

WAYS & MEANS®

Spring 2003

\$2.00

SPRING SPOTLIGHT:

Using The Tools of D.A.

How My PRG Touched Me!

Already an addict and alcoholic, I found myself \$150,000 in debt and the clock running out. Before my world imploded and destroyed me completely (and rarely having a good night's sleep anymore), I broke down to a couple of old AA friends who immediately took me to a BDA (BODA at that time) meeting.

Once the guest speaker began, I knew instantly that this was the place I needed to be. After attending more meetings, I realized that this was going to be the program for me to finally work the 12 steps at long last. I had never heard many of the words or phrases they used in DA in any AA meetings...but I was determined to take it all in and give it the chance to help me.

Fortunately I found a sponsor early on

who, to my great astonishment, not only gave me so much of his valuable time, but would never accept my constant thanks for this. He explained to me that allowing him to help me was beneficial to himself as well. It finally made sense to me...so now I thank God for delivering such a wonderful person to aid me with so many of my issues, and of course, not the least, debting!

“... virtual strangers...were so graciously going to give of themselves and their time...this was a very new experience...”

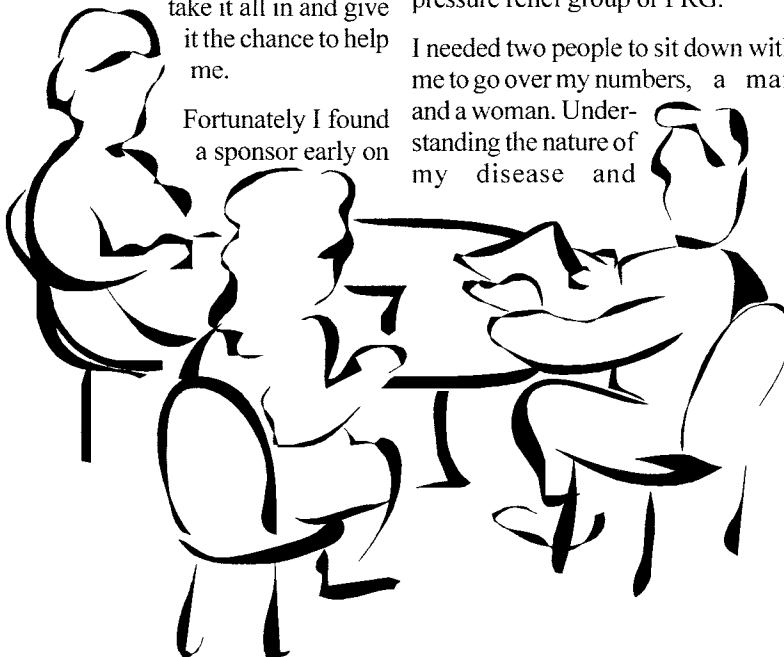
After going over how important it is to keep my numbers on a daily basis, my sponsor encouraged me to set a pressure relief group or PRG.

I needed two people to sit down with me to go over my numbers, a man and a woman. Understanding the nature of my disease and

debting, he advised me to call a woman named Sharon thinking she'd be perfect for me. Initially my response was “I've never met her, have never been at a meeting with her, nor had any experience with her...am I really supposed to call her and ask her to just give me an hour or more of her time?” His answer of course was simply “Yes.” I did call her and after talking briefly over the phone, she agreed to be a part of my first PRG. The next slot of the man was going to take a bit more doing and scheduling, but once I had asked the third guy from the list of men my sponsor gave me, he eagerly agreed having only just met me for the first time (the first two had too many scheduling conflicts).

So there I was on my “PRG Day,” sitting across the table from two virtual strangers, who were so graciously going to give of themselves and their time...this was a very new experience for me ...not just the PRG, but strangers giving of their time, and actually wanting nothing in return.

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A Quarterly Newsletter For the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous



Go Ahead . . . Take The Time

Tina D.

(Wednesday / Glendale, CA)

Time. We have plenty of it – and then, none at all. “I don’t have enough time,” I say or “the day is dragging too long.” Why don’t I have enough time to write when the day is filled with hours of work – an “A” job, “B” job or “R-responsibility” job and yet, the day is also filled with miscellaneous errands and phone calls.

But, that is why I’m in D.A., in B.D.A. and in a Debtors with Time Issues meeting on Wednesday nights.

It is as if we’re striving towards something: to be solvent, to take responsibility for our actions and to show up for life – and yet there is not enough time: to play, to write, to dream, to walk down a sandy beach.

How often I had enough time to work, to show up in Downtown L.A. and to give a full 8 hours (or more) of my time each day. But, how do I show up for the life I want? How do I “make” time? I realize now it’s as easy as flipping a switch “on” or “off.”

Last January at my meeting I realized how much I wanted to earn from my poetry and not just teaching

poetry. I did it. I couldn’t find an “A, B, or R” job in the Fall. My book was to be completed in December. I had to use our wedding money to live on (I got married in August). It was a

“ . . . how do I show up for the life I want? How do I ‘make’ time? I realize now it’s as easy as flipping a switch ‘on’ or ‘off.’”

painful but realistic decision. But, I finished my book for which I had been awarded money to publish. For the first time since the beginning of my 12 years in D.A. I showed up each day to write. Of course, I had “time” – but I used it well. The process was both empowering and humbling.

Each day I chose my two hour block (and sometimes three) to write. I’d walk to the kitchen – a procession I practiced each day: I pressed my finger on the clock of the oven – “1 hour” and returned to my desk. I felt free. I turned the phone off – “there are no emergencies,” I’d say and after one hour and the sound of the buzzer – I’d proceed back to the kitchen and assign the next hour.

Why couldn’t I have done this before? “No matter,” I’d say “I’m doing it now.”

Several months have passed since then. My book is now published and I’ve stopped writing everyday. I have finally found lots of work, so time for writing has diminished, but I am now earning.

Having a deadline for the book was great, but now what? Is it a part of the human experience to life by deadlines, alone? I hope not. Writing this article reminded me how much I long to sit and write again each day – even if it’s only for one hour. It’s the consistency that I most desire.

The “M” word – maintenance: one of the most important concepts in program for me these days. How do I consistently earn, work on my art and my visions – and broaden my life – laugh more – be quiet and still, and breathe deeply as if there is plenty of good air and time to breathe it – while understanding that the time I do have will not last forever.



Ways & Means

A Quarterly Newsletter for the
Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

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Who Told You?

By Hannah (Monday BDA / Hancock Park, Los Angeles)

Spring
2003

*Who told you, little girl, that you ain't pretty?
Who told you, darlin' child, that you ain't smart?*

*Pretty as a peach,
Sharp as a tack...
Yes you are!*

Told you you was too big for your britches now, did they?

*Well, who are they?
And who told you?*

Who told you God ain't on your side?

*Told you he ain't lovin' you...
ain't wantin' you to shine...
ain't wantin' you to fly...
ain't wantin' to wrap you up
a big ol' pretty life,
as good as gold,
as fine as wine...
and give it to you straight away?*

Baby Love, who told you that?

*Told you you'd be lost now, did they?
Lost and alone, they said?
And left to wander, too, I bet!*

Wander 'round wonderin' where all YOUR goodness goes...

*Wanderin' and wonderin' if by wanderin'
you might find yours...
your tiny bread crumb-sized happiness,
'cause that's all you get, right?
'Cause that's what they told you, right?*

*If you was lucky, maybe,
you'd stumble on it in the dark, they said...
Maybe trip on your oh-so-small pebble of joy
while you grasp around in your tiny hiding room
of "I don't need me too much, don't mind me"-ness!*

Must be right, 'cause that's what they said, now, right?

Well, I don't know who told you, Girl...

*But...
whoever they was, they is, they pretend to be,
no matter how they squawk and peck
and claw at the flawless perfection of your pristine spirit...
Princess Child, they lie!*

*And I'll shout it for ya, too...
'Til you find your own Voice again,
"THEY LIE!"*



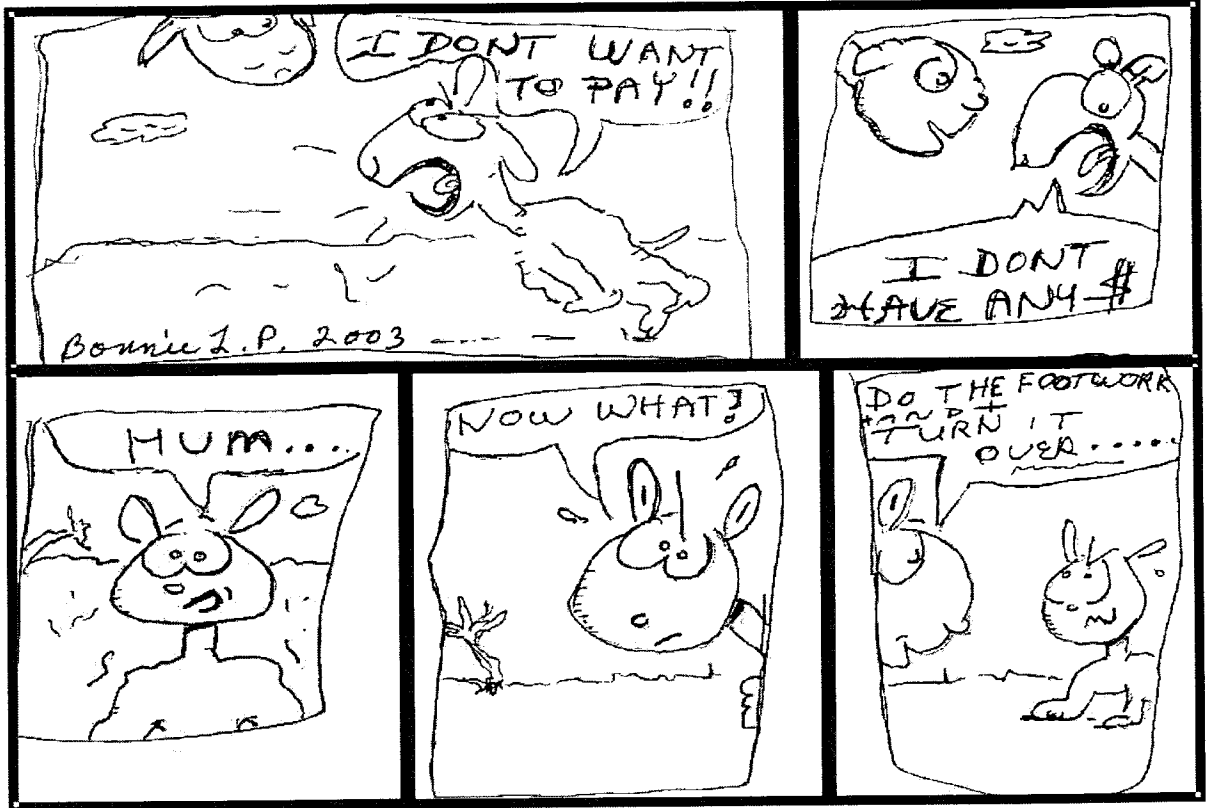
*'Cause yours is a' comin'...
wrapped up nice and shiny,
as easy to unwrap as Christmas...
Full of joy and promise and big-lifeness!
Baby, yours is a'comin'...
And what you heard before:
All that jibber-jabberin'
fearful-flappin'
chatterly meant-to-choke-you-up chitter-chatter
bloated with bitterness
anchored in anger
bullshit boisterousness...
Well, Beauty Child,
Shinin' Bright One,
Deservin'-of-all-Good-Things-Girl,
Full-of-Wonder-Little-Miss-Fancy-Thang...
THEY LIE!*

*You sip this cup of Truth, now,
Precious One...*

*The Truth I will whisper to you
in the soft mornin'
of your Perfect Brilliance,
"Yours is a'comin'
and Baby Love...
It is soooooo Good!
Great Gobs of Gigglin' Goodness
Comin' your way,
Sho' 'nuff...*

And I don't care who told you different!

WAYS & MEANS



PRG . . . (← page 1)

After beginning with a prayer, and then having them go through my numbers so thoroughly, I could barely contain myself. I was so emotional, fighting back tears through much of our time together. I would never have expected this PRG to be an emotionally-moving experience, I mean after all, we were simply going through my expenses and earnings (unfortunately non-existent those months).

I must admit however that they did not hold my attention the entire time. As they were speaking to me, clearly with my best interests at hand, I drifted off for moments at a time. I had to communicate with my higher power, thanking him so profusely for delivering me to this program, and putting me in the hands of such caring, giving and loving people. I've been around many wonderful people in my life; I come from a loving family which has eagerly offered me any support I've ever needed, as have had multitudes of loving friends who would do the same at any given time. This ex-

perience however, was vastly different, nothing I had ever known before and continues to move me in ways I never could have imagined! I suppose,

“ . . . having them go through my numbers so thoroughly, I could barely contain myself. I was so emotional, fighting back tears through much of our time together.”

this is what it's all about for me. . . .fear of the unknown. . . .facing it head on. . . .perhaps something I have been too reluctant to try or admit to.

Yes, my pressure relief group did what it was supposed to do: gave me an action list of things I was to accomplish before we next got together; did a reality check on when I really was going to start “earning” money again, and put me more in touch with my day to day expenditures than I ever knew before. But it also did something much more. It has given me a

much clearer picture of my fellow man, something I have lost focus on for the last 20 years or so.

I'm certain not all of you will have, or have had such an experience with your first PRG, and I'm also certain that many of you have had moving experiences that I will never know. But I do know that God is looking out for me, putting me in the hands of so many wonderful people, who one day were mere strangers to me, and the next, potentially as helpful as friends I've had for many years.

I think it goes without saying, that I'm actually looking forward to my next PRG, not dreading it like I was the first time around, now knowing what capable hands I'm in. . . .God's. I realize I've accomplished something great. . . .I've replaced the fear I had with hope and desire. A newfound hope around these issues I've had so many problems with and have feared so long. 🍀

Sam S.

(Saturday / Monday BDA
Hancock Park, Los Angeles)

Visions Meetings Help Recovery

God's been good to me. I have returned to the job market helping others to find work. This is harder than I thought. What I realize is that whether I have a job or not the same old issues still haunt me. I still have issues meeting my needs. Yet, I keep in contact with my sponsor whom I met way back at that first DA meeting 14 years ago. I still have pressure meetings and a current action list with 25 things on it!!! Still, I drift in and out of fear that God won't take care of me in finding work.

I have a problem with fear. God is the answer. What helps me with the fear is sponsoring and participating in others' pressure relief meetings. I go to two regular meetings a week. The only way I know to get out of the fear is to be really involved in

my own recovery, the recovery of others, and to pray for the willingness to let go of old behavior.

Going to Visions meetings started a new chapter in my recovery. I never knew what I wanted out of life. I just lived day to day, wrote my money down, and went to work. Some visions that have happened to me through this work are:

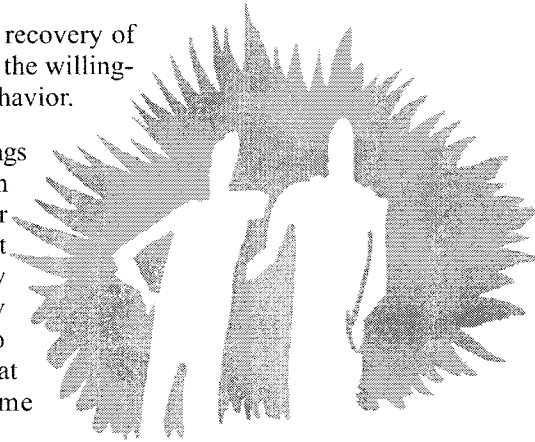
1. Going to Europe for the first time with a program friend.
2. Being adventurous, and trying new things like whitewater rafting.
3. Getting a BS degree in Applied Management.
4. Going to the Visions Retreat and getting clear on quitting my job of 11 years, then quitting a few months later! (I have been living off my savings since then and God's help.)
5. Taking suggestions and trying more new things like voice lessons, dancing, traveling to other parts of the U.S., and working on more inventories.
6. Going to Europe for the second time with the same friend.
7. Trusting my feelings, and honoring them. This is SO HARD!
8. Transitioning into a new career path with God's push.

And, oh yes, the Big Book. How could I forget that? The answers to my problems lie in the Steps. There is no way for me to further recovery if I don't work the Steps.

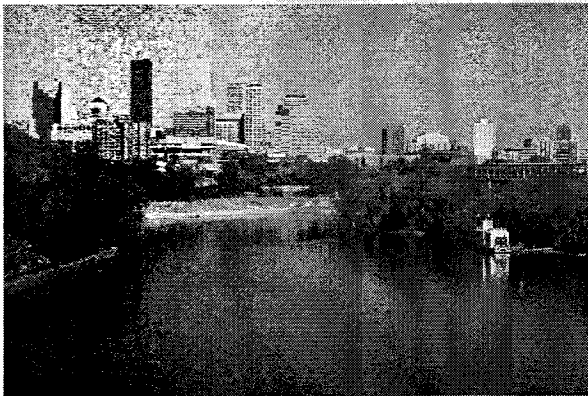
I was so grateful to be involved in the 2002 Fall Visions Retreat as secretary. I learned new skills and got a taste of events planning. If you really want to learn about your strengths and weaknesses get involved in a committee. Not only will you make new friends, but also you hear about DA recovery struggles and what fascinating lives others have lived!!!

Lynn P.

(Sunday Visions / Pasadena)



Minneapolis/St. Paul To Host 2003 World Service Conference



The 2003 DA World Service conference is taking place this August in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. GSRs from around the world will arrive at Augsburg College in the heart of the Twin Cities on Wednesday, August 6th, to begin their conference committee work.

On Fellowship Day, Sunday, August 10th, all DAs are invited to attend workshops and other social activities. Watch for information coming soon to your meeting's GSR or visit www.debtorsanonymous.org for the latest updates. For info about Augsburg College and links to Twin Cities resources, go to www.augsburg.edu/twincities.

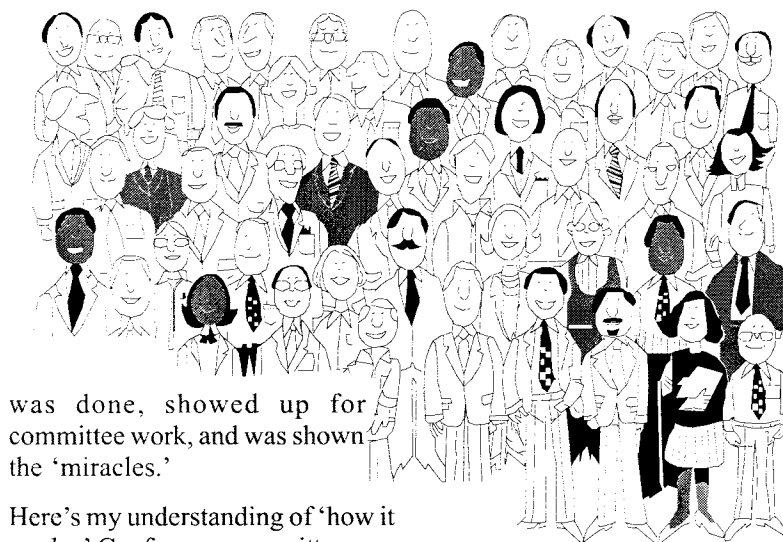
A GSR Sees 'Miracles' In Service

I had been taught in other programs that service was a very important part of my recovery, so I put my hand up when there was a need for a 'Checks & Balances' editor in 1997. In two months' time, I found myself sitting on the Service Board of SCDA (Southern California Debtors Anonymous). This was my first experience with Tradition 9.

Tradition

"D.A. as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

A year or two later, I agreed to become an alternate for my meeting's GSR, and then found my way to a new experience at the World Service Conference (WSC). My first thought at the WSC was that it was very confusing and scary. But I chose to ask questions and 'stay with the program.' I discovered how the 'business' of DA



was done, showed up for committee work, and was shown the 'miracles.'

Here's my understanding of 'how it works.' Conference committees are given assignments by the General Service Board (GSB) based on issues raised by each GSR and from issues encountered throughout the year. Committees are given only a brief amount of time to accomplish these tasks and it has always amazed me how much is done in such a short period. The Conference also features reports for the GSB and the committees they have created.

Today, after 6 years in DA, I have served on the SCDA Service Board

in the 'Checks & Balances' position for 2 years, as the Chair for the Southern California GSR Regional Area Group for 2 years, and am now serving as Chair of the SCDA Service Board and Inter-group. I continue to be a meeting GSR and have been working throughout this year to make the 'Ways & Means' newsletter into a real and viable entity for DA.



Deb O.

(Saturday Step Study / Santa Monica)

An Open Letter From Your General Service Board

Why We're Withdrawing \$50 Offer for "Most Inspirational" Meditation

Your trusted servants of the General Service Board of D.A. are concerned about a contest that was offered by the Daily Meditation Book subcommittee of the Literature Committee at the 2002 World Service Conference. That contest contained an offer of a \$50 prize for the "most inspirational" meditation. The offer also appeared in the Fall and Winter 2002 issues of the Ways & Means newsletter.

We thank the Daily Meditation Book subcommittee and all those who have contributed to its creation by submitting meditations. We realize this contest was pro-

posed with the best intentions and we also know how difficult it can be to motivate the D.A. fellowship to submit written contributions.

However, upon careful consideration of the fairness of this offer, we are respectfully requesting that the offer of the \$50 prize be withdrawn for the following reasons:

1. "Most inspirational meditation" is an impossible quality to measure;
2. A contest of this kind is something akin to a raffle; and

3. To make this contest equitable, we would need to pay every contributor an equal amount for his or her submission, which is not possible.

We offer instead the basic principle of 12th Step service. We feel sure that those of our fellowship who have submitted a meditation will acknowledge the priceless gift we receive by carrying the message to the still-suffering debtor, and consider themselves well paid indeed.



Special Caucus Welcomes Ideas for "Year of Prisoner"

Since 2003 has been designated the "Year of the Prisoner," a "Prisons and Institutions" caucus was created at the 2002 World Service Conference. The primary purpose of this caucus is to focus on carrying the D.A. message of hope to the debtor behind bars. Members of D.A. are encouraged to send their ideas of how to better reach this suffering community by email to da-gso@mindspring.com with "Year of the Prisoner" in the subject line.



Your Help Wanted!

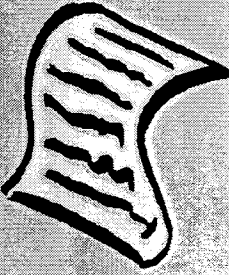
Ways & Means needs your contributions!

- Send in your
- D.A. jokes
- D.A. cartoons
- D.A. shares

Please mail to:

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waysandmeansda@hotmail.com



Literature Prices To Rise in 2003

This is the last call by the General Service Board for meetings to purchase D.A. literature at 2002 prices. A new 2003 price list will be published soon with expected price increases.

Ways & Means Subscription Form

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Please list the group name _____

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