

CHECKS

Feb '06 
Vol. 26, Issue 2

www.SoCalDA.org

& balances

The Newsletter of Southern California Debtors Anonymous

Our primary purpose is to stop debting one day at a time and to help other compulsive debtors stop incurring unsecured debt.

Southern California Events Calendar

DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION	COST
Feb 11	SCDA WORKSHOP: "DA Couples in Recovery"	1:30-4:30	First United Church, 1008 11th St, Rm 300, Santa Monica	\$10
Feb 18	SCDA Board Meeting	9-10:30	Share Center, 5521 Grosvenor Avenue, Los Angeles	
Feb 18	Intergroup Meeting	11-12:30	Share Center, 5521 Grosvenor Avenue, Los Angeles	
Feb 25	GSR Meeting	10-12:15	Share Center, 5521 Grosvenor Avenue, Los Angeles	
Feb 25	Do DA Day!	10-5	First United Church, 1008 11th St, Santa Monica	\$20/25

WORKSHOPS

The SCDA Workshop Series Presents...

The second annual "DA COUPLES IN RECOVERY"

Come hear a panel of abstinent D.A. members discuss their recovery in the context of a committed relationship (with or without another DA member) and for those who wish to be in a relationship so you can see how DA recovery works.

Saturday, February 11 | Registration begins at 1:15p.m. | Workshop runs 1:30p.m. – 4:30p.m.

Location: First United Methodist Church, Room 300, 1008 11th Street., Santa Monica, CA

(Less than 2 blocks N. of Wilshire Bl.)

\$10.00 suggested donation (No one turned away because of lack of funds.) Proceeds support SCDA

For more info contact Mark L. 310.477.9097

Editor-in-Chief: Arthur K. | publications@scda.org
Meeting List Editor: John S. | jpsohl@earthlink.net
Webmaster: by team | publications@socalda.org
Midtown Liaison: Deborah S. | dsweet211@yahoo.com

SUBMIT MEETING LIST CHANGES via e-mail BEFORE the 2nd Saturday of the month to publications@socalda.org. Updates will appear on the Meeting List & the SCDA Web site.

SUBMIT YOUR STORIES via e-mail to: publications@socalda.org. You all have something to say. Share it with the fellowship. What has worked for you? All submissions are subject to editing for brevity and clarity. Copyright remains with author, but DA may have unrestricted use of the submission to help the debtor who still suffers.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of individual DA members, not DA as a whole.

Submission Deadline: 1st Saturday of the Month

Stuffing Event Flyers: 3rd Saturday of the Month at the Share Center, 8:30am. Bring 500 copies.

DO DA DAY!

Come and celebrate recovery through abundance, resource and spirituality!

Date: Saturday, February 25, 2006

Time: 10am - 5pm | Registration begins @ 9:30am

Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door

Events: Speaker Panels, Visions workshops, Spring Cleaning (PRG's), Lunch, Live Entertainment, Drawings, Silent Auction & Grand Prizes!

Location: 1st United Methodist Church
1008 11th Street, Santa Monica 90403

More info: John S. 818.703.8708

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

1. How is the taking of Step 1 a necessity before taking Step 2?
2. Describe the specific ways in which you were insane (irrational behavior, thinking, etc.) while you were in your illness.
3. Discuss and reflect on how you can use the concepts of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness for your growth in the DA Program.
4. The "substitution method:" How have you looked for substitutes for a Higher Power all your life? Are you still looking?
5. Discuss and reflect on the following concepts:
 - A. Belief means reliance, not defiance.
 - B. Defiance is an outstanding characteristic of every compulsive debtor.
 - C. "The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think."
6. Discuss and reflect on your childhood exposure to any religious concepts. On a two-columned balance sheet, list your negative feelings on one side, and your positive feelings on the other as they relate to early religious experiences. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on this balance sheet?
7. Using "free-flow" writing, explore your rage at God—past and present.
8. Specifically in what areas do you need to be restored to sanity (harmony/balance/wholeness/reality).

(Questions adapted from the DA "Sponsor Booklet," with references to AA's "Big Book" Chapter 4, and AA's "Twelve and Twelve," Chapter 2 and pages 26 and 31.)

BELIEF AND THE SECOND STEP

by Joy M.

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Belief is difficult for many of us in the program: we tend to come from backgrounds that were troubled in one way or another. Very often, someone in our pasts—either from our families of origin or elsewhere—abused the concept of God in order to manipulate us, or make us feel guilty. Debtors seem even more vulnerable to religious abuse than those in other programs, because whatever was said to us aloud, the underlying message was often, "you're not a good person if you use any resources at all." Consumption got tied into an explicit (or implicit) notion about sin.

When our own parents had debting tendencies, this was often manifested in a household lurching around between compulsive spending and the "deprivation mindset," which is every bit as destructive, even when it disguises itself as a spiritual quest for simplicity. The mixed messages were devastating to our relationships with money: when we spent, we felt guilty for using up resources we often felt, deep down, we weren't "entitled" to. When we didn't spend, we knew we often weren't taking care of ourselves, our families and our homes properly. It put a lot of us in a double bind, until we realized that a spending plan could liberate us from this kind of extreme thinking.

My own religious development was dramatic, since I joined a cult at the age of 13 and spent nearly two years in it. The actual theological orientation of the group was fairly mainstream Protestant Christianity, but the group operated like a classic cult, separating the church member from his/her friends and family. Once isolated, the person was easier to control.

I pulled away from the cult around the time I turned 15, and didn't talk to God again until I was in my late 20s. I'm middle-aged now, and still have some issues with organized religion.

Obviously, with my background a lot of the Twelve-Step jokes about cultism aren't too funny to me. Whenever I hear "if you feel like you're being brainwashed, maybe it's because your brain is dirty," I take a step back. The very fact that the Twelve Step model lets us choose our own conception of God is our strength: it sets us apart from "religious organizations." We choose our own theology. We choose our own spiritual practices. Most Twelve-Step organizations operate like a loose-leafed notebook: take the pages out that do not work. Put pages in when they work. Even the Steps are said to be "suggestions only," though in that sense I believe what's meant is "we suggest—as in, strongly urge."

Once you get over hearing the G-word, Twelve-step programs are wonderful places for the spiritually polymorphous to land, because no one here claims to have a "bat phone" through which he/she talks to God. Personal matters are to be dealt with by a person's individual conscience.

In my own case, I found that, as they say, "God doesn't make hard terms for those who are getting to know him." I can embrace the contradictions in my theological leanings as long as I move forward in the areas that matter: working a program that will help me celebrate a conscious contact with my Higher Power. This is my foundation, and organized religion fits onto it like one Lego brick on another.

I learned to live in the middle ground—the areas between extremes. Cults live in the extreme places. I live with a real God. A God who knows that that one pair of pants on sale will be useful, and will fit into my spending plan. A God that knows if I buy three more like it, I should probably call my sponsor. A God that doesn't want me to fall off the balance beam on either side.

TRADITION TWO

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, DA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with DA Twelfth Step jobs or other DA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my DA jobs? Praise for my DA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been abstinent a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at DA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

(From the "Traditions Checklist" of the AA Grapevine and modified for Debtors Anonymous, for use by D.A. Groups and Individuals)

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

March 11

DA Unclutter Workshop

Led by Spencer C., the founder of all of our DA Declutter meetings in L.A. Clutterers unite!—at this workshop, that is. Learn about doing a "Physical Inventory" using the DA principles and tools in this exciting workshop! Contact Spencer C. for more information: 818-776-9236

April 8

Numbers 101

Sara S. will be leading this terrific workshop addressing all of our "numbers needs:" keeping your numbers, transferring your numbers, tallying your numbers and gaining clarity with it all! Contact Sara S. for more information: 818-767-3700

grow your **business** Using the Tools of **Debtors Anonymous**

Date: Sunday, April 30, 2006

Time: 9am - 5pm | Registration begins @ 8:30am

Location: Pasadena Senior Center
85 East Holly St • Pasadena 91103

TOPICS: Creating & Using a Business Plan; Trials & Triumphs of Business Ownership; How I Turned My Creativity Into Cash; Business Growing Pains; How Business PRGs Help Your Business Grow; Visions in Business: Keeping Your Eyes On The Prize

Suggested Donation: \$20 entire day, \$12 half day

SHARE STAFF POSITIONS

SHARE, a nonprofit community self-help center in the Culver City/Marina del Rey area, seeks qualified individuals for three staff positions, open to anyone with current personal experience in 12-step--or other self-help--programs and appropriate computer proficiency:

Part-Time Accountant

Full-charge bookkeeping duties; maintain ledger in QuickBooks; oversee multiple revenue sources.
2 years' experience

Full-Time Meeting Coordinator

Schedule and maintain weekly self-help support meetings at center (there are 70 meetings/week); supervise volunteers; man phone bank to assist individuals seeking self-help groups in L.A. County.
Self-starter; bilingual with any language a plus.

Full-Time Administrative Assistant

Provide office support for Exec. Dir. and Community Relations Dir. Oversee tenants, meeting administration. Filing, letter-writing.
2 years' experience in direct support of management; type 60 wpm; bilingual in any language a plus.

Inquiries and resumes may be faxed to 310/305-2671, or e-mailed to beverly@shareselfhelp.org

Did you miss the 'Buying Real Estate the D.A. Way' Workshop?

If so - don't fret! We are selling audio CD's of the workshop for \$15. Even though you weren't there, you too can hear the experience, strength and hope of our panel of D.A. members who have bought real estate for personal and investment purposes!

To purchase the CD, please contact Jen K. at JenK0923@yahoo.com or 310-904-8289. Monies from the CD sales will go into the GSR Fund for The Monday Night Santa Monica Women's D.A. Meeting.

Southern California Debtors Anonymous (SCDA)

5521 Grosvenor Blvd. • Los Angeles, CA • 90066

SCDA Office Hours:

(for literature purchase, etc.)

Wednesdays 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Saturdays 10:00am - 1:00pm

Office Telephone 310.822.7250

Office Fax 310.827.7079

Office Email scda_1@yahoo.com

World Service (Needham, MA) 781.453.2743

S.C.D.A. Service Board Members, ISR and other contacts

Chair	Deborah O.	scdachair@socalda.org	310.474.1475
Vice-Chair Office Ops	Lynn S.	vicechair@socalda.org	
Finance/Treasurer	Leslie Anne	finance@socalda.org	310.391.8076
Records	Open	secretary@socalda.org	
Resources	John S.	resource@socalda.org	818.703.8708
Meetings Liaison	Open	meetingliaison@socalda.org	310.450.6895
Programs	Linda C.	events@socalda.org	818.442.4660
Publications	Joy M.	publications@socalda.org	818.790.5982
Special Events	Open	specialevents@socalda.org	818.703.8708
Public Information	Richard H.	pi@socalda.org	818.843.7058
At Large 1	Linda L.	linda1lockwood@yahoo.com	323.371.5766
At Large 2	Nyra C.	nmconstant@yahoo.com	818.703.8708
ISR	Mark L.	isr@socalda.org	310.477.9097

SCDA GSR Area Group Officers

Chair	Jo Ann G.	greeneyes1021@sbcglobal.net	818.989.7273
Vice Chair	Roger B.	gsrlavicechair@yahoo.com	818.244.2408
Secretary	Maggie T.	mtennese@earthlink.net	310.530.0439
Treasurer	Jennifer S.	treasuregsrla@yahoo.com	

Suggested 7th Tradition Breakdown

After all expenses (such as rent, literature, coffee, etc.) are met and a prudent reserve is built and maintained:

45%	SCDA	5521 Grosvenor Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90066-6915
45%	D.A. General Service Office	P.O. Box 920888, Needham, MA 02492-0009
10%	SCDA GSR Area Group	P.O. Box 642091, Los Angeles, CA 90064-7091

SCDA OFFICE BACK-UP STAFF POSITION NEEDED

The SCDA office in Culver City has a back-up staff position opening to cover for Joan's vacation and sick hours away from the office.

Pay is \$10 per hour. Joan will provide training. Training will be paid time. Two people needed.

If interested please contact the SCDA office at 310.822.7250.