you want to accomplish at the Winter Lights luncheon in San Francisco in January. "Prosperity is the ability to proceed with hope. Abstaining without a Vision is hopeless; it would bring only despair. I try to remember that the vision of what I am and what I want to become is here now, not in the future. I have to 'be here now' with the vision and the hope, even though the evidence that I will achieve it isn't always there. I have to believe that there is enough."

Keeping the Vision Alive

The GSO Vision was born when members of the fellowship first asked for a DA "National Office." In response to that request, the DA Board of Trustees said, "Go out to the DA membership and raise the necessary funds to get one going." To keep the Vision alive, a small group of DA members known as the General Service Development Fund committee has met once a week since May of 1988 – lately they've been meeting on Friday mornings in a New York coffee shop. Out of these meetings have come three mailings based on the 9th Tradition, a collection from the CSRs at the September 88 Conference, a fund raiser luncheon in the San Francisco Bay area, and two \$500 contributions from individuals. The Fund has national co-chairs, a writing chairperson, an art director, a liaison person to Ways & Means (thanks for the news, Pam M.), a finance committee liaison, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Launch of Face to Face Appeals

In April, DA's "National Anniversary Month," the Development Fund committee will start its Face to Face Appeals for individual contributions



of up to \$500. April 28, DA's 13th Anniversary Day, will be the kickoff of the campaign. DA needs these substantial contributions from people who can give effortlessly. (What does "effortlessly" mean? Think of it this way: We're going on a picnic. If you have a limousine in your garage, bring it along. If you don't, please don't go out and rent one.)

The Spirit of the Face To Face Appeals

Alex K., the national chairman for this appeal, described how the fund-raising is in keeping with the spirit of the DA traditions: "As much as our common welfare depends on our unity (Tradition One), without a strong and vital GSO we will have little chance of carrying the message of recovery to all who need it (Tradition Five). Faced with the need for a home for the expanding role of the GSO, the time has come for all of us to practice our self-support (Tradition Seven) of the fellowship.

"Yet, the question arises, 'How can DA raise money? In fact, how can DA raise \$50,000 for the first year's spending plan for the GSO?' In response, we have uncovered a multitude of attitudes, feelings, opinions, suggestions, experiences, and demands about how to accomplish the task. Taken as a group conscience (Tradition Two), these expressions urge us to proceed in an 'all-inclusive' spirit of 'attraction not promotion' (Tradition 11), keeping focused on 'principles before personalities' (Tradition 12).

"The **SPIRIT** of how we raise money, therefore, is as important to us as the **METHOD** we use."

(continued on p 3)

GSO VISION (cont'd from p 2)

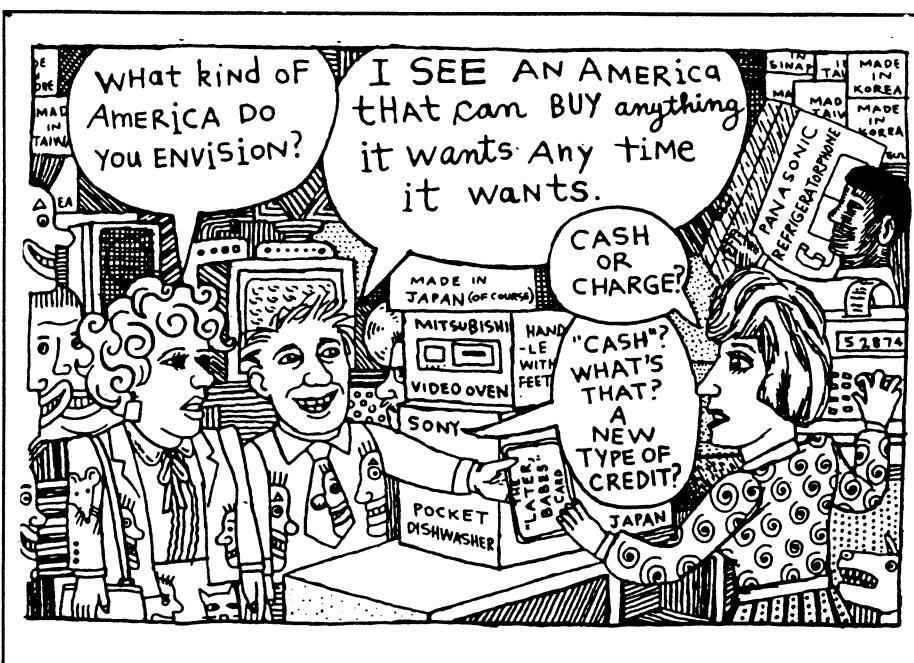
GSRs CAN HELP

How? By being ready to receive the names of those who want to contribute to the FACE TO FACE APPEAL. If desired, we will send two people to visit potential contributors to explain our plans for the GSO.

With your help, we can all use the language of the heart to keep the Vision alive and to build a GSO together. We have eight months to complete our goal. We would like to open the office in October after the '89 World Conference.

CASH OR CHARGE?

Nancy L. from Boston submitted the cartoon below. The cartoonist is Mark Alan Stamaty; the cartoon appeared in the Sept/Oct 1988 issue of the *Utne Reader*. Thanks, Nancy.



GOD IS SO CLEVER!

When I give service, I get out of myself, and when I get out of myself, I allow God to take over. That's when my life gets better and I start to grow. That's when the pain goes away and serenity sets in.

Giving service in DA has the same ripple effect as giving service in any other program or organization.

In sponsoring, we share our experience with people who are still in pain and struggling with issues. We focus on helping them grow and then the miracle happens -- when they are growing, so are we, as sponsors. Many times the person being sponsored will share something that will bring up feelings for the sponsor. In taking an honest look at what lies behind those feelings, the sponsor keeps growing.

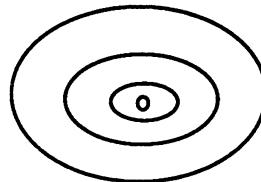
Conducting pressure groups gives me another opportunity to witness God's miracle. Most new members come to pressure groups full of apprehension and fear -- some have made themselves physically ill. It's very painful and embarrassing for most of us to "bare our souls" financially. Once the pressure

group starts, however, I usually see fear and pain replaced by relief and hope. Most people leave their pressure groups with smiles on their faces. Considering the pain they walked in with, that's truly a miracle.

Sharing at meetings is another way to give service, especially to newcomers. We all come into DA thinking we're "unique" -- the only adult in the world whose life has become unmanageable because we can't manage our money. We feel "less than," ashamed to admit the problem. But then we listen to fellow members share, and our ears perk up because we can relate to so much of what is said. When we share our feelings, particularly our pain, the newcomer finds out that he or she is not unique at all!

When we take on the job of "trusted servant" in DA, it's a vital service because it helps to ensure that DA will grow.

The bottom line to all of these ways of giving service is the ripple effect that takes place.



When we serve others, we reach out to compulsive debtors who are still suffering. Since DA is a program of attraction, not promotion, service is one of the vital ways we attract those who need help. The debtor who comes to that first meeting needs to be served so that he or she can feel safe enough to embrace the Twelve Step program and grow.

The beauty of it is that when newcomers are ready to make their own ripples, they will give serve and help yet another group of newcomers grow. The ripples get wider and wider.

God is so clever!

--Linda T., Torrance, CA

· GSB LETTER (con't from p 1)

who has traveling expenses \$100 toward such expenses, if requested. The funds for these two expenses will come from the Development Fund.

The Board's Literature Committee is very close to submitting the three new pieces of literature for printing, and there are ample reserves in the literature account for this purpose. The Development Fund will be continuing to approach the DA membership for funds to further equip, then staff, the office.

Suggested New Split in \$\$\$

What is clear, however, is that the General Account -- our main ongoing source for paying operating expenses -- is not meeting the DA fellowship's needs. So, in January, the Board of Trustees revisited our policy of recommending to groups how their revenues should be split between the local and national levels -- after each group has met its expenses and established its own prudent reserve, of course.

Old-timers on the Board pointed out that the DA policy of 60% for local expenses and 40% for national was adopted five years ago when DA was very young and Intergroups in all parts of the country were just barely getting started. It was felt at that time that the majority of funds should stay with local groups in order to allow them to build a firm foundation. The percentage was adopted from AA, because DA had no experience of its own.

Now, five years later, local DA strength has been firmly established, and local groups are now needing and wanting the services of a "National Office," which the GSB has

been hard-pressed to provide, due to a lack of funds.

As a result, the DA Board of Trustees has decided to ask groups to reverse the percentage of contributions -- that is, to send 50% to their local Intergroups and 50% to the National Office. The Board thinks this decision is in keeping with our DA program of recovery in the sense of asking for what will fulfill our current needs.

GSRs Asked to Report Change in Policy to Groups

We sincerely hope GSRs (or other members who receive this newsletter) will report to their groups this change in DA policy. We also hope that individual debtors, as well as DA groups and Intergroups -- by group conscience -- will continue to respond to the national needs of DA at this very special time in our development.

All of us need to feel confident that, at any time, when a suffering debtor reaches out to seek our help, we can be there! Thank you for your support.

In love and service,
Marjie M., Chair,
Board of Trustees

A RECOVERY STORY

In May 1985, overwhelmed by debt and out of control with his credit cards, Ken T. of Boston voluntarily permitted his bank to repossess his car. He couldn't manage the payments and still meet his monthly living expenses. Last June he bought another car (his first in three years) by paying cash -- and he even had enough money for the insurance. During these last four years,

Ken has been working the program of Debtors Anonymous.

For years, Ken had fought with over-the-limit credit cards, with bounced checks, and with compulsive spending. Periodically, after overspending, Ken would move back to his father's house to save the money he needed to pay creditors. He says he sometimes felt like a fraud, overextending himself to counter his low self-esteem, pretending to be something "better." He says he was always talking about what he was going to do, yet he never managed to accomplish any of the things he boasted about.

Ken finally felt sick and tired of being sick and tired, and he surrendered in DA. Things didn't change overnight, but in time with the willingness to take the program one day at a time, doing the best he could do for that one day, Ken's life has changed dramatically.

"DA has given me a multitude of wonderful gifts," he says, "like a savings account, vacations horseback riding in Britain and California (a lifelong dream), and the many friends who have come back into my life because of the amends I made as part of working the 12 Steps of the DA program. Their pictures line the walls of my apartment."

Ken no longer lives on the edge. He credits the 12 Steps with restoring his spiritual life. "I'm at peace with who I am. I'm loved and cared for by many people and I can let that in today. I've had a lot of service jobs in DA, and I follow the steps and traditions as best I can -- all this has helped me find solvency and serenity in DA. Keep coming back!"