

Ways & Means

A Newsletter for the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

September 1994

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Ways & Means is published by the General Service Board of Debtors Anonymous. It is generally published quarterly, but the publication schedule may vary. It is mailed free to all GSRs. Individuals may subscribe by sending \$8.00 (Foreign: US\$13.00; Canada: US\$8.50) to the General Service Office (GSO) in New York for a 4-issue subscription. Ways & Means is a forum for sharing experiences of D.A. groups, service committees and members. It does not interpret D.A. traditions or principles. We welcome articles, poems, cartoons and other appropriate submissions. Send all correspondence to:

Ways & Means Newsletter
Debtors Anonymous
P.O. Box 400
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Rebellion Dogs Our Every Step

By Rhea S., Boston, MA

The essence of "rebellion dogs our every step" from the A.A. Big Book came painfully clear to me last year. After nine years of Debtors Anonymous meetings and some recovery, I decided to move out of state and start a new chapter in my life. At a rehab I'd attended recently I had gotten the message that I should place more reliance on a Higher Power, less on sponsors and meetings and in general move out into life. This was necessary in order to combat the many fears which I still had.

And so I plunged in this new direction. Weeks went by. No D.A. meetings, not many meetings of any kind in my other programs as I meditated and searched for the right direction. A recent divorce made it seem painful to stay where I was, I thought. Also, my job was routine, low-paying and not part of my new path, I reasoned.

Several months later a book I picked up led me to a training program in another state. Before I knew it, I had sold my few things and moved south. Now this could have been a very positive adventure, but I brought my fears with me and did not bring many of my D.A. principles and tools. And, of course, the change was largely the

people, places and things type of change.

The person I trained with and I worked out a barter system for my training and I planned to support myself with part-time jobs. What a shock to find that higher paying jobs were very difficult to get and that wages in this resort town were the six dollar an hour kind. But I charged ahead and got unusual day jobs through temp agencies like helping children in Water Parks, and taking consumer polls as well as routine office jobs. At night I worked at first as a waitress and then as a hostess at a country western restaurant sprawled invitingly on the Inland Waterway. These were mega changes for a reserved woman from the northeast, but the rent was paid and I wanted to prove myself capable of any challenge. Sound familiar? Since I hadn't a clear idea of how much I really needed to earn, I just kept my expenses very low and kept working long hours at low wages.

Loneliness and some common sense had led me to some A.A., Coda and Alanon meetings by this time. There were no D.A. meetings, but the local Gamblers Anonymous contact said they would be willing to help me with

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A Message from the General Service Board

Looking Toward the 1994 World Service Conference

Dear Fellowship:

The 1994 World Conference is less than two months away by the time you read this article. A committee of volunteers in New York have been working hard on preparations for this year's Conference and I want to thank all of them in advance for their service. I know that their efforts will make everyone's stay in New York a good experience this fall. We appreciate your efforts very much!

This year's World Conference will be a reunion of sorts, in that the first ever Debtors Anonymous World Conference was held in New York City in 1987. Although I did not attend that conference, held in the auditorium of St. Vincent's Hospital, I understand that it was truly a remarkable event. There was no hotel, no committee meeting rooms, no Debtor's Ball, no talent show and not even any money to run the conference, but apparently the important stuff was there: camaraderie, a commitment to D.A. unity and service, people reaching out to help each other and themselves, and certainly a Higher Power in the midst.

I think it's good for us to be reminded how far we have come in the seven short years that D.A. World Conferences have been held. We have a General Service Office where correspondence can be received and answered, we have 14 pieces of literature available, we have a committee actively progressing on a recovery book for the Program, we have six commit-

tees working on various aspects of service, we have a regular newsletter sent to all known D.A. meetings, we have a General Service Board with Trustees from several geographic areas around the country, and on and on.

I believe that when we focus on what we have to be grateful for, what's working in our lives, then we attract more good things to be grateful for. Although there is still much to be done, and every committee has an ambitious list of goals and projects, let us not forget to stop once in awhile and appreciate how far we have come as the result of just seven World Conferences.

One additional feature of this year's Conference that I think will be valuable is a GSR orientation session planned for Friday morning and the distribution of a GSR service manual. Both of these projects have been worked on by the

Service Committee this year and will be presented at the 1994 World Conference. The GSR service manual is actually to be considered the property of each meeting so that when GSRs change over, the resource of information will be passed on to the incoming GSR to assist with their understanding of the D.A. organization and World Conference structure.

I look forward to seeing everyone who can attend the World Conference in New York this September. Those who cannot attend, I hope you will be in contact with other GSRs from your area who are attending. Give them your support, questions and good ideas ahead of time, and afterward, make sure you stay in touch to get a follow up report.

In love and service,

Mary M.

Chair, D.A. General Service Board

World Conference Details

The World Service Conference will be held September 22-25 at the Milford Plaza Hotel, 700 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10036, (212) 869-3600.

Registration is \$55. The schedule includes Registration and Opening Meeting Thursday evening,; Registration, Orientation, Convocation, Committee Meetings, and

Speaker Meetings on Friday; Convocation, Committee Meetings, Fellowship Day, and evening Dinner/Event (at extra cost)

Saturday; and closing Convocation on Sunday morning. For more information, contact the Host Committee at 429 Lexington Avenue, Room 300, New York NY 10163-0400; (212) 297-6102

(Monday through Friday).



A Day at the Office

It's 1:00 PM and the General Manager of the D.A. General Service Office (Elaine S.) begins her day with a stop to pick up the mail. Today she has 67 pieces, a larger-than-usual volume she attributes to a recent television spot about D.A. on TV. Arriving at the office, a single room housed in shared "executive suite" quarters in an older, architecturally-pleasing complex on Lexington Avenue near Grand Central Station, she settles down to sort the mail. She divides it into categories: literature orders, newsletter subscriptions, tape orders, questions or items for various committees of the Conference and General Service Board, inquiries from the general public, letters from groups, contributions. Setting these aside to address during the day, she retrieves messages from the D.A. "hot-line" answering service.

Where to begin? First, she sets aside checks for literature orders and contributions, recording them in the general ledger before deposit. Information on all money transactions will later be sent to Paige J., Treasurer for the General Service Board, in San Francisco. For international bank orders or postal orders, she will plan a trip to the bank, where she must wait "on line" to deposit them.

A call comes in from Brookline, Massachusetts: we're starting a new meeting; what do we do and how can we get some start-up literature?

To help the group get started, Elaine assembles a new meeting "starter kit" (three copies of each pamphlet, literature order forms, group registration forms, newsletter subscription forms, 7th Tradition page, and contribution envelopes).

Ten individual D.A. members have sent in literature orders, which take an hour to fill. Group literature orders will be sent to the



*The Office Manager
calls it a day
— a rewarding one—
at the D.A. office*

printer in New Jersey, who will fill them within two days.

Several members have sent in subscriptions to the D.A. national newsletter; these are each mailed an issue today, then the forms are forwarded to Houston, where they will be added to the subscription list for future issues. Notices of changes in

meeting location or time, new meetings, new GSRs, and so forth, also are forwarded to Houston to be logged into the D.A. national databank, the source of mailing lists and meeting directories.

Ron P. from Plainville, Indiana has requested the World Service Directory, which lists all known D.A. meetings in the U.S. and abroad, available for a \$5 fee.

Elaine is able to pack up a directory for mailing today; unfortunately, the package is too thick to mail from the office, and she plans a trip to the post office (and again, time in line) to make the special mailing.

Several more calls have come in: a literature order from Michigan, a chat with the New York Intergroup liaison, a call from Alex K., the General Service Board member who supervises the office, letting her know that the Conference Committee wants to use the office for a planning meeting for the upcoming New York World Service Conference, and would she be willing to stay to make them welcome later in the afternoon? Certainly.

Several more phone calls and calls returned, trips to the post office and bank, and the Office Manager returns to wrap up her day by welcoming the Conference Committee.

As she retrieves a phone message, Elaine notes that her code, 1988, matches the year in which the office was "born." At that time, public inquiries were being answered after meetings by members of the

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In Memory of John D.

GRATEFUL D.A. MEMBERS OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

April, 1994

We learned that John D. had passed away in late December, 1993. John D. was one of the first five D.A.s in Los Angeles. After ten years of service, he became concerned with his health in 1992 and turned his time and energy to health.

John established a Sunday meeting at a savings and loan in the posh community of Beverly Hills. As he shared his recovery in his spiritual and financial journey, he attracted people from a long distance. The meeting became "standing room only." We had to have folding chairs donated to seat the crowd.

When that building was torn down, he got us a larger room. This room, too, would be filled to overflowing. We listened and were inspired about the small spiritual struggles in life: how he worked on eliminating an unwanted habit of buying and eating a frozen yogurt; his spiritual discoveries about hidden assumptions concerning relationships, family, work and earning or debt. We heard truth and remarkable candor to "uncover, discover, discard" blocks to recovery.

John had a standing time each week for giving Pressure Groups. Working out the math, if our members made use of each hour he was willing to donate, he would have contributed over 500 Pressure

Groups to our recovery. At least one of the people he helped was able to come from poverty to ownership of her own condo. Another went from sleeping in his car to Chief Executive Officer of a thriving company.

John shared his D.A. recovery with many other audiences, which brought us a stream of newcomers. He personally sponsored many, and met with them weekly to guide and inspire them. As they recovered, they became officers of the meetings and inspired yet others in applying Steps to their debt-ing problem.


When D.A. began to have national conferences, John became a representative from Southern California. He worked on the Public Information Committee, helping to carry the message of recovery via radio, TV and the press. He helped complete the national P.I. guidebook, attending the 1991 Conference in San Francisco.

In 1992 our General Service Board honored John. In the discussions prior to the award, our Trustees who live throughout the U.S. could immediately recognize who John was, that he wore sandals as part of his distinctive style, and that he had contributed to our work and had a place in their hearts. Remembrances from individuals:

"When I first came to D.A., I was depressed and uncertain about my ability to support myself. John gave me inspiration and practical tips about working as a temporary so that I grew to support myself."

"When the woman who founded ARTS (Artists in Recovery Through the Steps) came to Los Angeles, he immediately organized a meeting in his house. Many struggling artists had their creative expression restored and learned to support themselves exclusively through their art activity, due to ARTS. It was in ARTS that I met my wife, so John touched my life directly in many personal and important ways."

"I started a D.A. meeting. John was a speaker when there were just three of us present. He shared on using the Steps in recovering. After the meeting, he shared money so that we could have literature at the meeting."

"I was new in the Program, perhaps nine months or so. I attended the Saturday meeting where John was secretary. The speaker didn't show up. He asked me if I had Pressure Groups and had stopped debting. I said yes, and he invited me to speak. It was Step 11 that day for the Step Study. After the meeting, I was talking to someone else. John approached, crying. He said that he had always understood Step 11 intellectually but this was the first time he had felt it in his heart. He hugged me and was so moved that the other person had to catch us, to keep us from falling. He told me I should travel to every meeting with Step 11. Again, he called my answering machine and left thanks. It was a great honor to be so honored by someone so far along in recovery and important to my growth in D.A." 

A Day at the Office

Continued from page 3

"Prosperity Group" in New York City, but the volunteers found it hard to keep up with the mail. The idea for an office was hatched at the California World Service Conference in 1988 and renewed at the Washington, D.C. Conference the next year. A committee was formed—the General Service Office Development Committee—which produced a booklet on how an office would serve the Fellowship, set a goal for start-up funds, and conducted a special fund-raising effort for the office. Soon, the Committee found that although they hadn't met their funding goal, there was enough money to purchase basic equipment and rent an office space—the same one where the office resides today.

The office is modest—there is no computer, no fax, no fancy machinery. The typewriter needs fixing. But copying services, fax services, and secretarial services are available on site if needed; an answering service picks up the line when the office is closed, two conference rooms are available, and, the Office Manager says, "We have all we need."

Formerly a corporate bank executive with a large staff of her

NOTE: This "typical day" intended to illustrate the activities of the General Service Office is actually a compilation of several days' activities; names of D.A. "callers" are not real. The office has new, regular telephone hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2-4 PM. If you cannot get through during that time, leave a message and your call will be returned.

Public and media inquiries, changes in meeting times, dates, or locations, information on new meetings and GSRs, subscriptions and contributions to the Ways & Means, communications for the Committees

of the World Service Conference and the General Service Board, group contributions, literature orders, and most other D.A. communications are handled by the General Service Office. You can reach the GSO at:


Debtors Anonymous
PO Box 400
Grand Central Station
New York NY 10163
212-297-6102

The D.A. General Service Office is supported, as are all of the activities of the General Service Board and World Service Conference, by contributions from D.A. groups and literature sales.

own, Elaine says being Office Manager is a perfect "hands on" job for which she is deeply grateful—"It allows me to give away what I've been given, and so stay active and healthy in the Program. I'm here to help carry the message, because I owe my life to the Program."

It's time to go, but one last call comes in. It's from a radio station in San Francisco—they'd like to do a spot on D.A. and are seeking

information. Elaine refers them to the Public Information Committee, who will respond with appropriate materials and sensitivity to preserving anonymity of D.A. members.

The Office Manager checks supplies needed, makes a note that the typewriter needs fixing, says hello to the incoming Committee members, and calls it a day—a rewarding one—at the D.A. General Service Office. 

COMPUTER PAL COUPON

I am interested in being on the Computer Pal list

I would like to receive the Computer Pal list

Please return this form to:
DA General Service Office
P.O. Box 400, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-0400

Attn: Computer Pals

My Name and Address are:

This list is confidential and available to D.A. members only, on request. Note: Anonymity may not be ensured when communicating via computer networks. D.A. does not promote or endorse the use of computer networking services.

Forum

NOTE: With this issue, the Ways & Means is initiating a new section devoted to the opinions of D.A. members on issues affecting the Fellowship as a whole. Opinions expressed are those of individual D.A. members and do not express the views of the Ways & Means or the D.A. General Service Board, nor do they represent the D.A. Program.

The letters below were received in response to a proposal from the Unity Subcommittee of the World Service Conference Literature Committee to make certain changes to the wording of D.A.'s 12 Steps and Traditions. This proposal was circulated to GSRs and groups with the last issue of the Ways & Means.

Contributions to the new "Forum" are welcome! Let us know your thoughts about the Program and issues of concern to the Fellowship as a whole.

AUGUST 7, 1994

Dear D.A. Fellowship:

I am writing this letter to respond to the proposal to change D.A.'s 12 Steps to say "God" instead of "Him" in Steps 3, 7 and 11 (i.e. "God as we understood God," "Humbly asked God," and "praying only for knowledge of God's will for us.")

I am strongly in favor of supporting this proposal. I (and many other people in Program that I know) refer to our Higher Powers as "She" and as "Goddess." Hearing the word "Him" all the time in the Steps makes me feel excluded and I am forced constantly to translate it to what works for me. I believe that referring to a person's Higher Power as the gender-neutral "God as we understand God" in the Steps can only include more people and their Higher Powers, whereas using "Him" only includes some people's beliefs. Neither "Her" nor "Him" is right, just different, and so I prefer the gender-neutral version of the Steps so as to include as many of us as possible. In fact, at most meetings I attend, people already automatically say "God as we understand God."

I hope that the D.A. Fellowship will support this pattern of inclusiveness so that the greatest number of suffering compulsive debtors will feel comfortable finding recovery in our wonderful Fellowship.

Sophie G.
Somerville, MA

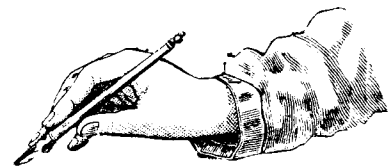
AUGUST 1, 1994

Degenderization Does Not Mean Unity to All D.A.'s

Dear Editor:

I have several concerns over the Unity Subcommittee's proposal to revise D.A.'s 12 Steps. I am uncomfortable with the proposal's inclusion of an opinion on the outside issue of what might "trigger" members of other fellowships. I am not sure exactly what would be achieved by changing some language when A.A.'s literature, which we use as a tool of our Program, contains hundreds of gender specific references throughout the Big Book and the 12 and 12.


It would be more helpful to me if we addressed these questions: 1) Is there a problem with unity and



inclusion in D.A.? 2) If there is, what actions we should consider taking? Since D.A. has elected to use literature that was written over 50 years ago, it might also be useful to consider that fact while reviewing the history of its development.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age seems to indicate that an extensive and inclusive group conscience process was used to develop the 12 Steps and the literature. As described on page 163, "Every voice in it was playing its appointed part to create an outcome that was to be nothing less than providential." On page 127 we read, "A.A. can and will survive so long as it remains a spiritual faith and a way of life open to all men and women who suffer from alcoholism."

The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions have served as a spiritual lifeline to recovery for hundreds of thousands of women and men for the past 50 years. Perhaps one of the reasons they have worked so well for so many is that the spiritual faith and the way of life they offer transcend all differences between us and unify us for a common purpose. If some D.A. members would like to change the Steps, I would be very interested to know how they feel the proposed changes would improve the quality of the spiritual faith and the way of life and promote greater unity in the Program.

Roy K.,
Manchester, NH 

D.A. News 'n Notes

New GSO Hours

The General Service Office has a new employee, Elaine S., and new office phone hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2-4 PM. If you cannot reach the office during this time, leave a message and your call will be returned. (See article on page 3.)

D.A. Recovery Day in Boulder, Montana

Boulder, Montana hosted a D.A. "Recovery Day" on April 16. Speakers from Wisconsin and Texas shared on "A Debtor's Story," and "Cross-addictions." Lunch and accommodations were offered, and the day went very well, according to its sponsors, the D.A. group in Boulder.

Winter Lights and Do-DA-Day Illuminate Bay Area

San Francisco area D.A. members have been inspired by two events: Winter Lights, held annually in February, is an afternoon of "spiritual renewal" featuring speakers, sharing, meditation, and visions. This year, two speakers shared, and during the Visions meeting each person lit a candle and shared a vision.

Do-DA-Day, held in July, was a day of workshops and sharing on the theme of service. The role of service in recovery, what abstinence and solvency mean in D.A., and possible "promises" for the Program were explored.

Southern California Activities

The Southern California D.A. GSR group writes about events "on tap" in their area:
"The Orange County (Disneyland) Intergroup held a talent show on

June 25th to raise funds for the D.A. Big Book. The San Diego Intergroup held a half-day workshop June 25th. Santa Barbara Intergroup is planning a live-in or commute retreat for November 11-13. For information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: SBDA Vision Retreat, 202 West Vineyard, Oxnard, CA 93030. The L.A. Intergroup puts on a two-hour workshop each month; the last was "Balancing Your Checkbook." Being in recovery in our area is fantastic! We have meetings in resort locations."

Group Discounts for Ways & Means

D.A. members can now order subscriptions in bulk at discounted rates for the *Ways & Means*. A flyer and new subscription form with the discount prices accompanies this issue. The new prices should help enable groups to carry the newsletter on literature tables, and individual members to join together to get favorable rates on subscriptions. Intergroups wishing to order bulk subscriptions can do so through the General Service Office. The bulk discount prices are:

- 1-4 subscriptions (regular rate):
★ \$8/year per subscription
- 5-9 subscriptions:
★ \$7/year per subscription
- 10+ subscriptions
★ \$6/year per subscription

The Fellowship Committee has the goal of seeing the *Ways & Means* available to D.A. members on all literature tables. Groups can help meet this goal by ordering group subscriptions at the new prices.

Computer Pals Project

D.A. members who wish to communicate with each other by computer can obtain a confidential list of members available via computer bulletin boards or electronic mail by writing the General Service Office, "Attention Computer Pals." Please fill out the coupon on page 5 if you wish to be included on this list, or to receive it. Note: D.A. does not promote or endorse the use of computer networking services.

Pen Pals Available

D.A. members who would like to be in touch with other members nationwide by mail can now be on a confidential list of D.A. "pen pals" and members willing to accept long distance calls. The list will not be published but can be obtained by writing Jayne B. in care of the General Service Office. If interested, please fill out the coupon on page 8.

Ways & Means Contributions

The *Ways & Means* welcomes your contributions. We want to increase our coverage of local D.A. events such as retreats, dances, workshops and Intergroup activities. We welcome your D.A. recovery stories, poems, meditations, etc. We especially need humorous contributions—cartoons, your favorite D.A. jokes. Beginning with this issue, we've begun a new "Forum" section to elicit members' thoughts and opinions on issues of concern to the Fellowship as a whole. Your thoughts are welcome. Write the *Ways & Means* in care of the General Service Office.



Rebellion Dogs Our Every Step

Continued from page 1

my money problems if I would come to one of their meetings. I resisted. Surely, this "real" job I kept applying for would appear. Then I would have enough money and my troubles would be over. Another familiar refrain.

Panic attacks started. They were something I'd never experienced before. A racing mind, rapid heart beats, shallow breathing and inability to sleep plagued me. Winter was coming, jobs were drying up since the tourists were leaving and I still didn't have a permanent job. My training had stopped since the relationship founded on my fears, barter, and very fuzzy barriers had broken down. "Let go and let God," "Stick around for the miracle," my new very supportive and warm friends in A.A. and Alanon said to me. My faith somehow didn't overcome the stronger fear and I became less stable as I worked long hours and didn't eat or sleep regularly.

The result was that I sought counseling help and instead found myself hospitalized for nearly three weeks. Miraculously, I got out and with the help of friends and family was able to return back north just before Christmas. Home was, of course, a loosely defined word for a

A Message from the Public Information Committee


The purpose of the Public Information (P.I.) Committee is to "carry the message to the debtor who still suffers" by responding to inquiries for information from radio, press, TV and outside organizations. Often, we are asked to provide a person who is willing to tell their story for a magazine article, on TV or speak on a panel. Sometimes a local or national television producer wants to film a meeting. Upholding the tradition of anonymity is very important. Whenever you or a member of your group receives a request for information, the P.I. Committee suggests the following:

- 1) Read Tradition 5 and 11 in the *12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*;
- 2) Consult the Debtors Anonymous International Public Information Manual. Copies are available by writing the D.A. General Service Office;
- 3)


Talk to one or more D.A. or 12-Step Program members who have had experience with public information. Contact a P.I. Committee member by calling the General Service Office (GSO) in New York. A message will be transferred;

- 4) Respond promptly and professionally with approved D.A. literature.

The Committee has responded to more than 25 requests this year from press, TV and organizations that have called the GSO. If there has been mention of D.A. in your local area, we'd love to hear about it. Send information to the GSO in care of the Public Information Committee.

NOTE: *The Public Information Committee is a Committee of the D.A. World Service Conference. The Committee responds to inquiries from the media and professionals for information about the D.A. Program.* 

while. At first it was my older daughter's apartment, then the YWCA and finally a small studio in a lovely part of the city. Home was also many D.A. meetings where I'm beginning to pick up the tools again—writing down my money, having Pressure Groups, calling a sponsor and looking for work

while I do temp jobs. I haven't been able to puzzle all of this out yet, but am so grateful to be beginning to return to some sanity and to be eating and sleeping more normally. Prayer and meditation are still a large part of my recovery, but D.A.'s way of life is for me also a day at a time necessity. 

PEN PAL/PHONE LIST COUPON



<input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in being on the Pen Pal List <input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in receiving phone calls. My phone number is: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I am available to sponsor. <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to have a copy of the Pen Pal/Phone List	My Name and Address are: _____ _____ _____ Please return this form to: D.A. General Service Office, Attention: Jayne B., Pen Pal Project, P.O. Box 400, Grand Central Station, New York, NY
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