

DA World Conference Minutes
Los Angeles
September 27 - 28, 1997

Debtors Anonymous World Conference
Los Angeles, California
September 27, 1997

Minutes from the Saturday Convocation

The DA World Conference Saturday Convocation opened with the Serenity Prayer led by Chris F. (NC), Chair of the General Service Board (GSB), at 5:34 p.m., Saturday, September 27, 1997.

The Acting Host Secretary, Carol B. (CA) was introduced.

Voting Representatives

A voice count of voting members established that there were 70 GSRs, ISRs and GSB Trustees present. Chris F. read from the DA Conference Charter a description of delegates eligible to vote, a description of conference members and the purpose of the Convocation.

Agenda

Chris mentioned that two main items were to be considered during this portion of the Convocation:

1. Are on-line groups to be considered bonafide DA groups? Three speakers were invited to speak for the topic, and three to speak against.
2. Is B.O.D.A. to be considered part of Debtors Anonymous? Three speakers were invited to speak for, and three against. Chris F. noted that the unity of DA was at stake.

Ratification of New General Service Board Trustee

Chris F. introduced Doyle B. to the members to be ratified as Trustee. Doyle noted that he has been a member of DA for 13 years, solvent for 8 years and his intention as a Trustee is to "give back service he has received from the DA program." His goal is to retain old members.

Motion 1

Moved by Curtis (WA), seconded by Johanna (CA) to accept Doyle B. as GSB Trustee. The motion passed unanimously.

Degenderization Issue

Chris F. asked for guidance from the representatives regarding the degenderization issue. A call was made for a motion to create a new ballot on the issue to give to all DA groups. Clarification was requested: Are unreachable groups not responding? Can the vote be continued, that is, count the votes received and continue to solicit more votes from the membership? It was noted that the vote was taken on a different piece of literature that which was approved by the Literature Committee, and any new vote would refer to a new document. The question was raised of whether the vote could be done in two years using an updated database and 1994 language. It was noted that a 3/4 response from the membership would result in the same situation. Mention was made of the fact that many registered DA groups no longer exist: this manner of voting is flawed. David A. (MA) noted that his committee planned to report that the cutoff date for groups to re-register has been set (July 30), and this information may influence the decision to vote again on the degenderization issue. Concern was expressed that a decision on the issue not be undertaken lightly.

Motion 2

Moved by Curtis (WA), seconded by David V. (CA), to interpret the last sentence of Section 3 of the Charter as "no change in ... may be made with less than three-quarters of written response of DA groups that respond within a reasonable length of time."

Discussion: It was noted that a vote to amend the Charter is upcoming, and this motion should be postponed until after that time. A suggestion was made that the motion be amended to read, "... of registered DA groups...." It was noted that to pass an amendment to the Charter requires a 3/4 vote of all conference members. It was suggested that there was a preceding motion to this motion, that a past vote was taken incorrectly, and that there were conflicting motions on the floor. Mention was made of the vague language, "reasonable amount of time," as the motion was worded. The Secretary was asked to re-read the motion on the floor. The question was called. Clarification of the motion was requested.

The motion was declared out of order by Chris F., who recommended that the vote not be taken, and requested that the Conference Committee give their report.

Committee Reports

Conference Committee Report

Dave M. (CA), chair of the Conference Committee, opened his report with the Serenity Prayer and then introduced the members of the committee: Holly (MI), Greg D. (CA), Steve B. (WA), Norm N. (CA), Janine M. (CA), Curtis C. (WA), Phoenix F. (NM) and Pat P. (NM). Dave mentioned that issues under discussion in the committee included the 1999 Conference site, the structure of the Conference, a proposed DA Convention, an updated Host Committee Handbook (undertaken by Greg D. and Holly A.), and a Consensus Calendar that could help streamline the Convocation process. Several issues were brought before the conference members for discussion and/or vote.

1. To extend the 1998 Conference to four days as an experiment.
2. To reimburse GSB Trustees 100% of their conference expenses. (In the past, they have received 25% reimbursement. The intention is to make the conference fully self-supporting and not use GSR money to send Trustees.
3. Future conference concerns include possible sites. Dave noted that a site for 1999 has not been set. He noted that Albuquerque, New Mexico has prepared a formal proposal to be the conference site in 2000, and encouraged other cities to present formal proposals as well for future conferences.
4. Members were asked to bring suggestions about having a DA Convention, as opposed to a DA World Conference, to the Conference Committee in Seattle in 1998.

Motion 3

Moved by Dave M. (CA), seconded by Duncan M. (CA), that

1. *The 1998 Seattle DA World Conference be extended to four days.*
2. *The GSB Trustees be reimbursed 100% for their reasonable conference travel expenses.*
3. *That Albuquerque, New Mexico be approved as the site of the 2000 DA World Conference.*

The motion passed : 60 for, 6 opposed, 4 abstentions.

Discussion: Four days was suggested as an experiment to relieve some of the time pressure experienced by delegates. Regarding the issue of reimbursement of Trustees, the question was raised: is there money to reimburse delegates? A clarification of "reasonable expenses" was requested and given by the Conference Committee chair. It was noted that another city had expressed interest in hosting the 2000 Conference, but had presented no formal proposal to the Committee.

Chris F., chair of the GSB, asked the delegates for a 10-minute extension of the Convocation.

Dave M. (CA) continued with his report. He asked that evaluation forms be filled out and left on the table. He then introduced Steve B. (WA), the chair of the Seattle 1998 DA World Conference. Steve B. discussed the

concept and theme of the 1998 Conference. The theme is "Transforming Dreams into Reality, One Day at a Time." The logo, a butterfly image, has been designed. Other ideas include a "Wall of Dreams," a Share-a-Day and a Talent Show. The Conference will be held at the University of Washington. A first draft of a spending plan has been prepared and given to Holly and the GSB for consideration. Steve mentioned that even with the extra day and the reimbursement of Trustee expenses, the registration fee will be lower than the 1997 Conference.

Motion 4

Moved by Fred (NC), seconded by Dan (CA), to accept the Conference Committee report. The motion passed with 69 in favor and one abstention.

Chris F. reminded the members to sign up to speak on the on-line issue at tomorrow's Convocation, and adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:40 p.m. with the Serenity Prayer.

Debtors Anonymous World Conference
Los Angeles, California
September 28, 1997

Minutes from the Sunday Convocation

The DA World Conference Sunday Convocation opened with the Serenity Prayer led by Chris F. (NC), Chair of the General Service Board (GSB), at 8:36 a.m., Sunday, September 28, 1997. Chris asked members to demonstrate the years of recovery present in the room by asking everyone to stand and then sit as she called out years in DA, from six months to over 11 years. She then mentioned that she would be conducting the Convocation according to Roberts Rules of Order. Members were asked to give their completed evaluation forms to Norm N. (CA) before leaving. The importance of the conference committees was noted and an intention was set to honor the power of the group conscience.

Chris F. asked to begin with the issues discussed at yesterday's Convocation, and established a firm commitment to end the Convocation at noon as planned.

Voting Representatives

A voice count of voting members established that there were 77 GSRs, ISRs and GSB Trustees present.

Degenderization Ballot Issue

Chris F. asked for a straw vote on the Degenderization Ballot issue:

1. Should the ballot be approved by the Conference?
2. Should it be mailed to the registered DA groups?
3. If yes, suggest it be mailed when the database is completed.

A show of hands appeared to evenly split. The issue was tabled until the 1998 Conference.

Motion 5

Moved by Tracy C. (CA), seconded by Carolyn H. (WA) that BODA is a viable part of DA and as such, all BODA members have access to all meetings, services, privileges and the right to vote at every DA World Service Conference and Convocation. The motion passed, 75 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Discussion: It was noted that at issue is the unity of DA as a whole. A member of the Literature Committee mentioned that the committee had formed a sub-committee to work on BODA literature and requested that samples of BODA literature be sent to Jerry, the sub-committee chair.

Agendas were distributed to the Conference delegates.

Chris F. introduced Charlie H. to talk about on-line DA groups and answer questions brought by the reps. Issues noted included security of anonymity, the purpose of the groups and contributions made to the World Service Office. Outside issues, crosstalk and registration of the groups with the World Service Office were also discussed.

Motion 6

Moved by Bob, seconded by Jimmy, that on-line groups be allowed to register with the General Service Office as DA groups. Motion passed, 65 in favor, 3 opposed and 9 abstentions.

Discussion: Speakers speaking against the motion mentioned the issue of maintaining anonymity on-line, leaders who "govern," contributions made to outside sources, inaccessibility to those without a computer, and the need for more information before voting. A speaker in support of the motion noted that the on-line groups honored the Traditions, made contributions to the WSO, and were available to debtors 24 hours a day.

Internal Operations Committee Report

Jerry P. (MA), chair of the Internal Operations Committee, noted there were two main issues on the table for the committee: to support the existing office as it is, and to consider the long term view. Members of the committee were introduced to the delegates.

Regarding the current situation at the New York office, Jerry noted that office rent has increased by \$25.00, an amount that is offset by the rent paid by the Tri State GSR Service Board which holds its monthly meetings there. Public information articles have resulted in an increase in calls to the GSO. Los Angeles groups have volunteered to help with mailings.

The long term view includes preparing a proposal to receive information from the Tally Management Group, an organization that manages other 12 Step group offices.

The Committee made several recommendations:

1. To ask the Tri State GSR GSB to have a volunteer coordinator to assist Alice in the arranging of volunteers.
2. Appoint two committee members to work with the GSB, Intergroups and GSR groups to improve the phone message.
3. To ask the GSB/GSO to accept requests from GSRs and Intergroups to offer service.
4. To be able to be involved with the GSB in any activity related to giving the operations of the office to an outside organization.

Discussion: What about moving the GSO? Why stay with "outrageous" Manhattan rents?

Motion 7

Moved by Fred F. (NC), seconded by John, to accept the report of the Internal Operations Committee. 73 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Literature Committee

Jimmy, the chair of the Literature Committee, introduced the members of the committee, and then noted the projects that are being handled by the ten sub-committees.

1. DA Twelve and Twelve is in progress. Drafts are completed for all steps except 5 and 7, which are partially completed. A mail-in form is available for people to give feedback. The goal is to have the book ready for a vote at the 2000 Conference.
2. The Thirteen Signposts. Comments are due to Karen by January 15, 1998. 6289 Vallejo Street, Emoryville, CA 94608.
3. DA 101. A How-To book for the DA program. Eight chapters exist with working titles. Feedback due to the committee by January 15, 1998.
4. Underearning Pamphlet. First draft due at the Seattle 1998 Conference.
5. SCDA Literature Subcommittee. SCDA literature, including the pressure group format and the numbers book, are being considered by the subcommittee and will be brought to the Literature Committee for comment.
6. BODA Literature. Contact Dan W. (CA) with feedback.
7. 4th Step Inventory/Sponsorship Pamphlet. Examining possible conflicts between the two. Plan to take comments on both in 1998.
8. Abstinence Pamphlet. The DA Promises were mailed to the GSRs in the last mailing. Show of hands indicated about half received them. The Promises will be sent again with the next mailing. Jimmy set up a sign up sheet for the GSRs who did not receive the mailing.

9. Debt Payment Pamphlet. Revisions continue and will be presented to the Literature Committee in 1998.
10. Service Pamphlet. Has been written, status unknown, location uncertain. May be ready to present to the GSB.
11. Debt Anon. Literature was discussed. It was suggested that as this is a separate program, that the group should form its own literature. DA could be a guide, but not the writer.
12. Bankruptcy. The issue was postponed until 1998.
13. Pressure Group vs. Pressure Relief Group. The Committee recommends changing the wording in all future literature to "Pressure Relief Group."

Motion 8

Moved by Lisa, seconded by Charlie, that the wording of all future literature be changed from "Pressure Group/Meeting" to "Pressure Relief Group/Meeting." Motion passed, 70 in favor, 4 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Motion 9

Moved by Mary, seconded by Matt, to accept the Literature Committee Report. Motion passed unanimously.

Resource Development Report

River L. (NY), chair of the Resource Development Committee, introduced the committee members, and mentioned that the title of the committee had been changed from the Finance Committee. She said that a group conscience was received from the delegates, that every comment was read, and further noted that about 25% of the comments were related to the existence of the database. A synopsis was prepared of the committee's experience over the past 2 years, and a clarification was made for the costs of the projects currently in progress. The operating costs of the GSB and the GSO were reviewed with the priority being to keep the GSO open. Areas of discussion included revenue enhancement. This involved defining the "market." An action plan was created based on the information received from the group conscience on Friday: Goals are

1. To produce the database to improve communication with the fellowship
2. To enhance income with a campaign to increase revenue.
3. To increase donations to the Recovery Book fund, noting that donations are coming in more slowly than anticipated, resulting in an estimated turnaround time of five years.
4. To print the two pamphlets currently in progress.

Motion 10

Moved by River L. (NY), seconded by Robert, that a non-binding Advisory Action vote be held regarding the \$2500 surplus expected from the spending plan of the 1998 Conference, and that the first \$1000 in excess of that line on the spending plan be allocated to create a database, with any surplus being used to print the Visions and Awareness pamphlets. After discussion, the question was called. After clarifying the motion, the issue was raised of which conference surplus was under discussion in the motion, and is that before or after the Prudent Reserve is taken into account. In light of the confusion, the motion was withdrawn by River L. with the approval of the second, Robert.

Discussion: Opposition suggested building Prudent Reserves instead. There was concern that the operations of the office would be curtailed for lack of funds. A question was raised about whether this amount included the reimbursement of the Trustees' conference expenses. There was a suggestion that a "crisis mentality" be avoided, since this was not a crisis. Mary, GSB Trustee, mentioned that the GSB likes to know the group conscience regarding priorities. A suggestion was made of setting up an easel listing various topics, and stickies that members can put next to the topics they feel deserve priority attention.

After the motion was withdrawn, it was mentioned that the 1998 spending plan was used as the basis for the idea, but the surplus mentioned in the motion was from the 1997 conference. This without taking into account the reimbursement of the Trustees' expenses. The intention of the motion was to make clear the members' priorities to the GSB: the database and the printing of the two pamphlets.

Motion 11

Moved by River L. (NY) in the form of a non-binding advisory action vote, seconded by Connie, that a campaign be created for increasing revenue to encourage DA members to put \$5.00 in the 7th Tradition basket ("Thrive on \$5") and to put two dollars in the basket instead of the usual one ("Double Your Dollar"). Motion passed, 75 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Discussion: A suggestion was made to make a chart showing graphically the decline of meeting and personal contributions.

River continued the report of the Resource Development Committee with discussion of the funding of the Recovery Book. The Committee recommended an "International Recovery Book Week," where all the funds raised through the 7th Tradition be sent to the Book fund. Members were also encouraged to pledge a percentage of the increase in their annual income since being a DA member, or a percentage of their discretionary income, or a percentage of the debt they no longer have, and donate this amount to the Recovery Book fund.

The fourth recommendation from the Committee was to suggest that the GSB explore ways to reduce the cost of printing pamphlets. It was mentioned that if 21 people give \$1000 each, the book could be published this year.

Motion 12

Moved by Leonard, seconded by Duncan, to accept the report of the Resource Development Committee. Motion passed, 75 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Break at 10:57 a.m.

Voting Representatives

A voice recount of the GSRs/ISRs/Trustees established the voting membership after the break at 62.

Fellowship/Communication Committee Report

Three main topics were brought up by chair David A.

1. The Ways & Means/GSR Quarterly Newsletter
2. Re-registration database
3. Infrastructure 2000

Issues to be voted on:

1. Encourage all groups to get PO Boxes
2. Publish 3 GSB Newsletters per years, depending on resources.
3. Re-register all groups with a new registration form.

David A. introduced the members of the Committee.

Ways & Means: Suse E., is the editor of the Ways & Means. All members are urged to contribute copy, etc. Copy deadlines were noted. Information is solicited from all DA groups (send to WSO in New York). There were 150 new subscribers in 1997.

The GSB Quarterly Newsletter is edited and managed by Chris F. Funding issues delayed the last mailing. Committees with activities during the year should update Chris with the information so it can be published in the newsletter.

Re-registration/Database issue: Two years ago the database was lost. The information is being collected again. The goal is to have every DA group, including on-line groups, registered on a new form, not the one in the GSR Handbook. Groups are advised to re-register, even if they have already registered, and to give the form to Marilyn. No information will be sent to groups that are not registered. Intergroups are requested to send their area meeting

lists to the Fellowship/Communications Committee at the WSO. All groups will be assigned an ID number that they will be required to use on all correspondence with the WSO. New forms will be cross-referenced with old forms. Mailing regions will be created according to the AA structure in 1st quarter 1998. Rebuilding the database will begin in 2nd quarter. A World Service Directory will be available to all GSRs at the 1998 Conference.

Motion 13

Moved by David, seconded by Curtis, that all DA groups endeavor to establish a PO Box. Motion passed, 56 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Motion 14

Moved by David, seconded by Jamie, that the GSB publish three newsletters per year, budget permitting, with two newsletters to be mailed before mid-June. Clarified to read, "... with two newsletters to be mailed between the conference and mid-June."

Friendly amendment #1 moved by Connie, seconded by David, that the wording be altered to read, "...two newsletters to be mailed between the 1997 conference and mid-June." The question was called. Motion passed, 53 in favor, 0 opposed, 9 abstentions.

Friendly Amendment #2 moved by Bob, seconded by Liz, that the wording be amended to read, "...two newsletters between the annual conference and mid-June." Motion passed, 58 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention.

Motion in its revised form passed, 61 in favor, 1 abstention.

Motion 15

Moved by David, seconded by Dan, that the Convocation will recognize only groups re-registered by July 15, 1998. All others will be moved to the inactive file and not be recognized. This will be binding based on the GSB newsletter publishing this information a minimum of two times before July 15.

Friendly Amendment proposed by Chip, seconded by Robert, that the wording be revised to read, "... all other currently registered groups will be moved to the inactive file...."

The question was called. Confusion arose concerning the calling of the question. Chris F., the GSB Chair mentioned her desire to table the motion due to procedural problems. A group conscience was called on whether the group wanted to move forward on the vote, with the awareness that any delay holds the process up by a year. The group conscience resulted in 50 in favor of moving ahead with the vote, 0 opposed, 6 abstentions. The question was called on the Friendly Amendment. The amendment passed, 53 in favor, 6 opposed, 2 abstentions. The revised motion passed, 54 in favor, 5 opposed, 3 abstentions.

David finished the Fellowship/Communication Committee Report by noting that he was stepping down as chair, and that Andy L. (OR) would be taking over.

Motion 16

Moved by Mary, seconded by Curtis, to accept the report of the Fellowship/Communication Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Information Committee Report

Introduction by Tracy C., outgoing chair, of new chair, Darleen from Pittsburgh. Issues discussed by the Committee included consideration of the chain of information, the building of an archive to store existing public information articles, etc., the updating of the PI manual, the DA Webpage and the creation of an outreach letter to professionals. Subcommittees were formed to handle some of these areas.

Motion 17

Moved by Chris F., seconded by Curtis, that delegates take a recess to check out of their hotel rooms and reconvene for a final 15 minutes. Motion passed, 59 in favor, 3 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Break at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Public Information Committee Report continues at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Other discussion included the creation of a letter to the media to go into the presskit, a memo to the debtor on how to respond to questions from the media and other DA information about the tools, etc. Two outreach letters are being developed that are going through the approval process. The DA Webpage, Debtorsanonymous.org is being created and will be on-line in the near term at zero cost to the GSB for the first year. Regarding the DA archives, Alice is now the official Archivist, the location is at the GSO, with copies to be held by Linda B. in New Jersey as a backup. The purpose of the archive is to collect all DA contact with the media. GSRs are asked to send the original and copies of any media contact to the GSO for Linda to organize.

Motion 18

Moved by David, seconded by Dan, to accept the report of the Public Information Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Chris F. began to conclude the Convocation by acknowledging outgoing GSB Trustees Fred F. and Mary, and by introducing Greg D., chair of the 1997 Host Committee, who passed the gavel to Steve B., chair of the 1998 Host Committee. Greg noted that there were 97 registrants at the 1997 Conference, and 314 attendees at Fellowship Day on Saturday, September 27. He acknowledged the work of committee members.

Dave M., chair of the Conference Committee noted that a formal bid is in process from Boston for 1999.

Chris F. said that the 1997 Conference was the largest DA conference to date. Also, for the first time, the GSB had a spending plan for the upcoming conference a year in advance, and she summarized the work accomplished at this conference.

Motion 19

Moved by David, seconded by Duncan, that the 1997 DA World Conference Convocation be adjourned. Motion passed unanimously.

The Conference was adjourned at 12:27 p.m.