

DISTRICT 40 NEWS

Volume 27.4

April 2014

District 40 GSR Official Meeting Minutes Southeast Area Alcoholics Anonymous

March 11, 2014

Call to Order: Serenity Prayer, Preamble and Unity Declaration

Tradition III/Concept III: reading and summation by Nancy R. and Jackie V.

Volunteers for next month: Tradition IV/Concept IV will be Taylor K. and Kate E.

Introduction of Attendees: (28)

Albert C. (GSR, First Light Group); **Betsy G.** (Past D40 DCM, Past Area 67 Delegate, God Meeting Group); **Bob P.** (Alt. GSR, Taking Care of Business Group); **Cheryl B.** (D40 Treasurer, Katy Crossroads Group); **Chris C.** (GSR, Men's Monday Night Supper Step Study, D40 Archives Rep); **Doug B.** (Alt. GSR, Men's Monday Night Supper Step Study); **George** (Visitor, Rule 42 Group); **Hillary F.** (GSR, Broad Highway Group); **Jackie V.** (D40 IT Rep., GSR, God Meeting Group); **Jes K.** (D40 DCM, First Light Group); **Jeff H.** (GSR, Our Common Journey); **Kate E.** (D40 PI/CPC Chair, Memorial Going Home Group); **Kelly C.** (GSR; Taking Care of Business Group); **Kris H.** (Past D40 DCM; Area 67 Treasurer, Rule 62 Group); **Kyle M.** (Alt. GSR, Rule 62 Group); **Libby S.** (GSR, Katy Crossroads Group); **Linda F.** (Visitor, Spring Branch Women's Thursday Meeting); **Michelle H.** (D40 Alt. DCM, Rule 62 Group); **Mike J.** (GSR, Katy Big Book Group); **Nancy R.** (D40 CC, Memorial Going Home Group); **Pam F.** (Visitor, Katy Big Book Group); **Paul W.** (D40 CFC Rep., Sunday Night Men's Group); **Peter C.** (D40 Intergroup Liaison, GSR, Journey Group); **Rhett C.** (GSR, Sunday Night Men's Group); **Rick Mc.** (GSR, Another Chance Group); **Taylor B.** (GSR, Simply AA Group); **Taylor K.** (D40 Literature Rep., Broad Highway Group); **Trent P.** (D40 TFC Rep., GSR, Wild West Group) **Wendy A.** (D40 Secretary, Katy Crossroads Group)

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History Corner

Nelson Newcomer: I keep hearing something about "Right of Appeal". What is that and how do I exercise my Right of Appeal?

Angela Archivist: The long form of Concept Five tells us that "Throughout our world service structure, a traditional 'Right of Appeal' ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered." That is certainly a lot to swallow at one time. Let's break it down further.

The basic root ideal of right of appeal is the minority opinion. Use of the minority opinion begins in the group conscience meeting. We have gone to great lengths to protect our trust in the Group Conscience (Tradition 2). For example, when any vote is taken on a motion made during an AA group's group conscience meeting, the Chairperson or person conducting the meeting should always ask if anyone who voted in the minority wishes to express a minority opinion. Sometimes, when those present listen with an open heart to the minority opinion, someone in the majority may ask to change their vote. When the vote is retaken, it is very possible that the outcome of the vote may change.

At the level of our Board of Trustees, discussions are sometimes long and tedious, because we place such a value on hearing opinions on all sides of the issue that we always try to hear everyone's thoughts, no matter if we agree with them or not. When votes are finally taken, the chairperson always asks for the minority opinion, and sometimes, as described above, the final decision may change.

When, after a decision has been made, a member of the board feels that a severe error has been made in the board's actions, that member may exercise his or her "Right of Appeal" and ask the board to reconsider its decision. If, after the board either refuses to reconsider, or the outcome is not changed, the board member may appeal directly to the General Service Conference.

An appeal to the General Service Conference has happened only two times in our 64 years of holding annual General Service Conferences. The first was made by Bill W., when he was unable to convince the board to increase the number of trustees and to change the ratio of Class A and Class B trustees. The second was in 2007 when the Southwest Regional Trustee filed an appeal to the Conference because he felt that his voice had not been adequately heard at the board level. After review, the Conference Committee on Trustees issued an Additional Consideration requiring that the "Appeal to the General Service Conference" be given a full hearing at the next scheduled executive session of the General Service Board, and that the board's operating procedures be reviewed and changed where necessary. The full hearing was held at the July 2007 board meeting, and important changes were made in the board's operating procedures relating to the hiring of new General Managers. A final report on the outcome and the review was forwarded to the 2008 General Service Conference.

Concept Five can also come into play if one of our staff members feels that he or she has not been treated fairly by the General Service Office Manager or other person in authority. The complainant would file a "Petition for Redress" either directly to the General Service Board or even to the Conference. The Petition for Redress will seldom be used, but its mere existence will restrain those in authority from misusing their power.

I hope that all who read this will understand the importance of the right of appeal, Petition for Redress and minority opinion. It is one of our most important privileges and is guarded very carefully.
Betsy G.

Normal Business:

1. **Secretary's Report** – February 11, 2014 Minutes accepted as amended.
2. **Treasurer's Report** – February report period ending 3/11/14. Opening balance \$5,099.65. Expenses for the month of February totaled \$135.00 for PI/CPC Committee. Group Contributions received this month totaled \$285.66. Closing balance was \$5,250.31. YTD calculation to be corrected. Report accepted as amended.
3. **Group News** – Katy Big Book has agreed to make a \$100 commitment towards the D40 hospitality suite for the 2015 SETA Convention and will start making regular contributions to the entities. The Katy Big Book Group has also created new meeting schedules with their new location information included.

Committee Reports:

- a. **Archives** – Chris C. reported that the Archives committee 2015 budget proposal was modified & accepted by the Area Budget Committee. Discussed the legalities of distributing copies of Larry Jewell's *AA pamphlet* as published by the Houston Press in 1940. Larry Jewell started the 1st AA group in Houston. This committee usually meets the 1st Saturday of the month. The March meeting has been postponed until further notice due to the untimely death of the trusted servant treasurer of the committee.
- b. **Coffee** – Nancy reported that all is well and we have plenty of supplies!
- c. **Public Information/Cooperation with Professional Community – PI/CPC** – Kate E. reported the Area CPC met on March 3rd and discussed their current projects of mail-outs to Hospitals and Child Protective services. D40 PI/CPC met on February 22 and focused on the Breakfast with the Clergy Meeting that will be held on May 8th at I-Hop. They will show the Video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* and distribute pamphlets in addition to their talk. At their next meeting they will finalize their agenda. They made changes in their flyer for the emergency clinics. They will laminate a few and take them to some of the clinics to see how it is received. They are returning money to the District in the amount of \$120.00 for the difference between the actual billing of their PSA they ran at Christmas and the original quote. Their next meeting is March 22nd 2-4PM at the Spring Branch Memorial Club. Please note the special time for March only.
- d. **Correctional Facilities Committee – CFC** – Paul W. reported Volunteers are needed for correspondence and pre-release. For more information contact seta.cfc.coordinator@windstream.net; For those interested in becoming a registered volunteer, TDCJ has an upcoming training and orientation at Intergroup on Directors Row on March 29, 2014 at NOON. Please call 713.686.6300 for more details; District 81 will be hosting a "Let's Get Acquainted with CFC" party on Saturday May 17, 2014. The location is at the Clear Creek Club 1310 5th St. Seabrook, TX 77586 and you can call 281.474.9066 for more details. The time will be from 2 to 7pm; Harris County has relaxed test regulations that allow new volunteers to simply watch the video as opposed to lengthy test subsequent to PREA regulation ramp up. Point is, it's less bureaucratic at this point...so Harris County is ready for more volunteers; Financial report for Jan 2014 had a ledger balance of \$8,893.19 plus outstanding checks of \$3,637.46 for a bank balance of \$12,530.65 as of 31Jan14; The next SETA CFC meeting is Feb 19th at the Delta Club from 7:30 pm to 9pm. We will also have updates for the SWTA Conference and others during this meeting.
- e. **Grapevine** – OPEN
- f. **Intergroup** – Peter C. reported that the Meditation Workshop on March 21-22 is sold out; Intergroup will be holding a catered Appreciation Dinner on Saturday, April 26. Cost is \$50 and there is seating for 100 people; Open House and Tax Free day will be Saturday, June 14th. There will be barbeque and people are encouraged to bring side dishes and desserts; Intergroup will celebrate 75 years of AA in Houston on or about March 15, 2015, with speakers, food and fun. Details to follow.

- g. **Information Technology – IT** – Jackie V. reported that several positions are still open: Secretary, Alt. Secretary, Alt. Chair, Alt. Postmaster, and Alt. Support. The Alternate Support position has been filled by Waco. With his career primarily being in the IT field, he will be a welcomed asset to our committee. Kyna/Postmaster is still having problems with Spam and Waco will be getting with her to determine if he may assist in alleviating the problem. The past 4 Newsletters for 10/2013, 11/2013, 12/2013 and 1/2014 have been sent to SETA Webmaster for posting onto our D-40 webpage.
- h. **Literature** – Taylor K. will bring literature display at GSR workshop. The SETA literature committee is in the process of creating district/ group reps and discussed different ways to present literature. The next Area Literature Committee meeting will be at the April Assembly. They are still in search of a committee chair.
- i. **Treatment Facilities Committee – TFC**– Trent P. had no report; Next committee meeting at the April Assembly.
- j. **Newsletter** – Representative not present. Newsletters will be distributed electronically due to the shortage of printed copies.

Current Items:

1. **2014 Gratitude Dinner – Cheryl B. (Co-Host Chair)**
 1. Approved a \$300 budget. The committee met for the first time on Saturday, February 22nd. The main topics for discussion included introductions, positions available and job descriptions. The attendees were asked to come up with food items and them ideas.
 2. Since D40 is the co-host for 2014 our specific responsibilities regular participation in the committee meetings as well as publication of the event by developing and distributing save the date cards and flyers as well as getting the appropriate information posted to both the SETA and Intergroup websites.
 3. By the end of this term, D40 will be next up to Host the GD for 2015 so we need to observe and learn from the current host.
 4. I have drafted save the date cards and am currently circulating them to committee members for review. I will need approval from the district to fund the cost of printing 1000 of these cards which totals roughly \$50. We currently have \$300 budgeted for the 2014 Gratitude Dinner. I also volunteered to come up with costing for the main course costs for BBQ, Fajitas and chili that will feed 450 people therefore would welcome any input.
 5. NEXT MEETING: is at 12pm on March 29th at the Delta Club.
2. **Visitation Committee- Nancy R.**
 1. Met on 3/2.
 2. A master list of groups has been created. There are 86 groups accounted for at this time.
 3. Decided to bring New Group Forms, Circle of Love & Service, GSR pamphlets & District Meeting Information flyer to visitations.
 4. \$100 budget approved for literature & printing costs from MISC line item of the budget.
 5. The group list will be circulated for volunteers to pick groups they would be willing to visit.
 6. An impromptu training will be held at the next meeting.
 7. The ad-hoc committee will continue to meet prior to the District Meeting at 6:30 pm
3. **2015 SETA Convention – Michelle H.**
 1. Hospitality Suite was approved, Michelle will find out about getting room.
4. **GSC Agenda Items, Summary, Request for Input – Jes K.**
 1. Interesting Assemblies – Voices Heard

Announcements:

- **D40 Service Workshop:** Saturday, March 15, 2014, 1pm – 4pm, Spring Branch Memorial Club, 1200 Blalock, Ste. 378, Houston, TX 77032
- **Intergroup Step 11 Prayer & Meditation Workshop:** Saturday, March 22, 2014. 9:00am – 1:00pm; Located; 4140 Directors Row, Houston, TX 77092
- **SETA Assembly:** April 12-13, 2014, Sheraton North Houston 1570 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Houston, TX 77032

So, back to work – on me.

In 2005 I went to a speaker meeting at the International Convention in Toronto, and the theme topic was “AA pockets of enthusiasm”. There were three speakers, the last of which was the well-known circuit speaker Clancy I. I always enjoyed Clancy, his humor, his perceptiveness and his commitment to AA Traditions. I wondered what AA pockets of enthusiasm were, not really going to hear about the topic, just wanting to see Clancy again.

I can't give much of a blow by blow account of his talk, but the meeting itself, much like the International Convention, seemed to be a pretty good example of AA enthusiasm. The fire code maximum for that particular meeting hall was 5000, and people were turned away, so it was probably at or around that number in attendance. Clancy spoke of meetings in California with regular attendance of over 1000. Amazing given my experience with meetings which average 30 to 50 people. I thought, well, there are a lot of alcoholics in California, I guess. But there are a lot of alcoholics in Houston, too.

Attendance is not my point; enthusiasm is. Why do some places have it, and others do not? If our goal is attraction, not promotion, are we attractive?

I sense a lack of enthusiasm, both in my own home group and in area service, but I struggle with what I can personally do about it. There is a place where the “we” of AA is quite plainly replaced with an “I”: in the responsibility statement, which we use as the close for our district meeting.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA, always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.
Even the theme of the 2005 convention was “I am Responsible”.

My real difficulty is with myself. I can look around, engage in some self-aggrandizing judgmentalism, and conclude that others are the problem. I do it all the time. I critique shares in meetings, I roll my eyes, I have perfected the face palm and the head shake. I am ready to pronounce others as the source of sparse attendance, low basket contributions and vacant service positions. I must confess, admit and accept that I am the only problem I can solve. I have solved a multitude of serious, debilitating problems by using AA's twelve steps and twelve traditions, my sponsor and my home group. If I hope for a more enthusiastic AA, it must start with me. Like any 4th step writing dissected in a 5th step, I dread the inevitable question from my sponsor: “So Jes, what do you think YOUR part is?” I hate it when that happens.

So, back to work – on me.
Jes K.

Changing My Mind

Concept V gives me the “Right of Appeal”, but in order for me to understand that right I personally must first understand the spiritual way to use that right. For me this can only be learned through experience. When I got here there were the all too common traits of stubbornness & defiance in me that had me using phrases such as “I'll never ___, I'm always going to ___, So, help me God I will ___ for the rest of my life”; you can probably imagine what the blanks were filled in with. I was not one to change my mind because it was the right thing spiritually to do & I wasn't very interested in what other people's opinions or feelings were, especially if they were different than mine. Different was bad & I had no past experience of thinking of what was best for the whole.

Thank goodness early in my journey I was exposed to ideas & statements such as your home group is where you serve, cast your vote & let your voice be heard. My home group's conscience is where I first heard about minority opinion & realized that people are very passionate about their opinions too. Many were different, some I thought were ridiculous & others had me feeling uncertain about my current opinions. I was confused to say the least. In typical AA fashion, I slowly but surely began to understand how the Traditions, Concepts, Rights & history are all interwoven together to create the structure that we have today.

At an Area Assembly I witnessed the chairperson ask if the minority would like to speak. As the little elder stateswoman walked to the mike & in the softest voice shared her opinion, I not only heard what she was saying, but I felt it. The power of her voice when delivered in a humble, spiritual way changed not only my mind but I watched as the vote was retaken, it changed the entire Area's mind as well. I do not remember what the agenda item was, but I sure remember that day. This experience taught me that my voice & my vote can be either a very powerful gift or a very powerful weapon of destruction. I can apply the Serenity Prayer personally & use my voice with God Confidence to be heard & stand in peace; or I can use my voice saturated in self-centered fear & potentially harm others & destroy all opportunity & potential.

The Right of Appeal protects us at the group level all the way down to the Trustees from the all too common act of discounting, disrespecting & the ignoring of other's “different” opinions. The service manual explains clearly that it is a right that we hopefully do not have to use because we have it in place. It's a bit like insurance or warranties to me. If I have it I don't always need it, if I don't have it & I know I should, I always need it. My voice & your voice are equals regardless of what they are saying & we all have just one vote. Today I can make them both count, if I'm willing to open my heart & mind to change!

Michelle H.
D40 Alt. DCM

The following Committees meet at:

The Delta Club
6400 Westpark, Suite 355, Houston, TX 77057
Telephone (713) 972-0034

Grapevine Committee

3rd Thursday of the month - 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Correctional Facilities Committee

3rd Wednesday of the month - 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

*Public Information Committee

4th Saturday of every month at Noon (Except for Assembly Months)

IT Committee

Meets every 4th Saturday from 10:00 am to Noon at:
Spring Branch Memorial Club
1200 Blalock, Suite 378
Houston, TX. 77055 Telephone: 713-468-9103

Literature Committee

Bay Area Club located on Webster Ave., Webster, TX at Noon on the 2nd Saturday of the month

The following Committee meets at:

The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston
303 Jackson Hill, Houston, TX 77007
Telephone (713) 942-4100

Cooperation with the Professional Community

1st Monday of the month at 7:15 pm

Archives Committee

Meets 2nd Saturday of the month at 10 AM at 521 N. Sam Houston Pkwy, Ste. 215.

*Treatment Facilities Committee

Meets quarterly at the Area Assembly at 4:30 pm

District 40 PI/CPC Monthly Committee Meeting

Last Saturday of the month from 1-3 p.m. At the Spring Branch Memorial Club

*All committees meet at the Area Assembly in the months of April, July and October at 4:30 PM Sheraton North Houston - 15700 John F. Kennedy Blvd. Houston, TX 77032 During the remaining months, the committees meet at the above locations and times.

THE NEXT DISTRICT MEETING IS
MAY 13, 2014 AT 7:00 PM

Just starting a group in District 40 and wish to add it to this newsletter? Send group information, location and meeting times to SETA-40@aa-seta.org and intergroup@aahouston.org. You can also call Intergroup at 713-686-6300.

District 40 of the Southeast Texas Area is a territory bounded on the North by US HWY 290; on the South by Westheimer Rd.; on the East by Loop 610 and on the West by State HWY 36. If your group falls within these boundaries, please contact us SETA-40@aa-seta.org and attend the monthly District meeting at the Bear Creek Community Center. HWY 6 at Patterson Rd.

