

July 2012

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The DA Focus is published quarterly on a fiscal year basis by the D.A. General Service Board and emailed to all subscribers of the D.A. eNews. It is also available to download from the D.A. website at www.debtorsanonymous.org

Seeking Class A and Class B Trustees

Thirteen Trustees are currently serving on the General Service Board: eight Class As (recovering debtors) and five Class Bs (non-debtors). The Conference is looking for three Class As and one Class B to help do the work of the Fellowship. Please go to www.debtorsanonymous.org and the *D.A. Manual for Service* for the qualifications for this rewarding service.

“Debtors Anonymous” pamphlet

Groups who wish to place correction stickers on their stock of “Debtors Anonymous” and “Deudores Anónmos” pamphlets should send a self-addressed envelope stamped with “Forever” postage to the General Service Office. **Please specify the desired number of stickers in each language.**

Defining D.A., What We Are and Are Not: A Historic Opportunity for the Fellowship

Debtors Anonymous does not hold the right to adapt the A.A. Preamble. But just what does that mean in practice? First of all, the restriction affects what is produced by the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, Inc., the educational not-for-profit registered in the State of New York that has the legal and fiduciary responsibility for the spiritual fellowship of Debtors Anonymous. In order to fulfill its legal obligations in a timely way, the General Service Board has begun removing the D.A. Preamble from the Web site, www.debtorsanonymous.org It no longer appears on the home page, and it is being gradually deleted, in whole and in part, from other elements on the site.

The Board will remove the text from D.A. publications as they come up for reprint. This fits well with a long-term project, already under way, to review all literature and service material for our primary purpose, as well as for unattributed “borrowings” or violations of fair use.

But what is the responsibility of the D.A. groups? The short form of Tradition Four says, “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or D.A. as a whole.” On one level, groups are as free to cite the A.A. Preamble as they are to read from A.A.’s *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* or from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the A.A. “Big Book,” substituting “unsecured debt” and “debtor” for “alcohol” and “alcoholic.” In this light, your group may initiate a systematic study of the Twelve Traditions, including discussions of how using the adapted Preamble does or does not have an effect on “other groups or D.A. as a whole.” In addition to D.A. literature, the wealth

of material on the D.A. Web site will be useful in formulating our welcome to the newcomer.

There are other considerations. Groups might reflect on the *spirit* of AAWS’s request. When AAWS refused D.A. permission to adapt A.A.’s Promises, they encouraged us to create our own then, too. And at the 2001 World Service Conference we approved our own Promises. In spots the D.A. Promises use the language of A.A.’s, but they are very much ours, stating the specific gifts that so many of have experienced as a result of not incurring unsecured debt, living the Steps to the best of our ability, and giving and receiving service.

Similarly, it’s time for us to ask ourselves what we as D.A. believe in common with A.A. and differently from A.A. Some of us will be afraid that by doing this we are somehow distancing ourselves from the program itself, but—as so many of us have learned when we stopped debating—on the other side of fear is faith. Together we can.

Here is something we know: in the light of the principles of our program of recovery, everything turns to our good. Once again, we’ve been given an opportunity to explore those principles in the process of formulating our own mission statement, finding our own language to express our primary purpose. This is an exciting project that will inevitably strengthen D.A.’s identity and so our ability to reach the still-suffering debtor.

And speaking of history . . . A.A.’s “preamble” was not written as a mission statement. The then-editor of the *Grapevine* drafted it as a summary of what A.A. is and is not. Many of us find it difficult or even impossible to think of an introduction to D.A. that uses different language. But as D.A. enters its fourth decade, what an opportunity for unity!

The 2012 World Service Conference will be held in Seattle, Washington, at Seattle Pacific University, August 15–19, 2012.

The 2013 World Service Conference will be held in Phoenix, Arizona.

General Service Board Committee Reports

Audit Committee

The newly formed Audit Committee met for the second time in June. This is a part-time committee, meaning that it does not meet every month like most other General Service Board committees. The committee will meet one more time in the 2011–12 Conference year, immediately prior to the World Service Conference in August.

As a new committee, our primary focus has been to define the committee's scope and composition. Towards that end, we conducted research regarding audit committees for non-profits. We learned that in larger and more mature organizations the membership of the audit committee usually does not include anyone from the organization's finance function. Further, we learned that a key function of the audit committee is to select the CPA firm that will conduct the audit (or *review*, in our case) of the organization's financial statements, and to meet with that firm to go over the results of the audit/review and any issues raised.

Our next step towards this maturity will be to have the GSB Audit Committee meet with the CPA firm, separately from the GSB Finance Committee. We have requested that this occur during the upcoming fiscal year 2012 review cycle.

Communications

As part of a long-term translation project proposed by the WSC Literature Committee, the Communications Committee (ComCom) has undertaken to post texts from the Web site in Spanish. A priority was to revise the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions on the Web site under the "En Español" tab, in keeping with our agreement with AA World Services. They're up and printable.

Following a recommendation from the 2011 WSC, ComCom converted D.A.'s three public service announcements (PSAs) from CDs to mp3 files. However, Board members noticed that the PSAs spoke of D.A.'s "national"—rather than "international"—office number, and that the phone number given was the non-

toll-free number. The GSB Public Information Committee has taken the matter on.

The number of people opening the eNews continues to rise, hitting more than 700 in March–April.

Conference Support

The Conference Support Committee has received GSB approval of the new World Service Conference Host Committee Handbook. It is in the hands of the 2012 and 2013 Host Committees and has been well received. The CSC hosted two 90-minute WSC orientation calls in late July and early August. We are looking forward to a hard-working, productive WSC in Seattle.

Information Technology

The General Service Board's Info Tech Committee is planning for the second straight year a "broadcast" via telephone conference call of a portion of the World Service Conference Fellowship Day workshops. Last year three workshops were available to the worldwide fellowship. This year the number will be increased to four.

The chair and vice chair of the General Service Board broke new ground recently when they attended a meeting of the United Kingdom Intergroup using video conferencing technology. From two different locations in the U.S. they had both audio and visual links with about a dozen Intergroup representatives in London. This was the first time such technology has been used on the international level. It is likely to be used again in the near future to enhance communication around the world.

Legal Affairs

The Legal Affairs Committee has been snowed in with translation requests—a really high-class problem to have. Japanese, Italian, and Spanish translators are dotting the "i" and crossing the "t" to ensure that our copyrights are preserved and legally documented. Requests for translations have arrived from French Canada and Iceland. The board met with a representative of AA World Services, Inc., in February to discuss translation procedures. The head of AAWS publication services and AA's intellectu-

al property administrator continue to generously share experience, strength, and hope with D.A. In compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the board has adopted a document retention policy and a whistleblower-protection policy. Our trademark registrations are up-to-date. Several requests to copy D.A. material or to post D.A. material on websites have been reviewed by the committee.

Literature Publications

The committee consulted with counterparts in another Twelve Step fellowship to clarify copyright issues in order to get D.A.'s own literature in good legal standing. The committee created an updated description of and process for creating D.A. service materials and worked with Legal Affairs to create a formalized process for translations of D.A. Literature. Lit Pub has been gathering information on the expected costs of translations as well.

The committee has been working on a revision of the WSC-approved Literature Approval Process that would be easier and clearer to implement. If approved by the board, it will be taken to the WSC for its consideration.

Literature Services

Lit Serve has finalized the text for Newcomer's Packet sleeve and has completed its review of the "Annual BDA Business Plan" and "Pressure Relief Groups / Pressure Relief Meetings" pamphlets. Lit Serv is refining the concept and design of the "Twelve" set of bookmarks. Lit Serve is reviewing the last four Traditions and preparing the proposed second edition of *A Currency of Hope*. Writers continue to be sought for several projects, including "The Twelve Promises of D.A." and three BDA pamphlets, "B.D.A. Tool Ten," "B.D.A. Clarity in Business Finance," and a "B.D.A. Numbers" booklet.

Long-Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Committee hosted a day-long regional forum with the Chicago/Great Lakes Intergroup in April

General Service Board Committee Reports

(see p. 5). Fifty D.A. members from three states attended, and it was an informative event for all. The last "Ask the GSB" phone forum of the 2011–12 Conference year took place on June 17. Houston, TX, and Washington, DC, are being considered as possible sites for future regional forums.

Nominations

The Nominations Committee (Nom Com) continues to look for qualified candidates to fill the two open positions for Class A (recovering debtor) trustees. The committee also reviews and recommends any additions, changes, or updates to the GSB By-Laws. Nom Com is currently updating the "How to Become a GSB Trustee" FAQ's. This will give any members who are interested a detailed idea of what to expect if they choose to perform service at this level.

D.A. members who are interested in serving on the board as Class A trustees can go to www.debtorsanonymous.org and look at the qualifications necessary to perform this gratifying service. Please see "How to Become a GSB Trustee" under the "Service" tab.

Office

No report.

Public Information

The General Service Board Public Information Committee had a full year of working on various service-material projects, responding to national and international media requests, and supporting the Appointed Committee Member with media trainings for the D.A. community volunteers. The Committee updated its Composition, Scope, and Procedures, finalized the Spanish-language outreach flyer, and worked on a "D.A. Is/Is Not" service-material flyer. The Committee streamlined a response procedure for media requests and obtained a copy of a two-minute video piece about Debtors Anonymous in Ohio. There were four ma-

major media requests, and two international media requests, and four press mentions of DA as reported by a search-engine alert. The next two Media Contact trainings are scheduled for Saturday, August 18, during the 2012 WSC, and November 3. If you are interested in receiving announcements of trainings, please subscribe to the eNews on the home page at www.debtorsanonymous.org

Finance

No report.

"Traditions and Social Media" Teleconference Calls

On March 4th and again on July 1, the Communications Committee of the D.A. General Service Board and the Fellowship Communications Committee of the World Service Conference sponsored a "Traditions and Social Media" conference call.

D.A. members discussed concerns about anonymity in social media, shared their experience with broken anonymity, offered suggestions to help protect anonymity, and broadened the discussion of anonymity in the area of social media to the entire Fellowship.

More than sixty D.A. members participated in the March call and some twenty-five in the July call, including trustees, all the members of the current Fellowship Communications Committee, and members from the U.K. and Germany.

The calls made it apparent that anonymity in general is still a real concern for many D.A. members. However, as members discussed how they use social media to support their recovery, an exciting new question arose: How could social media be used to reach the sick and suffering debtor?

The calls suggest that continued discussions around the Traditions, social media, and anonymity in general would be very useful to the Fellowship.

Central to the discussion was a review of D.A.'s "Traditions and Social Media" statement (see below).

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The "Traditions and Social Media" Statement

Our Tradition Eleven states that "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." This implies all forms of public media-including social media. Our Tradition Twelve states, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." Anonymity provides protection for every member from identification as a debtor-an important safeguard, especially for newcomers.

The growing popularity of social media brings with it the increasing need for us to maintain personal anonymity. When using a Web site or any social media platform where D.A. members and non-D.A.s mingle, we should be aware that it is a form of public media. If we reveal our membership in D.A., along with our full name and/or photograph, this would be in conflict with the spirit of Traditions Eleven and Twelve.

World Service Conference Committee Reports

Business Debtors Anonymous

No report.

Conference

The 2011–12 Conference Committee continues to support the ongoing planning for this year's WSC in Seattle and the 2013 Conference in Phoenix. We have documented a formal policy for awarding the John H. WSC Scholarships that has been submitted to the GSB for approval. The 2012 Host Committee has indicated they plan to use the new policy, as it offers guidelines proposed by the past few years' host committee chairs and, as such, comes with much tried and true methods. As a committee we are happy with the low drop-out rate this year, as it has enabled us to maintain momentum and allowed us to address all of our agenda items. We have much gratitude for DA!

2013 WSC Host Committee

We have been told by the current and previous HC Chairs that we are ahead of schedule. Our vice-chair needed to resign to fulfill other service obligations, and we are happy to welcome Christy S. as our new vice-chair.

The GSB liaison, Alexandra BW, has begun the process of going over the information we gathered on our top two choices of hotels.

We have just received the Host Committee Handbook. It is 143 pages of vital/helpful information.

Sharon G., the HC Chair, met with the Southwest D.A. Intergroup to update them on the HC and to give them another look at service opportunities for the 2013 WSC.

Besides continuing to work toward the selection of a hotel, the HC will begin work on the registration packet. The HC chair has sent in her registration to the GSO, and looks forward to learning from and working with the 2012 Host Committee.

Diversity Caucus

The Diversity Caucus has excelled in all they have set out to accomplish.

All caucus members' personal stories been submitted to the Ways and Means, and the caucus continues to seek other debtors who

may also share their journey into D.A. and how it has impacted their lives.

The caucus also has established a new group in Harlem, NY, which is registered and has all their group service positions filled and functioning.

A letter of introduction, with appropriate D.A. literature, was sent to thirty-two organizations who serve possible debtors that come from different cultures, backgrounds, and ethnic areas.

To sum the year up . . . this caucus has been enthusiastic and action orientated in reaching debtors who may not be contacted in usual manners. Personal growth of all members has been realized, relating not only to their service experience, but also in their personal recovery. It has been a truly productive year, and has strong promise to continue in the next year. One more time, we get to experience how carrying the D.A. message not only helps the still suffering debtor, but also ensures our own solvency.

Fellowship Communications

The Fellowship Communications Committee has had a very productive 2011–12 Conference year. The committee hosted two Fellowship-wide "Traditions and Social Media" teleconferences, with D.A. members from around the world calling in. Groups writing in to Gsponsorship@gmail.com found a wealth of useful information and suggestions, including ways for stronger groups and more struggling meetings to find each other. The GSB Communications Committee is currently reviewing the "D.A. Resources" PDF, which catalogs resources available on the D.A. website, and contains direct hyperlinks to help quickly navigate the current D.A. site. The committee has suggested to the GSO that it would be beneficial to include the Treasurer's Manual, or a reference to it, in the materials sent to newly registered groups. The committee is revising its mission statement to more accurately reflect its purpose and potential in the modern realm of communication. Going forward, the FCC is considering proposing a "State of the Conference" conference call, on which representatives from all WSC committees and caucuses

would meet to share information, discuss issues, and find ways to collaborate.

Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons

No report

Intergroup Caucus

The Intergroup Caucus continued to meet monthly during the past quarter.

Although a number of topics were discussed, the primary issue addressed was changing the status of the group from *caucus* to *committee*. The primary rationales for this are that the Caucus views Intergroups as one of the primary growth mechanisms for D.A. and that, to fulfill its objectives, the Intergroup Caucus needs to operate as a full committee of the World Service Conference.

There was unanimous support on the Caucus for this action. The Caucus has contacted the Conference Committee regarding the proposed change, and looks forward to presenting the concept to that committee at the 2012 WSC.

Internal Operations

The Mission of the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) is to support the General Service Office (GSO) of D.A. The committee focuses on the overall operation of the GSO and interacts with the Board Liaison and Office manager to support the ongoing work of the GSO.

This year's theme for the IOC has been "Clarity and Action."

Two members of the IOC visited the GSO, met with the Office Manager, and were warmly greeted and shown the office and its resources. As a result of this visit the IOC identified some items to be added to the Board's 2012–13 spending plan. These include carpet cleaning and some upgrades to the computer system.

The IOC continues to work with the Tech Committee via monthly conference calls. By combining these two units it is hoped that two existing forms will be upgraded to increase efficiency and communication between members and the GSO.

Literature

February to July 2012: Lit Com continued its efforts to expand D.A.'s literature scope. We turned to A.A. for translation guidance, created a Health Care Survey and a "Call For Diverse Stories," and kept Tech Com apprised of literature approved for recording as downloadable MP3s on DebtorsAnonymous.org.

Lit Com recommended literature not updated for gender neutrality be done so upon reprinting, not sooner. We voted to have the D.A. "Basic Text" follow the format of the A.A. "Big Book": history including stories of the founding members, in-depth writing on debting characteristics, agnostic/atheist members, signs of recovery, and the spread of D.A.

We were unable to successfully rewrite the Responsibility Pledge or come to a majority decision to alert the Fellowship that the D.A. "12 and 12" is being written without using the word "solvency" to define D.A. recovery. We **strongly** recommend that the 2012–13 Literature Committee take up these issues.

Public Information

WSC PI has completed revisions to the PI Manual and forwarded it to GSB PI for review.

Resource Development

No report.

Technology

The Committee's mission is to support the General Service Board's technology efforts to help debtors worldwide.

To that end, we submitted a list of "quick fixes" for the D.A. web site and created a vision for the web site redesign: We asked D.A. members what they wanted on the site, researched other Twelve Step web sites, and explored the electronic reformatting of free D.A. literature—even creating a sample audio recording. We also studied how to update/register meetings and order literature online. Throughout the process, we discussed anonymity, security, not in-

Throughout the process, we discussed anonymity, security, not incurring new unsecured debt, and the Twelve Traditions.

At the 2012 WSC, we'll serve as onsite support during the Fellowship Day teleconference meetings. We'll also hand out a re-sources sheet on holding committee meetings by telephone, and on creating, storing, and sharing meeting agendas/minutes using a commercial electronic storage facility and server for e-groups.

Chicago Regional Forum

Fifty members from three Midwestern states turned out for a daylong immersion in D.A. service April 21 in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge, Illinois.

The Midwest Regional Forum drew debtors from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan to learn about the history, service structure, and primary purpose of the Fellowship, among other topics. It was sponsored jointly by the D.A. General Service Board and the Great Lakes D.A. Intergroup.

Three current and one former Trustees were joined by several Intergroup officers in making presentations, answering questions, and hearing comments from the membership. Other topics covered during the day included the purpose of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for World Service, current trends in D.A. literature, the spiritual concept of self-support, the General Service Office, and the resources available to strengthen D.A. groups and Intergroups.

Regional Forums have been held in D.A. since 2009, for regions centered on Boston, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, New York City, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Charlotte, NC. At least two are tentatively scheduled for next year in the Washington, DC, and Houston areas, with other cities under consideration for future years.

The purpose of the forums is fourfold: to enable local members to feel part of a vibrant worldwide D.A. community, to provide the tools to build strong groups and Intergroups, to answer any and all questions members have about D.A., and to build a stronger culture of service within the Fellowship.

Evaluation forms distributed at past forums indicate those goals have been met, and that most of those in attendance would be enthused about attending another forum in the future.

Open Service Positions

Three Class A (recovering debtors) General Service Board (GSB) Trustees

One Class B (non-debtor) GSB Trustee

Appointed Committee Member (ACM) for Finance Committee

ACM for Legal Affairs Committee

ACM for Conference Support Committee

ACM to Edit D.A.'s *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Two ACMs for Literature Publications Committee

All positions are on a volunteer basis.

For more information, see "Open Service Positions" at www.debtorsanonymous.org and the *Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service* (DAMS).

Chris R., Appointed Committee Member

I joined D.A. in February 1999, after my wife showed me the “12 Signs of a Compulsive Debtor.” I couldn't deny that most of them seemed to apply to me!

At my first meeting, it was suggested to me that I should keep track of every penny I spent, and every penny I earned. I have done that ever since, not perfectly, but diligently.

When I had a month or so of numbers, I had my first Pressure Relief Meeting.

I started doing service early on. I led meetings and gave PRMs. I was slow to get a sponsor, because I was scared of working the Steps. But after about a year, I accepted an offer of sponsorship.

My first sponsor used to say: “Going to the World Service Conference is 'turbo-recovery!’” I resisted that boost to my D.A. program for nine years, then in July 2008 I just couldn't shake the feeling that I should go to the Conference. And there I found that my sponsor had been right, all those years ago. Simply being among people who worked a strong program, and knew the value of service, gave me much greater clarity than I had known before.

As General Service Representative for a phone meeting, I was grateful for the benefits technology had brought me in the program. So I joined the Technology Caucus to give what I could back to the Fellowship, through my passion for the use of technology to assist recovery.

After serving two years on the Tech Caucus, I was asked if I would consider becoming an Appointed Committee Member to the GSB's Information Technology Committee. I was sure they were making a mistake! I didn't think I had skills or knowledge that would be useful at that level. But after a lot of outreach calls and introspection, I did eventually accept the offer, and have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Committee.

We meet once a month by phone, discussing issues that relate to the use of technology. Some of the topics we have discussed are:

- improving and eventually re-designing the website;
- broadcasting parts of Fellowship Day using a phone conference;
- making audio recordings of stories and D.A. literature available on the website;
- “Ask the GSB” phone conferences;
- electronic versions of literature;
- saving the Fellowship money, by sending electronic receipts for donations, instead of mailing paper receipts;
- and we have repeatedly discussed, although still not found a solution for, the possibility of D.A. being able to accept payments and contributions via our website, without accepting credit cards.

As an ACM I feel that my contribution really makes a difference, and that is very satisfying. It feels great to be able to give back to the Fellowship that has changed my life!

The eNews delivers *The DA Focus, Ways & Means*, and announcements of World Service events and service opportunities. You can sign up on the home page at www.debtor-sanonymous.org

Jan S., Class A Trustee

Rotation: The Sorrow and the Joy

A couple of months from now, I will rotate out of my position as a Trustee on the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board. I will return to my home group in Burlington, Vermont, and take up a job as greeter, coffeemaker, or whatever service position is available.

The first emotion that comes to mind when I think of this prospect is sorrow. During the past six years as a Trustee, and the past two as chair of the GSB, I've grown in ways I could never have imagined, and have experienced an exhilaration and a sense of fulfillment that are impossible to describe. It has been one of the great experiences of my lifetime, and I consider myself one of the luckiest men on earth to have had it. The thought of giving it all up when the gavel comes down at the World Service Conference this August, is painful, scary, and sad.

The second thought that comes to mind is resignation. I am a good D.A. member and, I hope, a good Trusted Servant. Our Fellowship depends for its well-being on the spiritual principle of rotation. No matter how painful the idea of rotation is for me, personally, it is necessary and good for D.A. I need to stand aside and make room for new blood, fresh ideas, different perspectives.

Many other things are whirling through my head these days. I find myself working late at night on the computer on projects that I want desperately to wrap up before my term ends. I've spent hours re-reading Bill W's discussion in Tradition Two about Elder Statesmen and Bleeding Deacons, in the hopes that I've gained enough spiritual development to become more of the former than the latter. And I'm just damned scared and confused a lot of the time—what will I do with those fifty Sundays a year I've long devoted to GSB work, and how will I be able to stand not knowing how my friends and former colleagues are doing without me?

As always, the answer to all this lies in the willingness to seek still more spiritual development. I have a service sponsor who has made this same transition in the past, with great style and grace. I have close friendships with several other men and women who have gone from being exemplary Trustees to exemplary former Trustees. Each one has gone through the same sense of deep loss, only to find new satisfactions and unexpected opportunities for service and usefulness.

The crux of the problem is that, as a compulsive debtor, I find it hard to believe that anything this good will ever happen to me again. And so, I have trouble letting go. At every stage of my D.A. recovery (now sixteen years of continuous solvency and counting), I've been given magnificent new gifts, one after the next. Each time one door has closed, a better one has opened. But each time I've stubbornly believed that there was nothing more for me out there, that each magnificent gift would be my last.

My debtor dilemma is my inability to believe in the goodness of what's to come. And so the answer is the same as it's always been: don't debt one day at a time, turn it over, show up, take action, pray, do the next right thing, share with others, and trust . . .

For the past two years, I have been privileged to have temporary custody of the gavel used by each of the fourteen men and women who have chaired the General Service Board throughout our Fellowship's history. It hangs on the wall just above my desk, as a daily reminder of our great history, and of my responsibility to D.A. Words cannot express my gratitude to the D.A. Fellowship for giving me the opportunity to serve in this way.

On August 19, I will hand that gavel to my successor. And then I'll hold out my hand to a Power Greater Than Myself, to ask to be guided to the next place, and the next adventure, where I can find joy and fulfillment while being of maximum service to God and my fellows.

Peggy R., Class B Trustee

Hi, my name is Peggy and I am a friend of Debtors Anonymous. It has been my distinct honor and pleasure to serve as a Class B (non-debtor) trustee on your General Service Board since August 2006. What an amazing whirlwind of an experience this has been! It's hard to believe that these past six years have gone by so quickly . . . but, indeed, they have and the time has come for me to, once again, rotate on.

I very deliberately say rotate "on" and not "out" because it has been my experience over the course of my twenty-five years of service to those universal principles embodied in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts that I must gratefully make room for the next trusted servant and joyfully accept whatever the God of my understanding has next in store for me. Service has been, and will remain, the lynchpin of my recovery and my life.

Some of the many lessons I have experienced are:

Trust God

Each day, as I turn my life and my will over to the care of God, as I understand God, I find that God's plan or inspiration for me is always superior to anything I might otherwise devise.

Have courage

A new experience may start out with some measure of anxiety or fear because I've never done it before so I have to utilize my trust in God to demonstrate courage in action. I am going to make mistakes but I can forgive myself my imperfections and try to do better next time. I have come to embrace my flawed humanity as that which shows me where I need to grow and how perfectly I belong exactly where I am.

Ask for help

Self-reliance can be a positive attribute but I have found that reaching out and asking someone for help or guidance affords me the opportunity to learn something new, to see a different perspective, to be part of something greater than myself, to begin to learn how to build relationships. Learning to develop and rely on a group conscience continues to prove a challenging but most rewarding experience.

Make the time and be available

Life is wonderfully busy, particularly now that I am living in recovery, but I remain committed to giving back that which was so freely given to me. I need to exercise prudence in the commitments I accept but not to the exclusion of my responsibility to the principles that saved my life. A little seeming inconvenience has always provided an outcome of gratitude for service.

Practice love and tolerance

I have come to celebrate the vast diversity of all those I interact with in service and in life. Each of us brings our own talent, skill, and passion to those times we share and I have witnessed the value each individual brings to the whole. Only in an atmosphere of love and tolerance can we bring our best effort.

Show gratitude

Thank you all for this opportunity to be of service to the fellowship of Debtors Anonymous. I have worked hard, learned much, made life-long friends, and hopefully contributed in some small way to the continued success of your life-saving program.