

WAYS & MEANS®

Summer 2003

\$2.00

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT:

A Vision For You

Helping Bring Visions “Out of the Closet”

Attending a Vision Retreat is about God’s help being present, sharing our thoughts about our visions, and doing our vision collages. That’s all. Everything else is extra.

Of the two, I think that sharing is more significant than collage work. By sharing, a person gets to voice his or her vision(s) with like-minded people. No one evaluates your sharing or vision. That’s not their job.

When sharing, people bring their visions “out of the closet,” out of those places in their minds where they have kept those visions safe. Vision work is a process of discovery, and the environment provides the support and context for creating a vibrant, refreshing, and renovating vision.

Over the course of 2½ days, visioneers sit with their visions, and by sharing they come to believe in the energy of their

visions. The air is electrified, yet the participants are calm. Spirit is there. I believe God is there.

People’s lives change by sharing their thoughts at the Vision Retreats, some most dramatically. I’ve seen it happen. I’ve been there.

A Retreat is ultimately about each participant, the visionary, and their sharing with others and the Universe. Getting enough sleep and eating enough good nutritious food are important, and the primary focus of the weekend is about discerning their path in life right now.

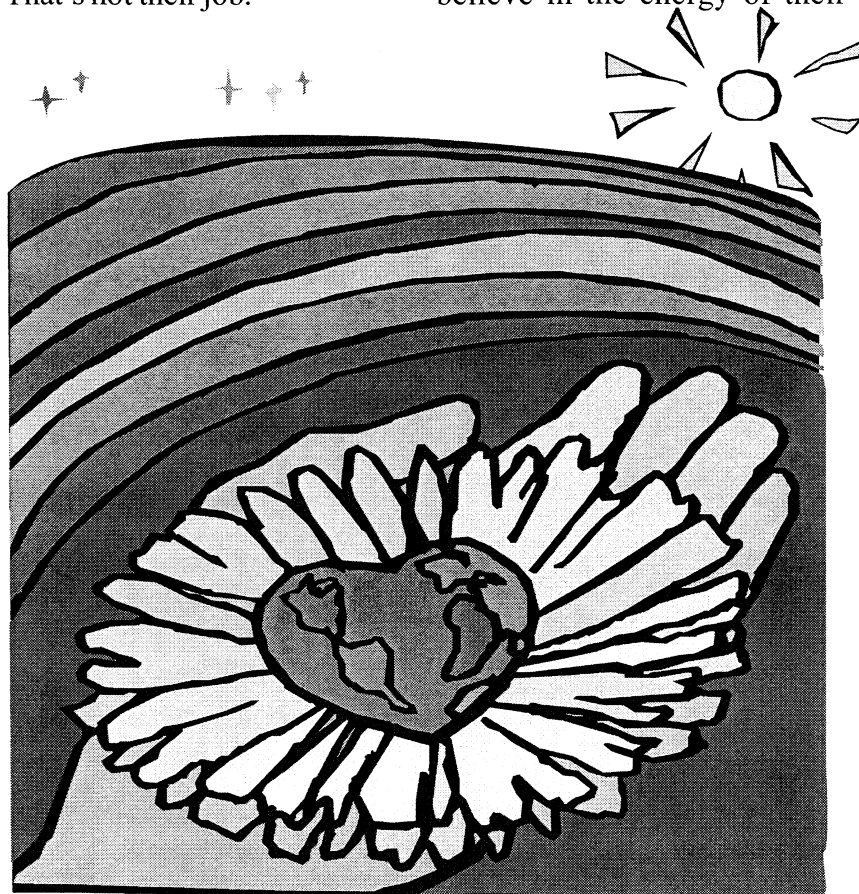
It’s about having a safe environment for visioning to take place. That’s what I think the Vision Retreat is all about.



Arnold
(Los Angeles)

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A Quarterly Newsletter For the Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

My Vision In Progress



Name: Beth P.

Residence: Santa Monica, CA

Solvency Date: August 11, 1989

Sign: Who cares? I can take care of myself!

Pre-DA Figures: 0-0-110%
(savings-retirement-spending)

Current Figures: 10-10-80%
(savings-retirement-spending)

Favorite Color: The soft, pale green of the SCDA "Numbers" book.

Favorite DA Pastimes: Spending quality time with my checkbook, adding up and pondering the meaning of my numbers, sculpting my spending plan, being of service.

DA Theme Song: "You Can't Always Get What You Want"

Favorite DA Steps and Tools: The first twelve of each.

Greatest DA Moment: The first time I realized that the amount I was now able to contribute to charity was greater than the amount that I used to be able to pay to creditors.

Last Word: Thank you, God, for leading me to DA. Thank you, DA, for leading me to God.



Beth P.

(Saturday PM / Santa Monica, CA)

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Ways & Means

A Quarterly Newsletter for the
Fellowship of Debtors Anonymous

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Published by the General Service Board of Debtors Anonymous, *Ways & Means* is a forum for sharing the experience, strength, and hope of D.A. groups, members, and service

entities. It does not interpret D.A. traditions and principles.

The *Ways & Means* is edited and produced by the Fellowship Communications Committee of the World Service Conference.

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All articles, jokes, and cartoons in the spirit of D.A. recovery are welcome. Submissions are subject to editing and cannot be returned.

Send all submissions to:

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Divine Insurance

Summer
2003



I've been in DA for the past 15 years and BDA for 10. I own my own business, thanks to BDA. A review of my action plans reveals that I've been looking for medical insurance since 1997.

Insurance salespeople always told me that as a sole proprietor I was ineligible for insurance due to a

“People called, came, brought Big Books and spiritual reading. I didn't realize that so many people cared about me.”

pre-existing illness. But in December 2002, a DA member who sells insurance informed me that I could finally get medical insurance if I hired a part-time employee. Since the employee and I would form a group, the rules for exclusions based on preexisting conditions are less stringent for groups than for individuals.

In February 2003, I found myself in the emergency room of a local hospital not knowing that I would be spending the next four

days there in the Cardiac Unit. A few weeks prior to being hospitalized, I had hired my first part-time employee. I was so grateful that someone would take over my business while I got better.

A good friend in program not only drove me to the hospital but stayed with me for hours until a room was available. Because I was not sure when my new insurance would kick in, I panicked. “I'll go home and get into bed and I'll be OK,” I said.

What I really was saying was that I didn't value my life nor did I trust that I would be taken care of. I knew hospitals cost lots of money, and I didn't want to get back into debt.

The support from the Fellowship was overwhelming, so nurturing and loving. People called, came, brought Big Books and spiritual reading. I didn't

realize that so many people cared about me. I was overworked, exhausted, not taking time for myself causing dangerously high blood pressure.

While I was in the hospital, I gave

“Here was a chance to once again see how D.A. works . . . I asked God for guidance..”

the hospital's financial office my insurance group information and told them I wasn't sure when my coverage would be effective. My fear was that I would be transferred to County. I was not transferred and I got the best of care....\$20,000 worth of care!

When I received the hospital bill, I took it unopened to a meeting and we opened it together.

The insurance policy had a stipulation saying that part-time employees had to be working 20 hours a week. My employee was only working 5 hours and I wasn't

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Editor's Corner . . . (← page 2)

with two local D.A. meetings accepting the jobs of production and marketing. The commitment of these meetings and the individual volunteers listed on the masthead make my job a truly joyful and simple one. With production streamlined, our plan now is to take on the challenge of marketing *Ways and Means* to the fellowship.

The 2003 Minneapolis-St Paul World Service Conference brought clarity and innovation to the editorial direction of *Ways and Means* with each issue focussing on one of the 12 steps. The current issue focusses on Visions and the Third Step. At the same time, we continue to remember the need for humor in the face of our debting disease with another cartoon strip and one member's light-hearted self-portrait.

Ways and Means is an ideal setting to showcase the wealth of our international fellowship,

so please answer the call to tell us what's going on in your part of the world. In this issue, look for accounts of New York City's Pressure Relief Days and Southern California's Visions Retreats. Feel free to send in

“*Ways and Means is an ideal setting to showcase the wealth of our international fellowship.*”

snippets of news representing your region. Also, an interview format with suggested questions is now available to those who would like to respond themselves or interview another about experience, strength and hope working the Steps. In the first of these Step stories, Barbara W. of Texas shares her Step Three miracles with FCC member Evan. Also find inside an inspiring story of triumph over daunting medical problems and an astronomical hospital bill.

In the spirit of a fresh start, *Ways and Means* wishes to make amends to any subscriber who may in the past have not received all four issues that they subscribed to. Please let us know, since it is our hope to build a strong, vibrant publication with a loyal subscriber base. And if your subscription is expiring, as you renew you may rest assured that you'll receive this inspiring “meeting-between-meetings” on a quarterly basis.

Watch for our Fall 2003 issue with the theme of Harvest and the Ninth Step. We've planned the launch of a DA Forum for that issue where members can write in to air their thoughts about matters of concern to the fellowship at large. As always we welcome any submissions you may make, particularly pertaining to these subjects.



Kieran K.
(Los Angeles)

“The Biggest Blessing in My Life”

E: What brought about the biggest blessing or miracle in your life?

B: Step 3.

E: How did you work this step?

B: First, I worked the third step with a sponsor using the Big Book and the 12 and 12. Then I worked it in a group using a non-program-approved sponsor's guide to the 12 steps. There were 11 questions.

We used the Big Book and the 12 and 12 for readings and then answered the questions. I liked that the questions guided me to explore both my childhood and current concept of a Higher Power. I saw that my old ideas about God persisted in spite of my recovery.

I was raised pretty fundamentalist with very black and white thinking. That belief system presented a punishing God and emphasized hell. I argued with old timers who said I get to create my own understanding of God. But when I revisited my conception of a Higher Power in my DA step work I was surprised to discover that I still had a punish-

ing God that would send me to hell. I also discovered a tremendous amount of self-hatred that I had not realized was there.

I've been in the D.A. program 14 years and I'm doing very well. I've got 12 years of spending plans

to prove it. I go to meetings, work the tools, do service. I still struggle at times with overspending and sticking to the plan. It's still heartbreaking that I can't stick to my plan. I feel a tremendous amount of shame.

E: What was the blessing?

B: I get to choose, at a more conscious level, an unconditionally loving God who has a great sense of humor and does not judge me. He accepts me as I am and wants only good for me. There isn't anything I can do to win his love because I already have it. When the self-hatred, shame and rewormse come up, I consciously think about God's love, and those thoughts soften my heart.

God doesn't just love me when I'm doing well. He loves me when

I'm in the bookstore and the supermarket. I realize that it is

I, not God, who has been the punishing, rejecting, send-you-to-hell person.

The more I work the steps, the

“ I get to choose, at a more conscious level, an unconditionally loving God who . . . accepts me as I am and wants only good for me.”

more recovery shows up in my behavior. I don't live in financial fear anymore. My values have shifted, and today I live in

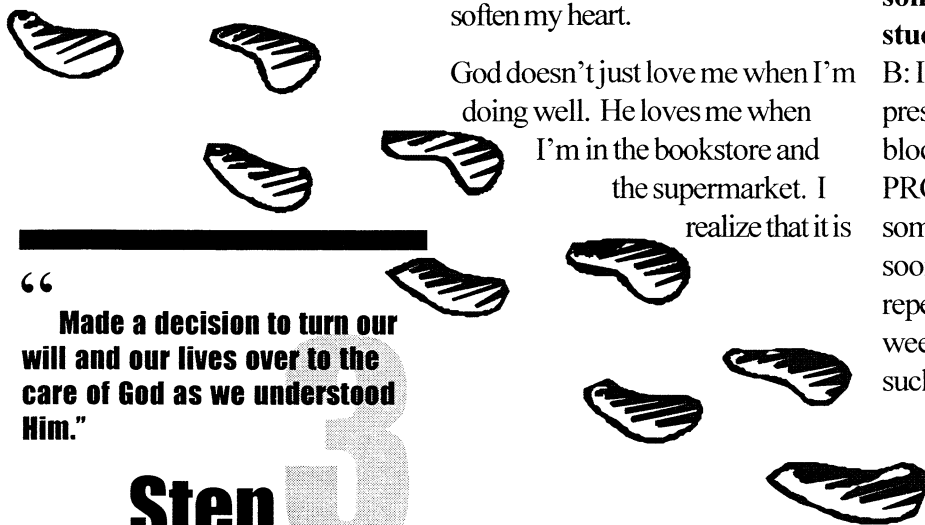
gratitude. I have lots of sponsees and in a gentle way I suggest to them that they cultivate a grander vision.

Recovery isn't just about getting by. My standard of living has improved so dramatically through the years. My self-care is radically improved since I've worked the Steps. I go to the dentist every six months. I keep up my prescription on my glasses and always have nice underwear. I buy wonderful food. I sleep well because I have a clean conscience. I can breathe easier. I don't live in fear anymore but rather in peace.

E: How do you suggest someone get started if they are stuck?

B: I suggest that person have a pressure relief group about the block and prepare well for that PRG. It's about telling the truth to somebody and asking for help, the sooner the better. Rinse and repeat: have a PRG every six weeks with the same people. It's such a valuable tool. ♡

Interview with
Barbara W. (Texas)
by **Evan U.** (Los Angeles)



What's Going On: New York D.A.

Here in New York City, DA Intergroup has held three Pressure Relief Days in addition to our traditional Share a Day in November. NY Intergroup established and held the first Pressure Relief Day on April 30th, a Wednes-

day evening between 6 and 8pm. This first Pressure Relief Day helped about 50 pressurees to relieve their pressures in all areas. Although sessions were shortened to half an hour, the

virtues of serenity, efficiency, and togetherness as we welcomed the presence of a loving Higher Power. Based upon the success of this innovative event, a second Pressure Relief Day was held on July 9, also on a Wednesday evening between 6 and 8pm. Another 50 pressure relief meetings helped DA members in need. A third similar event took place on Wednesday, August 27th.



lovely flower arrangements, fresh water, and fruit did provide a welcoming, abundant environment.

DA members experienced a flourishing of love and self-esteem. Throughout the event, DA members embraced the

I have been the event coordinator, pushing the whole event to go harmoniously, but only our Higher Power could supply the magic of it all. ♡

Mae C.
(New York)

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Divine Insurance . . . (← page 3)

aware of this. I was not covered. I told myself I had to handle this like I would with any other creditor. Here was a chance to once again see how DA works I told myself. I asked God for guidance.

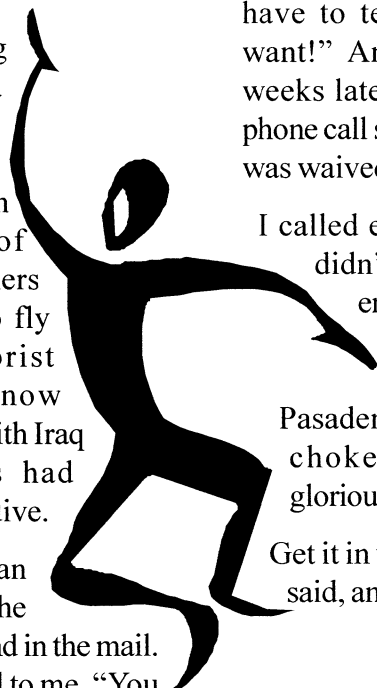
I contacted the business office of the hospital and told them I was going through a financial hardship. They asked me to write a letter explaining my financial situation. I had two months of spending plans, both business and personal, which I sent with the letter.

I explained that my business

depends on people flying since I am a pet sitter and care for their pets when they're out of town. Customers were afraid to fly due to terrorist attacks and now with the war with Iraq my business had really taken a dive.

It took less than an hour to get the letter written and in the mail.

One friend said to me, "You



have to tell them what you want!" And so I did, and two weeks later I received a telephone call saying...the \$20,000 was waived!

I called everyone but really didn't let myself feel the emotions until I was in the parking lot of the Friday night Pasadena meeting. I got so choked up and felt glorious!

Get it in writing, a DA friend said, and sure enough, I did.



Rena
(Pasadena, CA)

Announcements

Upcoming DA Events

October 11, 2003 New Jersey/Eastern PA Intergroup Share-A-Day

October 18, 2003 Second DA London Convention

October 24-26, 2003 DA Convention in Bremen, Germany

November 9, 2003 Annual New York Intergroup Share-A Day

Visit the official D.A. website at www.debtorsanonymous.org and click on the Events button for links to details.

Seeking Nominations for General Service Board

Do you know someone who might be a suitable candidate to serve on the D.A.'s General Service Board (GSB)? Or would you yourself like to serve? The GSB nominations committee is currently seeking nominees. Contact Phoenix (committee chair) at 505-243-1937 for further information about board service, qualifications, and the nomination process.

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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