

***D.A. WORLD CONFERENCE
MINUTES - NOVEMBER 3, 1996***

DEBTORS ANONYMOUS WORLD CONFERENCE

Mundelein, Illinois

November 3, 1996

Minutes from the Convocation

The D.A. World Conference Convocation opened with the Serenity Prayer led by Mary M. (IL), chair of the General Service Board (GSB) at 8:45 a.m., Sunday, November 3, 1996.

Members of the Conference Committee led by Esther H. (CA) read the Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous. Esther noted that the Twelve Steps refer to individual recovery, the Twelve Traditions refer to group recovery and the Twelve Concepts refer to world service recovery.

Voting Representatives

Mary noted that there were 53 voting delegates present at the beginning of the Convocation (General Service Representatives, Intergroup Service Representatives, General Service Board Trustees and the General Service Office employee). Three additional voting delegates came in later.

Ratification of the General Service Board Trustees

Mary introduced the following individuals who were recommended by the General Service Board for trustee service:

Esther H., California, who was appointed to serve on the Board mid-year;

and three current trustees being recommended to serve a second term:

David P. (Texas) and Chris F. (North Carolina) as debting trustees,
and Bill C. (Connecticut), as a non-debting trustee.

Motion #1

Moved by Dave M. (CA), seconded by Barb B. (CA) - to accept all three nominees. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Mary reported that the new Board officers for the coming year would be as follows:

Chris F. (NC), Chair;
Hollie A. (MI), Vice Chair;
David P. (TX), Treasurer;
Fred F. (NC), Secretary.

Recovery Book Votes

A flow chart was distributed to explain the voting options regarding the draft of the recovery book that had been distributed on Friday morning, November 1 (Appendix A).

Motion #2

Moved by Hope B. (NY), seconded by Sarah D. (NJ) - to conduct the vote on the recovery book draft this year. The motion PASSED: 50 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions.

Motion #3

Moved by Sarah D., seconded by Mark D. (CA) - to conduct the vote on the book at the Convocation this morning. The motion PASSED: 48 in favor, 7 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Motion #4

Moved by David V. (CA), seconded by Hope B. - to approve the draft of the book as presented with the understanding that the Board will proceed with hiring a professional editor to finalize the manuscript. The Board retains the right to remove or edit stories as needed to create a balanced and quality manuscript for publication. The Board will approve all final editorial changes and the fellowship will not see the book again before it is published. The motion PASSED: 45 in favor, 7 against, 4 abstentions.

Questions and Discussion

There were several requests from people wanting to take the draft book home to show in their meetings, as a means to help with the fund raising that will be needed. The Board had concern about not wanting the drafts to be widely distributed because it is copyright material and there still is much editing to be done before the book is in final form for publication.

Specific concerns about the contents of the book were mentioned: There is no introduction. Are D.A. principles regarding sobriety clear? Six members pitched going ahead with approval of the book suggesting that the process be trusted, that the value of the stories which have taken two years to collect be accepted with their imperfections, and acknowledging the amount of work invested in the book to date.

Motion #5

Moved by Duncan (CA), seconded by Jimmy (CA) - that Conference delegates be allowed to retain for 60 days the drafts of the recovery book that were distributed at the World Conference, so that they can be shared with meetings and help to generate support for the book within the fellowship. The books will be due back in the General Service Office by January 1, 1997; the return postage is to be paid by each GSRs meeting or the ISRs intergroup. The motion PASSED - 45 in favor; 7 opposed; 4 abstentions.

Questions and Discussion

It was noted that the draft books are copyrighted and therefore should not be duplicated.

Committee Reports:

General Service Office Operations Committee

Hope B. (NY), chair of the General Service Office Operations Committee, introduced and thanked all who had given service on the committee. The committee report included an office activity report (March - October, 1996), reports on the office functions (actual and envisioned), development of an ideal and actual spending plan for the office, an office vision statement and other issues and recommendations. Hope emphasized that the committee was looking to the future with regard to the clerical and administrative needs of the office. The committee envisions computerizing the office, having more volunteers, and expanding to having other office locations in the Midwest and California. She also stressed the importance of all meetings registering with the G.S.O. and suggested the meetings pass another basket to support the G.S.O. Hope asked that everyone keep the ideas coming and energy flowing.

Questions and Discussion

There was a suggestion from the floor that individuals incorporate in their spending plans sending an additional \$10 a month to the G.S.O. Another suggestion regarding regional office locations included diversifying the services in various offices. There was also a suggestion for exploring moving the General Service Office to another city where the rent would be less than it is in the New York City area. Hope asked that fellowship members write down their suggestions and visions and send them into the committee.

Motion #6

Moved by Mark C. (WI), seconded by Esther H. - to accept the report of the General Service Office Operations Committee. The motion PASSED: 52 in favor; 1 opposed; 3 abstentions.

Finance Committee

Mark C. (WI) introduced the Finance committee members and expressed appreciation for all of their contributions. The committee's report (Appendix B) included copies of two letters composed by the committee, one addressed to GSRs and the other to DA members at-large. Both letters stress the importance of contributions to the G.S.O. for general world service **and** to support the recovery book. The committee also submitted a revised business plan for the recovery book as part of its report; the total estimated cost for publishing the recovery book is \$30,000. It was noted that Mark Crea, the Board's consultant to work on publication of the recovery book, also met with the committee.

Mark C. (WI) stated that the committee hopes to know the exact cost of the book within six months. D.A. members at the World Conference have been surveyed about their preference for a hard cover vs. soft cover edition, which is a factor that will affect the cost. It is estimated that many of the first edition sales will be for gift copies. The decision was made not to pre-sell the book which would be debting.

Questions and Discussion

There was a question regarding designated contributions for the book and office. David P., the GSB treasurer, stated that any non-specified contributions automatically go into the general fund. If a contribution is made and it is specifically designated for the book, then that money will go for the book. It was noted that supporting both the General Service Office and the book are important. If the book is published and we can't afford to keep the office open, there will be no way to fulfill orders for the book or let people know how to find D.A. in their area once they do purchase the book.

There were some comments about wanting to see more figures on the projected income from the book, what the selling price for the book would be and how the book's publication might impact the potential growth of the fellowship. It was noted that these were areas the Board and the Finance Committee would be studying over the next several months, with the advice and consultation of Mark Crea. David P. noted that the book was just approved today and some time is needed to work out the details.

David also added that he believes our collective Higher Power is in charge, and that as this information is shared with GSRs to take back to their meetings, the fellowship will respond positively so that the book can be published.

It was also noted that pre-selling the book would be debting and we have to believe that if the fellowship wants the book, it will support it. The letters distributed describe how contributions are used and that communication is the most important means we have for generating funds. The finance committee urged that everyone go back with a positive attitude and reach out to people in the fellowship to build support for publication of the recovery book.

There was a question as to if the finance committee will look at reducing the cost of literature. David P. stated that prices will probably not be reduced because the present price is needed to cover more than just the cost of reprinting each item. Other costs that need to be covered include administrative overhead costs from the General Service Office to process orders, Literature Committee expenses for the development of new literature and the costs of warehousing and order fulfillment. The overall cost and pricing for literature is an item that is reviewed regularly by the Board and has been studied by the Finance Committee as well.

Esther H. noted that the Board is not focusing on the income production potential of the book, but rather seeing this as a service piece that it wants to make available to as many people as possible. "It's all in God's hands."

Motion #7

Moved by Fred F. (NC), seconded by Bob K. (CA) - to accept the report of the Finance Committee. The motion PASSED: 55 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention.

A 7th tradition was taken for the General Service Office and for the Recovery Book after which the group took a ten-minute break. Chris chaired the next portion of the meeting.

Literature Committee Report

Barbara B. (CA), chair, introduced and acknowledged all 1996 Literature Committee members including officers, board liaisons, and others for their work on the recovery book. She also thanked Eric R., committee chair, and other members of the 1995 Literature Committee for their work on the book. This year every person on the committee is new, except for Nicole and Jimmy which makes it really exciting. The committee has been working on developing literature in French, and reviewing the process for literature approval.

A survey was distributed about the "13 Signposts on the Road to Becoming a Compulsive Debtor", the results of which are to be to Claudella J. (MI) by January 15, 1997. (Appendix C)

Works In Progress Subcommittee

Jimmy W. (CA), chair of the "Works in Progress" subcommittee, provided a progress report on various pieces of literature. The following items have been approved and are ready to be printed: Visions and Awareness pamphlets; plus the Recovery Book that has just been approved today. The Service pamphlet is being revised from GSR comments and the Sponsorship Pamphlet is being submitted to the Literature Committee for comment; the Abstinence pamphlet is in subcommittee, being readied for comments by the Literature Committee. Jimmy reported on the progress of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book. Underearning and Savings/Prudent Reserves pamphlets are being discussed. Jimmy said he was inspired by the energy of the committee.

Vote on Proposal to Amend Steps and Traditions

Barbara noted that the ballot to ask meetings to vote on a proposal to change the wording of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of D.A. to make them gender neutral has not been sent out yet. This proposal was worked on by the Unity subcommittee of the Literature Committee. Chris F. stated that the reason the ballot had not gone out yet was due to difficulty the Board has had with getting the data base updated and in a usable format. She expects that the ballot will be mailed out within the next three months. An affirmative vote by three-quarters of the D.A. meetings is needed to change the language of the Steps and Traditions.

Questions and Discussion

There were some questions about the proposed Signposts and it was noted that there would not be a vote to approve the proposal today. Barbara also noted that the committee is working on one sheet of information [in addition to the pamphlets] which could be given out to newcomers at meetings.

The question was raised as to if it is allowable to duplicate the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions given the copyright restrictions. It was noted that this frequently occurs. Mary stated that all D.A. literature including the Steps, Traditions and Signposts are copyrighted. Members are asked to respect this and not reproduce literature in its entirety. With regard to the issue of if just copying the Steps and Traditions is permissible, she stated that the Board would need to discuss this and develop a policy.

A question was asked about if the proposed language for de-genderization the D.A. Steps and Traditions has been approved by A.A., given that we need A.A.'s permission to reprint the Steps and Traditions with amendments. Mary M. stated that permission has been received from A.A. to amend the Steps and Traditions as proposed, pending approval of the D.A. fellowship.

Esther H. expressed her opinion that the present language should remain as it is written in the A.A. Steps and Traditions. There was not time to allow further comments on the issue.

An opinion was also expressed that talking about the issue of "clutter" should be a part of the D.A. program and literature.

Motion #8

Moved by Fred, seconded by Duncan - to accept the report of the Literature Committee. The motion PASSED: 55 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention.

Fellowship Communications Committee

David A. (MA) acknowledged the committee members collectively for all of the work that is being done and individually for talents contributed to the committee.

Ways & Means Newsletter:

Suze (TX), the newsletter editor, has put out the last two issues. GSRs and ISRs were encouraged to purchase a subscription to the Ways & Means newsletter today and to promote it at their meetings. Order forms were distributed during the Convocation. It was also noted that the Ways & Means is now sent to subscribers only, and not provided to meetings on a complimentary basis. The newsletter is self-supporting through the subscriptions received only, and those funds are accounted for separately so that the money is only used to print and mail the newsletter.

Request for Articles and Other Contributions to the Newsletter

Members were encouraged to share their experience, strength and hope by writing an article or sharing any other contribution that could be printed in future newsletters. All article and story ideas should be sent into the General Service Office. Duncan, a member of the Fellowship Communications Committee, will be working with Suze to collect and compile the contributions.

New Editor for Ways & Means will be needed in 18 months

David acknowledged Suze's contributions as Ways and Means editor and stated that she committed to do eight issues of the newsletter (four per year). She has completed two issues and work like to have the new editor selected to work with her during her second year as editor, to insure a smooth transition. David asked members to start thinking, today, about if they or anyone they know would be interested in picking up as the Ways & Means editor when Suze's term ends.

Trustee's Newsletter

David P. noted that at last year's World Conference it was voted to separate the Trustees' newsletter from the Ways & Means Newsletter. The Board will send regular updates to the fellowship on a quarterly basis, and time those mailings so they are on different months than when the Ways & Means is sent out. Thus, communications to the fellowship will be going out at least eight different times during the year. Reports from committees can be included with the Trustee's newsletter but that information needs to be received from the committee chairs at least a month ahead of time.

Database (World Service Directory)

This is now handled by a private data base management firm in North Carolina. The committee recommends that back-up disks be distributed to each trustee as a safeguard to prevent loss of the information.

ID Numbers for Groups

To improve the management of the database, all meetings will be assigned an ID number. This should eliminate duplication of mailings to meetings and help track contributions from each group. Group registration is very important. The World Service Directory information comes from registration forms. Group registration/group change forms are being amended to include an ID number and meeting specifics such as non-smoking, speaker, male or female only, etc.

David also asked members to please send their current meeting lists to the General Service Office as well, to help locate meetings that may not be registered.

Infrastructure 2000

David noted that the Committee's vision is to have a working regional infrastructure to communicate between the fellowship and the General Service Board as well as laterally between the intergroups. He noted that the current infrastructure does not work; only seven of seventeen intergroups have responded that they would be willing to participate in passing along information to meetings in their areas. The committee will be following up with the intergroups they did not hear from last year to get more full participation around the country. GSR Area Groups are not

nationwide and the Committee seeks input on how the GSR Area groups should fit into the infrastructure. This is just a beginning on how they think the communication flow can work, the committee welcomes additional input.

Motion #9

Moved by David P. (TX), seconded by Nicole L. (CA) - to accept the report of the Fellowship Communications Committee. The motion PASSED: 57 in favor; 0 against; 0 abstentions.

Public Information Committee

Tracey C.(CA), the new committee chair, thanked everyone especially the new committee members and new officers.

PI Manual

Colleen C. (CA) reported on the progress of the PI Manual. Comments on the current draft of the Manual are to be submitted to Tracey in time for a conference call that is scheduled to discuss comments received. Tracey will compile all edits and refine the conference call input to prepare a new draft of the Manual by July 31, 1997.

Information Cover Letter

Colleen also noted that at the 1995 World Conference a letter was drafted to be sent out to helping professionals informing them about D.A. The committee plans to contact GSRs to request lists of institutions and helping professionals in various parts of the country that ought to receive this letter.

The letter to be sent to the helping professionals has been submitted to the Board for approval. If the board approves the letter, it will go out with information about D.A. to the list of institutions and individuals provided by GSRs. The issue of how D.A. can be contacted without violating anonymity is under discussion. The committee is considering the possibility of a national phone number; costs associated with this will need to be explored.

Web Site

Fred F. reported that the committee has begun researching the establishment of a web site on the Internet. He has spoken with staff at the A.A. General Service Office and learned that they have a web site. David S., Duncan, and Glenn are assisting with this research. The committee would like to see a web site fact file that includes how to contact D.A. around the country. To accomplish this, it would be very important to have good contacts in each area so that people get a prompt response when they ask for information.