

Ways & Means

A Quarterly Newsletter For The Fellowship Of Debtors Anonymous

First Quarter 2008

A Thorough Step 9 Brings Healing

I am a grateful member of Debtors Anonymous and incurred my last debt on October 15, 2005. I have worked the Steps many times in other 12-Step programs, and am currently working the Steps in DA for the second time. Every time I work through the Steps I learn new things and am able to heal at a deeper level.

After I completed the first eight, my sponsor suggested that I write letters to people I had harmed as a way to begin the amends process for Step 9. These letters were not necessarily to be mailed, but were for my benefit, although I did end up e-mailing a couple of them later. Following my sponsor's guidance, I started each letter out with a statement of appreciation of the person, then made a sincere apology and closed with a blessing for them. I liked the format, but it was a little awkward at first for me to adapt it to match my own style and spirituality. It was also hard for me to come up with an appreciation statement for everyone, as it was a chore for me to find something I could be thankful for about the other person.

Since I wanted to be sincere in my appreciation of the other person, I wrote a request to my HP for guidance, and put my writing in my God

Box to wait for answers on how to be sincere. I ended up revising some of my letters and omitting the appreciation statement if it was not sincere. I also have such a non-traditional form of spirituality that concluding the letters with "God bless you" sounded hypocritical to me. I discussed this with my sponsor and we came up with the idea of saying "I wish you the best" instead. I revised my letters yet again, sent them to my sponsor, and her feedback was that they were good, but contained a lot of superfluous in-

I learned I can have
compassion for
someone even if I
don't like them.
What a concept!

formation that could be omitted. In short, I had made the amends, but had included a lot of unnecessary chatter that cluttered up the message. I had also tried to explain why I had done certain things, such as, "I gossiped about you due to my feelings of inadequacy". My sponsor pointed out that this sounded as if I was making excuses for my behavior and that was not appropriate for making an amends. After rewriting the fourth draft of my letters by honing in on the message, deleting the clutter, and eliminating the excuses, my sponsor and I agreed that the letters were complete.

Regardless of some of these stumbling blocks, the process of writing the letters really helped me to get very specific about the harm I'd done. Being vague is one of my character defects, and it was important for me to get as specific as I could about how I had harmed the other person. I was able to be clear with myself and stay focused on the amends I was making.

Another lesson that came from the process is that it is so important for me to work with a sponsor on all my Step work, and especially the Step 9 amends process. Without her input, I would have made a disaster of the amends process and would have ended up with even more amends to make. The letter-writing process also helped me to develop compassion for some people on my list that I didn't like. I learned I can have compassion for someone even if I don't like them. What a concept!

After getting my sponsor's blessing, I sent my first amends letters by e-mail to two people I hadn't seen or heard from in 15 to 20 years, women I'd gone to high school with. I tried not to have expectations about the process, but deep down I had expected to be rejected by both parties. I assumed I would either receive no response from them, which I was okay with, or a terse reply, which would have been harder to deal with.

(Continued on page 6)

Ways & Means: A Name And An Anniversary

I'm going to admit my bias here. I love the name of this newsletter. I love the name Ways & Means.

I've loved it ever since I read my first copy of DA's quarterly "meeting in print" sometime back in the 1990s, and even longer than that—I remember being intrigued by it as a boy, when it referred only to a committee of the U. S. House Of Representatives, and not to a Debtors Anonymous publication that didn't yet exist.

The Ways & Means Committee. How distinguished. It matched up perfectly with the pictures in the those 1950s newspapers of stately old congressmen scratching their heads and sipping from water glasses while they tried to figure out how to build the interstate highway system and keep up with Russia on the Missile Gap without raising our taxes.

It's a wonderful name. But not everybody thinks so. Some people think it's frumpy and old fashioned. Every couple of years, someone at the World Service Conference proposes replacing it with something hip, zippy, and modern. To date, they haven't come up with a decent substitute, but they nevertheless keep trying. I hope they never succeed.

I believe if the name Ways & Means ever goes by the, uh, wayside, it will be a sad day for our fellowship. After

all, it's not only been a staple here for the last 20 out of our 32 years, but when you think about it, it captures perfectly what we're trying to do in DA.

The earliest recorded use of the name Ways & Means comes from the year 1641, when England's House Of Commons was beginning to assert itself and demand some basic freedoms from the king. When it won the power to raise revenue for the national government and levy taxes for the good of the country, it needed to find a fair and rational way to do that. And so, it created a Committee On Ways & Means.

The Founding Fathers of the United States were even more concerned with meeting the needs of their new country in a sane and equitable way, and so they, too, created a Ways & Means Committee on the first day the U.S. Congress opened in 1789. It's been on the job ever since, along with Ways & Means Committees in the legislatures of many of the 50 states.

In DA, we are individuals, not nations or states. But we do exactly the same thing when we attend DA meetings, talk with our sponsors, and meet with our pressure relief groups. We identify what our real needs are, the things we must have to lead a good and prosperous life, and we go about figuring out how to get the money to pay for them.

Twenty years ago, DA had a newsletter called, unimaginatively, Newsletter To The Groups. It had been around for 3 or 4 years, and had served its purpose in DA's pioneering time, but the fellowship was ready for something more, something that captured the excitement of the way DA members work toward both spiritual and practical solutions to their debting problems.

And so, Ways & Means was born. The first issue was July/August 1988 (it came out six times a year then). And it's been carrying the DA message ever since, originally printed on newsletter stock and now available as a download from the Internet.

In this anniversary year you'll be reading a lot about Ways & Means in Ways & Means, and the message recovering debtors have been carrying down through the decades. In our 2nd Quarter 2008 issue, we'll be featuring the stories of several DA members who have not incurred any unsecured debt for at least 20 years. In the 3rd Quarter 2008 edition, we'll trace the history of Ways & Means in much greater detail, and tell the stories of the many other publications that have served the DA fellowship over the years. As always, we welcome your contributions on those topics, and on any others that help us to not incur unsecured debt one day at a time.

Ways & Means

Ways & Means, an electronic "meeting in print" for the fellowship of Debtors Anonymous, is published quarterly by the DA General Service Board. It is a forum for sharing the experience, strength, and hope of DA members, groups, and other service entities. Articles are not intended to be statements of DA policy, nor does publication constitute or imply endorsement by DA as a whole, the DA General Service Board, or Ways & Means.

A PDF version of Ways & Means can be downloaded free of charge from the international DA website www.debtorsanonymous.org. Multiple copies may also be downloaded for distribution at DA meetings.

The newsletter may also be distributed electronically via an e-mail subscriber list.

Submissions from members on any aspect of DA recovery or service are welcome. If chosen, submissions will become the property of the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, and will not be returned. As with all DA publications, everyone submitting writing or artwork will be required to sign a standard publishing release form granting rights to the work to DA and releasing DA from legal liability. Those submitting work to Ways & Means automatically acknowledge that they will not receive compensation for the work, and that work may be viewed by

an unknown number of readers in unknown locations.

Please submit work by e-mail to waysand-meansda@hotmail.com, or in hard copy form to Ways & Means, c/o DA General Service Office, PO Box 920888, Needham, Mass. 02492. Include your full name and address, telephone number, and e-mail address. (This information will be kept confidential). Ways & Means also welcomes story ideas, sent to the same addresses.

Editing and layout for Ways & Means are done by the Communications Committee of the DA General Service Board.



A Strong DA Fellowship Growing Across Canada

With more than 31 million people, Canada's population is about 10 percent of the US total. Many Canadian cities have thriving DA groups, which have sprung up since the 1990s all across our vast country. Today there are more than 20 registered DA groups and intergroups throughout the ten provinces and three territories of Canada, including meetings in Brantford, Calgary, Maple Ridge, Montreal, Oakville, Ottawa, Regina, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and Winnipeg.

In light of our primary purpose, it seems important in today's world of global travel to let recovering debtors know more about DA in Canada. It also seems equally important to let Canadian debtors know more about DA around the world.

The Toronto Area Intergroup sponsors a website which has been running since 1999 with up-to-date Canada-wide meeting information, as well as a link to the Web site of the General Service Office of Debtor Anonymous. Since January 2006, there have been close to 7,000 visitors to this site, www.debtorsanonymous.ca.

The history of DA in every city in Canada has not yet been written, and the information in this article is in no way the whole Canadian story. It is one debtor's best attempt to collect and share some of our experience, strength, and hope with you, and is offered in the spirit of progress. not

perfection. If you have information to share about DA in Canada please email it to info@debtorsanonymous.ca.

DA in Ottawa

DA has existed in Canada's capital since January 2001. For almost a year there were often just two members attending a single meeting. Slowly people started to hear about the group. In the spirit of service, members began to spread the word to local treatment centers and community resource centers. People came and went, especially around Christmastime.

In 2005 the fellowship had grown enough so that a second group began to meet. In 2007 a "closed" step-study group was started and the good news is that debtors in Ottawa have now joyously celebrated 6,5,3,2 and one-year solvency anniversaries.

Ottawa DA has twice contributed to the Toronto Area Intergroup so that a delegate could attend the World Service Conference to share our Canadian experience, strength, hope, and gratitude with the international fellowship of DA.

DA in Montreal and Quebec

A French-speaking meeting in Quebec City began in the late 1990s and lasted for a few years. A bilingual DA meeting has existed in Montreal since the late 1990s. Today meetings exist in both French and English in Montreal and these groups support each other as they continue to grow.

There has always been a great need for a francophone meeting (as opposed to a bilingual meeting) so, in support of our primary purpose, the meetings have divided by language, sharing the universal message of 12-

Step recovery. The French-speaking meeting continues to receive support from DA meetings in France, particularly Paris. Both meetings accommodate either language as much as possible, and all are welcome.

Members from Burlington, Vermont, continue to share their recovery with their Canadian neighbors by making trips to Montreal to support both these groups. Many debtors from Montreal also come to Burlington a couple of times a year to attend meetings, share-a-days, and to participate in PRGs.

DA in Toronto

DA in Toronto began in 1994 with a meeting in a church basement in the downtown core. Although this meeting had a short life it gave birth to what is now a thriving DA recovery community in Toronto.

In 1995, when the first meeting folded, a small group of people from various 12-Step backgrounds began a "closed" DA support group through phone and Internet contact with each other. Without access to Conference-approved DA literature, the group read from the Big Book of AA. Eventually this informal "support" arrangement transformed into the first official Sunday DA meeting that still exists today.

This meeting, like all meetings, has had an ebb and flow of attendance over the years but has always kept its door open to the debtor who still suffers. These early groups also received online support from a long-term DA friend in New York City who graciously made a few trips to Toronto

(Continued on page 8)

Online DA Saves A British Debtor From Herself

I'm Gilly, a recovering debtor and credit card addict from the United Kingdom. I think I was always a compulsive spender even as a young girl, wanting stuff there and then and not being willing or able to save up or wait for it. Once I reached 18 and could have my own credit cards the lid came off Pandora's box. I was hooked – I could have what I wanted when I wanted it, and didn't even have to pay for it (well, not yet anyway!) I spent and spent just trying to satisfy what I saw as my needs and wants--to have beautiful clothes, to look and feel important when the sales staff took notice of me, called me by name, and picked out items they thought would be just right for me. I could convince myself I was grown up by having grownup things like designer handbags, clothes, and shoes. I was merely trying to "buy" that sense of importance and personality in the same way that the little child I once was used to try to buy friendships by giving people at school sweets or biscuits in order to feel loved and accepted.

How did I finally arrive in DA? Some years ago I had a full-time job that I loved and was well paid for. I had a company car, good holidays, and felt that I could just have what I wanted, all on my plastic. I believed one day I would take money seriously and start to pay off all my cards. This sense of wanting things to cover up my insecurities eventually was to land me in deep debt that got so bad I could not even make the minimum payments. (I had been married almost 20 years at that stage and had always kept my bank accounts and credit cards in my own name. I was not being honest with my husband or sharing in the household expenses). I became sick with an incurable, but not life-threatening, illness and was advised to give up my job. I got a lump-sum payment, a regular monthly pension, and an empty future! I finally admitted to my husband that I had several credit cards that needed paying off and we went through what I owed. It was about 6,000 British pounds, and we agreed to use my lump sum to pay all the credit cards off and get me to that point of a zero balance, with a little left over. I vowed to never get in debt again, and for quite a few months I really enjoyed the freedom of knowing my debts were paid, shopping with just cash or my debit card and keeping my accounts clean.

Because I was no longer able to work, I began to see myself

as useless. My self-image was shattered because of my illness, and the old insecurities kept coming back. I got bitter and resentful and subsequently had a minor breakdown. As I began to recover, I found I could venture out once more with my own brand of therapy—shoes, clothes, and handbag shopping. I would set off on shopping sprees, hide the stuff in my wardrobe, and make up stories such as I had had it for ages, bought it in a sale, or a friend had given it to me. I found out I could get new credit cards in my own name simply because I had a bank account and could lie about my income.

Using credit cards gave me a false sense of being valuable again. The adrenaline rush was amazing, even though I knew deep down I simply could not afford what I was buying. Again I was living a lie. I couldn't pay the minimums for much longer, and I was running up huge balances again, hoping that something would happen to rescue me. I began to start selling things to afford the credit card payments. Half the items I was selling hadn't even been properly paid for because it was all on the plastic that I was paying off, and most of it still had the tags on and had never been used! The irony was that during this time, I had trained and then worked as a volunteer debt adviser, so I knew all the ways to get help but never applied them to myself. I couldn't tell the people I was advising that I was in such a mess. I realized I should fall on my knees and ask God to show me how I could get help.

Possibly as a result of that prayer, I heard about Debtors Anonymous. I heard someone talking on TV about her debts and how she had discovered DA, how it was likened to an alcoholic but applied to compulsive spending and debting. I

The adrenaline rush was amazing, even though I knew deep down I simply could not afford what I was buying.

(Continued on page 5)

Online DA Saves British Debtor

(Continued from page 4)

had heard of AA, but had never realized there was a DA. On my computer I found more information and knew DA was for me.

I came to DA as an online member with almost 30,000 British pounds in credit card debt (about \$59,000 US.) I set up a repayment plan with my creditors that I could afford, and I began to pay off my debts in a way that allowed me to have the things I like and need in moderation. I also received the DA book *A Currency of Hope* from a friend in the US, and read it over and over. Although I could not attend face-to-face meetings, I joined the international online group spendersda, and began attending online chat meetings. I got rid of the glossy magazines that used to fuel my addiction, and instead read the daily postings on a DA message board.

I have been able to get involved in giving service—I offer PRGs and am a buddy and sponsor to people all over the world. In return, I have buddies, sponsors, and PRG members helping me. It is so good to realize that I am not alone in my debting, and now I also have a weekly face-to-face meeting about 25 minutes away where there is some good strong recovery.

As I've worked this 12-Step program for more than 3 years and maintained my solvency all that time, I have realized that I have to deal with my anger and depression in other ways and become

inventive about keeping my attention away from shopping and spending and learning to handle my money in a more grownup way. I won't pretend this has all been easy and I've come to rely on God (my HP) so much more. I have to be very strict with myself when going out to keep it all in my spending plan, writing down every penny and pound I spend and balancing it all at the end of each month. I can become obsessive about it, but I see that as better than the denial, vagueness, and deceit that I once lived with.

I've lost some friends along the way by having a new lifestyle, and keep away from those people and places that have caused me to lose control or whose lifestyles I have envied and gone into debt to emulate. I was sick then in more ways than just my health, but thanks to DA the sickness is leaving me as I work for my recovery. I've found a whole new level of freedom in being set free from those relationships, and I'm moving into a new circle of friends who have the same values that I have.

Membership in DA depends on a desire to stop debting one day at a time. For me, my "desire" to stop debting must be a strong one. Even if I wobble a great deal at times, I haven't yet fallen off. I've diligently worked the Steps and continue to work them, and have now gone without debting for more than 3 years.

—Gilly C., United Kingdom



Pithy DA Sayings Are Capsules Of Recovery

The most recent issue of *Ways & Means* included a story on common DA slogans, which I really appreciated. It got me thinking about all the great things I have heard in meetings. I am grateful to all the DA members who shared these nuggets of wisdom with me, and am glad to share them here.

- HP can move mountains, but bring a shovel.
- Going into my own head is like going behind enemy lines—don't go there alone!
- GOD – Good Orderly Direction (or Group Of Debtors)
- NUTS – Not Using The Steps
- DA is not a Tools program.
- My needs come first. My creditors come last, but they don't come never.
- I can't, God can, Let Him.
- Veni, Vidi, Velcro (I came, I saw, I stuck around).
- If you want recovery, stay out of the shoe section. That's where the sneakers, the loafers, and the slippers hang out.
- Do I look at my faults through a microscope or through a magnifying glass?
- DENIAL--Don't Even Know I Am Lying.
- SLIP--Solvency Losing Its Priority.
- Mind your own business!
- A vision without a plan is a hallucination.
- What is the next right thing?
- What does easy look like today?
- I am a special person, but not a special case. I'm unique, just like the rest of us.
- More backbone, less wishbone.
- If I'm not part of the solution, then I'm part of the problem.
- There is magic in the chairs.
- What happens in Vagueness stays in Vagueness. Viva Lost Vagueness!
- You must be present to win.
- There ain't no big deals!
- Expectations are premeditated resentments.
- It's hard to be hateful when you're being grateful.

—Lucy, Pennsylvania

A Thorough Step 9

(Continued from page 1)

Instead, I got very warm responses from both, and they really didn't seem to think what happened in the past was a big deal to them, although it had certainly been a big deal to me. The things I had done to these women years ago had impacted my life so much that I'd been carrying guilt and shame for many years. This caused my self-esteem to be lower, and I felt as if I couldn't be a friend to anyone as the result of these long-ago actions. I had held myself back as a result of my past, and had ceased interaction with all of my high school friends as a result of being embarrassed about my past.

For most of my life, I had a sense that something was wrong with me because I couldn't maintain long-term friendships. A burden was lifted from me as soon as I made those two amends, and unbelievable things have happened as a result. I am now in touch and actively corresponding with several of my friends from high school. They had wondered what had happened to me and had been hoping to get back in touch with me. Several of us have done a lot of catching up over the past few months.

This process has renewed my hope that I might actually be able to maintain long-term friendships without messing them up. In the past, my addiction to debting and money dysfunction prevented me from hanging onto friends for very long, and now I feel as if some of the damage from the past is being repaired. I can't tell you the happiness this has brought into my life. This is much more than I expected from the amends process!

Another of my amends was more difficult for me to make. I put it off for several weeks because I just didn't

want to do it, and I learned how putting off an amends can be damaging. The amends was to my husband, and it related to an incident where my husband had stolen a gift card that came for me in the mail while I was out of town on business. He had spent it on himself and then lied to me when I asked him about it. My Step work had revealed to me that I wasn't communicating about money with my non-DA spouse. I was trying to control our finances as a couple without giving him access to very much information. In all likelihood, this controlling behavior on my part led to his feelings of "not enough," which led to his stealing from me.

This is not to justify his actions, but rather for me to realize how I "set the ball rolling," as the Big Book says. My amends was to be to engage him in discussions about money and go over our spending plan and records with him so that he would be more informed. I also wanted to start considering his input in revising our spending plan, even though he did not want to participate in my pressure relief meetings. I used his unwillingness to participate as an excuse for trying to control all of our finances as a couple. How did my procrastination on making this amends affect my life? Every time I expected a check in the mail, I obsessed on whether my husband would get to the mail first and steal the money.

There was a check mailed to me during this time that got lost in the mail, and when my husband denied getting it, I had much difficulty believing him. This lack of trust compromised our marriage. I believe if I'd not delayed making the amends to him, some of my worry about his stealing from me would have been alleviated.

Once I did make the amends and we sat down together to go over the spending plan and contingency fund balances,

trust began to be rebuilt. Rebuilding trust is still in process, but no progress could be made until I made the amends. I know that to continue repairing the damage in our marriage, I will have to persevere in making a living amends to him by regularly sharing financial information and seeking his input.

A final amends I want to comment on is the amends I made to myself. I actually wrote myself a letter apologizing for the many years I engaged in self-depriving behaviors, expected perfection from myself, and resented myself for not having my whole life "together" at a certain age. Writing an amends letter to myself helped me realize that I really do want to change some of the behaviors that are harmful to me. I was able to reflect on a lot of my good qualities, and I realized that even though I do make mistakes, I am very skillful at coming up with solutions for problems that are created by my mistakes. In my letter I stated that I would be allocating more money in my spending plan to items such as clothing and self-care, and that I would schedule at least one fun activity each week. The Step 9 work I have done has had such an impact on my life. It is my hope that my story will help others who are embarking on this most important step in recovery.

—Anonymous

20 Years And Counting

Ways & Means wants to celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2008 by running as many "long-timer" stories of members with 20 years or more of continuous solvency as possible. If you have not incurred any unsecured debt for at least 20 years, please submit your story (or ask questions about writing a story) to waysandmeansda@hotmail.com, or by postal mail at PO Box 920888, Needham, MA 02492. You will be contacted with more information.

Warning Signs For DA Mid-Timers

- Trying to get solvent by working the Steps in another program.
- Trying to get solvent by only sharing in small groups.
- Not having a sponsor, or being closed to letting others give feedback.
- Staying vague about my spending plan and numbers.
- Spending my savings allotment every month, or dipping into savings a lot.
- Continuing to underearn and maintain an attitude of self-pity and victimhood.
- Sporadic PRGs.
- Erratic completion of PRG tasks.
- Coming to meetings late and leaving early (i.e. maybe because I'm shopping?)
- Talking the talk.
- Talking myself out of recovery actions with negative, self-defeating thinking.
- Hearing myself say "Well, I'm not as bad as I used to be." (With a whiny voice.)

THE SOLUTION

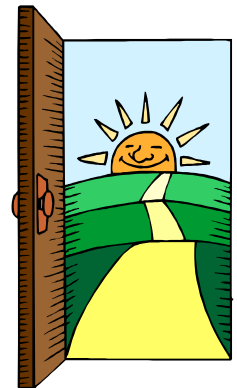
- Get a clear, honest, solvent sponsor.
- Get a clear spending plan
- Work the DA Steps with a DA sponsor.
- Work to increase income.
- Save, save, save!
- Pray, pray, pray!

—D.R., Rochester, Minn.

Grateful To Be Living In The Clear And Now

It's hard for me to determine where I've been helped the most by DA, so I'll just start off with this simple fact of my life: Today I don't debt because I want to live in the now. I don't want to take more than I've been given. And I don't want to be blind to what I've been given.

Staying solvent gives me this, and much more. Being solvent has for the first time in my life really shown me what it means for me to take care of me. It's also shown me that I need not fear the future, to believe in God's abundance, and to believe that dreams really do come true.



I've learned all that by going to meetings, by keeping my numbers, by working with my pressure relief people, and by doing my spending plans. I don't debt and I go to meetings. I call my sponsor, and my sponsees call me. I give back to DA because DA has given so much to me.

And I've learned to love some of the most wonderful literature in all of 12-Step recovery. Through coming to meetings and studying the literature, especially the pamphlets, DA has taught me about the joy of living in ways I never imagined.

The simple joy of clarity: knowing how much money I make (okay, that's not always a joy), how much money I spend, visions of what I would like to spend my money on, and where all the abundance in my life comes from, are just a few of the many benefits. I never thought I could be responsible, never mind enjoy it.

I am so, so grateful. Thank you God. Thank you DA.

—Matt P., New York

DA In Canada

(Continued from page 3)

over the years speak to the group and help get things going.

In the late 1990s a meeting of what was then known as BODA was started after the World Service Conference in Albuquerque. That meeting eventually closed but its legacy is that a new BDA group is currently meeting.

The first Toronto DA Intergroup was formed in the early winter of 2003, and continues to support new groups, communicate with the GSO, support a delegate to the WSC, and provide outreach throughout Canada. Since 2003 there have always been at least five active meetings in the Toronto area. Today DA is growing in Toronto. The first Toronto DA Share-A-Day was held in June 2006 with about 40 in

attendance, and the first Step Study Retreat was a success in November 2007.

Most Canadian DA groups were started by people with previous 12-Step experience. In these early days DA meetings in Toronto were few and far between so some debtors attended local “open” AA meetings to share the experience, strength and hope with sober people in recovery. This practice still continues today and members remain ever grateful to the AA support offered to debtors around the globe.

World Service from Canada

Several DA members from Canada have attended World Service Conferences since the 1990s, and these trusted servants have served on the Resource Development, Internal Op-

erations, and Literature committees. DA’s trustees made their first-ever international trip when they met in Toronto in 2007 for the annual General Service Board “face-to-face” meeting. During the visit the trustees met with local DA members and generated much support for their efforts to include Canada as a vibrant part of the international fellowship of DA. Many debtors from around the world come to Canada to work and to play. Please know that you are always welcome at our meetings and special events!

(This article includes contributions from many Canadian DA members, including Roger, Mary Ann, Charlie, Diana, Liz, Kathryn, Sandy, and Mel.

—Jeffrey H., Toronto

DA Word Search

- AMENDS**
- BDA**
- DEBT**
- INCOME**
- INVENTORY**
- NUMBERS**
- PAUPERISM**
- PRAYER**
- PRG**
- SAVINGS**
- SHOPPING**
- SOLVENT**
- SPONSOR**
- SURRENDER**
- UNDEREARNING**
- VISION**

M I Q F D X L H R B E U S S R
 S O L V E N T D B M N A B P E
 Z W X D E B T G O D V L B O Y
 Z J U N B B N C E I A F R N A
 K C N M O I N R N T N R E S R
 K D F U P I E G J B F D D O P
 N G Y P M A S F W I A K N R Y
 H V O R R B B I Y R T O E Z H
 Y H Y N O E E U V P L Q R R U
 S G I H U T M R L R C H R N X
 E N V G I I N A S G S D U O X
 G U H M S I R E P U A P S M E
 S D N E M A V U V F O H U J V
 L Q Z T K V Y F K N F B B R M
 V G W Z M L H U T N I M J D O

—Virginia B., Orange County, CA

Around The Fellowship



GSB Visits Oregon

DA's General Service Board met with members of the Portland, Oregon fellowship in early February during the board's annual face-to-face (F2F) business meeting. The trustees attended a regular Friday night DA meeting and then went out to dinner with members.

The GSB travels to a different city each year in the late winter or early spring for several days of business meetings, and also acts as ambassadors to the fellowship, encouraging the growth of local groups and intergroups and getting feedback from the membership on issues and concerns of importance to the fellowship. In recent years the board has traveled for the annual F2F to Toronto, Chicago, Houston, Boston, and St. Louis.

Intergroup Phone Meetings

More DA intergroups are conducting their monthly or quarterly meetings by telephone, as a way of increasing attendance and bringing together far-flung groups.

New York State's Empire State Intergroup, which covers the Hudson Valley and Capital District, began meeting by phone a few years ago, with good results.

Now the Chicago-based Great Lakes Area Debtors Anonymous (GLADA) has decided to alternate phone with face-to-face meetings, and also hopes to increase attendance. GLADA covers a large area in the Midwest, including Illinois, Wisconsin, and parts of Indiana, and some groups have difficulty getting to face-to-face meetings every month because of the travel distance. The idea of phone meetings for intergroup business originated in the WSC Intergroup Caucus and has been found to be helpful for some intergroups.

Special Focus Meeting

The first known special focus meeting for African-American debtors has been established in New York City. The meeting, listed for people of color and people of African descent, meets on the first Thursday of each month at Cabrini Hospital. As with all DA meetings, it is open to all DA members, but those attending are asked to respect the special focus.

Former Trustee Mourned

Many long-time members are mourning the loss of one of DA's greatest non-debtor friends. Former Class B Trustee Bob P. died January 1 in Idaho. A former general manager of the AA General Service Office for 15 years, he later used the many skills and talents he developed in AA service for the benefit of the fledgling fellowship of Debtors Anonymous. He served on DA's General Service Board for several years in the 1980s and assisted in the groundbreaking work of forming a General Service structure.

12-Step Programs Cooperate

Two members of DA's General Service Board recently attended a first-ever sharing session among 12-Step fellowships aimed at exchanging experience and increasing cooperation between the programs. The Debtors Anonymous trustees joined trustees and general managers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Overeaters Anonymous for the one-day session at the AA General Service Office in New York City.

AA and the Al-Anon Family Groups have held similar sessions with each other in recent years, but the February 29 event was the first time other 12-Step programs were invited to participate. Both DA's trustees said the in-depth, honest sharing among trusted servants was of great value, and hope DA will be able to take part in similar sessions in the future.

Among the topics discussed were singleness of purpose, expansion in countries around the world, translations into foreign languages, means of carrying the message, practical applications of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts For World Service, and how programs can cooperate without affiliating.

Correction

In a by-line on page 6 of the 4th Quarter 2007 issue of Ways & Means, writer Virginia B. was incorrectly identified as a resident of Los Angeles. She actually lives in Orange County, California.

Ways & Means is interested in reports of interesting and inspiring activities taking place around the fellowship. Please send information to waysandmeansda@hotmail.com.