

Normal Drinker, Problem Drinker, or Real Alcoholic?

A sponsee was having difficulty understanding the part in the Big Book that talked about the three different types of drinkers: the normal drinker, the problem drinker and the real alcoholic. So he asked his sponsor to explain it to him. The sponsor took him to the sleaziest bar in town for some fieldwork. Before they went in, they stopped at the dumpster in the back and the sponsor gathered a handful of dead flies. They went and sat, nursing a couple of Diet Cokes in the corner.

Pretty soon a fight broke out and everyone in the bar went outside to see how it would end. The sponsor proceeded to get up from his seat and sprinkle the dead flies into beers scattered around the bar. The sponsee started to ask a question but the sponsor told him to wait and watch.

As the bar patrons returned from watching the fight outside, they started to notice the flies in their beers. One guy, upon seeing the dead fly, set the beer aside and asked the bartender for another one.

The sponsor said to the sponsee, "That is a normal drinker."

Soon another guy noticed the dead fly in his drink; he picked the fly out and drank his beer. The sponsor said, "That is a problem drinker."

The sponsee asked, "So what in the world is a real alcoholic?"

A commotion at the end of the bar caught their attention. A man noticing the fly in his beer had picked the fly up and was shaking it; shouting at the fly, "Spit it out! Spit it out, darn you! Spit it out!"

Comedy By Ron C.—Area 67 Alt. Delegate

Step Five

**Admitted to God, to ourselves,
and to another human being
the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Tradition Five

**Each group has but one primary
purpose—to carry its message to the
alcoholic who still suffers.**

Concept Five

**Throughout our structure,
a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought
to prevail, so that minority opinion
will be heard and personal grievances
receive careful consideration.**

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Sponsor to sponsee:
I have been able to be honest without fear; that has meant so very much in keeping me sober.

Being a sponsor for me started with me being sponsored first. Going through the Twelve Steps with a sponsor, learning how to have an open mind, to be willing and to be honest and then give away what I was given. "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."

What it means to me to be a Sponsee... For me being a sponsee means, like everything in the program, being willing and humble. I chose my sponsor because she had what I wanted more than anything... SOBRIETY! So I trust her, follow her expressed suggestions and her unspoken examples. I show up and I value her and her time. I keep the lines of communication open and am honest with her. In essence, I remain "sponsorable." AND IT WORKS! She is teaching me to be a sponsor so I can give back what was freely given to me. I am grateful for my sponsor and the sober life she has helped me to achieve today.

I'm so grateful there was someone there to literally carry me through that first year of sobriety when there seemed no way out of my misery. My first sponsor was almost like a surrogate mother at a dark time in my life. I hope I've been a bit of that for my sponsees.

Being sponsored and sponsoring has given me the opportunity to watch the steps in action. There is no greater privilege than watching people change all the relationships in their lives by practicing these principles. By watching sponsors and sponsees, I have learned how to be a mom, daughter, wife, AA member and citizen! And nothing can take the place of sitting across from another woman and seeing the lights come on.

With encouragement of my sponsor and remembering the 12th Step recommendation is to "help others achieve sobriety," I began to sponsor others. The fear of not being able to "do that" was replaced with surprise of how much I actually got of myself and enjoy sponsoring.

Being a sponsor is a great experience. I love the spiritual aspect of it and having the ability of helping a sponsee also experience and find just a sliver of peace.

Sponsors have shown me the closest thing to unconditional love that I had ever known before I was sober. I learned how to trust another and myself through sponsorship. As a sponsor, I have felt that same unconditional love that I was shown by my sponsors. The best relationships of my life!

From the Ladies of the Katy 164 Group

Lessons of a Sponsee

Last year, my second sponsor passed away. What I wanted to share was the experience, strength and hope he taught me during our time spent on the phone and in person.

What I will never forget is sitting in his car and wanting to ask him to sponsor me, but still being nervous and still listening to my own voices that told me I didn't need to open up to anyone else. So I beat around the bush hoping he'd pick up on it. Finally he said, "You gotta ask me". Lesson 1: I have to ask for help. I should have known this one. I did it years before and had gotten better, but still had a lot to learn.

As time went on, what I learned the most from him was two more lessons. Lesson 2: Everything is gonna be alright already. And Lesson 3 often came through his sarcasm: Don't take yourself so damn serious. Lesson 3 was often followed by another reminder of Lesson 2.

The day he pushed me to ask him, I had recently had another push when I approached someone else about being a service sponsor. The response from that was also, "If you want me to be your service sponsor, you have to ask me."

I had enough time spent in recovery to realize the God of my own understanding used these two moments and these people as tools to help me learn more about one of my standing defects of character.

As an old timer, my sponsor taught me a lot about AA History in general and around the Houston Area. I'd often listen to his stories and forget whatever issue I had before that I wanted to keep talking about. I became grateful for that.

I got to share many meetings, conventions and retreats with him over a few years. He later moved a little further away. His health began to decline. As an ex smoker, he'd remind me of this lasting addiction I still had. Often telling me, "That's ok, you'll quit when you have enough self-esteem." That statement would drive me nuts. But I never wanted him to quit telling me that. I needed to hear it.

What he had that I wanted was his realness and his calmness, his understanding and treatment of other alcoholics, and his sense of humor and honesty after years of sobriety. I was grateful to have him invite me into his home and his life.

When he passed, it was the first unselfish tears I had in awhile. But I was happy he was going to the big meeting in the sky with his friends and those who walked before him. At his funeral, another person approached me after and said he used to give him the same line about smoking that I heard.

What I learned from my first sponsor is the real sponsor keeps us further from the "ism" of this disease, where the "ism" stands for "I Sponsor Myself". I'm grateful to all the men who worked with me and the old timers in the meetings who gave me direction when I wandered.

Brad H.



What is a Sponsor?

Sponsors are our life-line!! Most people have that inner voice that stops the crazy thoughts, actions, and reactions; we alcoholics' seem to have a defect in this area of our thinking. After working my twelve steps with my sponsor, she became my trusted confidant, role model and advisor during the process of sobriety. My relationship has evolved to a trusted person that knows me and can be that voice when my brain takes a detour to that familiar road. My sponsor is that little voice that tells me "This is your alcoholic mind at work!" She is the voice that says "What is your part in this?" Also she's the person that advises me "Pray about it before you act on it!!" When I am unsure of something or something is eating at me, my sponsor is a person that I can talk with, knowing that I am going to get an honest answer! My sponsor is my sanity!!

Over the years the idea of sponsors has evolved and guidelines established such as working with members of the same sex, one must work the 12 steps first before he/she sponsors another, one must have a sponsor to become a sponsor, etc... I think many of the "rules" that have been put in to place are very important! But when push comes to shove it is the goal to help the struggling alcoholic!! When I look at my sponsor and our relationship I see it in a very simple way, much like Clarence S. wrote about in 1944 in the first A.A. Sponsorship pamphlet which he stated "The acceptance of an opportunity to take the A.A. plan to a sufferer of alcoholism entails very real and critically important responsibilities. Each member, undertaking the sponsorship of a fellow alcoholic, must remember that he is offering what is frequently the last chance of rehabilitation, **sanity** or maybe life itself."*

My sponsor keeps my thinking and my actions from going back to my old pattern and practice. When we work the program together, we are keeping each other from the brink of insanity!! My sponsor is the voice of reason that cannot reason for itself inside of me!!

Patty D.

*Reference: http://silkworth.net/aahistory/aapamphlet_clarences.html

District 40 GSR Official Meeting Minutes Southeast Area Alcoholics Anonymous

March 10, 2015

Call to Order: Serenity Prayer, Preamble and Unity Declaration

Tradition II/Concept III: reading and summation by Kaylee S. and Jackie S.

Volunteers for next month: Tradition IV/Concept IV will be Patty D. and Betsy.

Introduction of Attendees:

Ana D. (D40 Secretary, Area 67 Newsletter Chair, Katy Big Book Group); **Betsy G.** (*Past D40 DCM, Past Area 67 Delegate*, God Meeting Group); **Betsy K.** (GSR, Katy Big Book); **Bill A.** (Alt. GSR, Breaking the Chains); **Brad H.** (*Past D40 DCM, Area 67 Registrar*, Journey Group); **Cheryl B.** (2015 Gratitude Dinner Chair, Katy Crossroads); **Cindy M.** (D40 Correctional Facilities Chair, Area 67 CFC Secretary, Katy Big Book); **Clark F.** (GSR, Houston Young People); **Cole D.** (GSR, Men's Supper Step Study); **Corrie H.** (D40 Alt DCM, Katy Big Book Group); **Deborah G.** (D40 Newsletter Chair, Rule 62 Group); **Desiree B.** (GSR, God Meeting Group); **Diane S.** (D52 Alt. DCM); **Jackie S.** (GSR, Bear Creek Fellowship); **Jeff K.** (Alt. GSR, Houston Young People); **Jeff S.** (Alt GSR, Post Oak Club); **Kate E.** (Area 67 PI Committee Chair, Memorial Going Home Group); **Kaylee S.** (GSR, Broad Highway); **Kevin B.** (GSR, Another Chance Group); **Matt G.** (Alt GSR, Katy Crossroads); **Melissa R.** (Delegate, Good News Group – Humble); **Michelle H.** (D40 DCM, Katy Big Book Group); **Mike W.** (D40 Treasurer, God Meeting); **Pam F.** (D40 Treatment Facilities Chair, Katy Big Book); **Patty D.** (GSR, Katy 164); **Richard B.** (GSR, First Light Group); **Ron C.** (Alt. Delegate, 12 & 12 – Bellaire); **Scott S.** (D40 Coffee Committee Chair, GSR, Memorial Going Home Group); **Sunshine P.** (Alt GSR, Spring Shadows Group)

Normal Business:

1. **Secretary's Report** – Accepted as written.
2. **Treasurer's Report** – Accepted as written.
 - a. Mike W has been elected as acclimated to the treasurer's position. Welcome!!!

Committee Reports:

- a. **Archives** –OPEN. – Area Archives will have a table setup at Intergroup on March 14th from 1 – 4.

- b. **Coffee Committee** – Scott has stated that all is going good.
- c. **Correctional Facilities Committee – CFC** – Cindy M. reported there are Blue Cans available. CFC Orientation is March 28th @ Intergroup. Annual CFC convention flyers will be posted.
- d. **Grapevine** – OPEN – A subscription challenge is going on right now. Look at flyers for more information. Writing articles is a part of helping!!!
- e. **Intergroup** – AA Comes to Houston, March 14th 1 – 4 p.m. @ Intergroup. Understanding Step One and Carrying the Message, speaker Chris R., April 11th 10 – noon. @ Intergroup.
- f. **Information Technology – IT** – No report provided.
- g. **Literature** – OPEN;
- h. **Newsletter** – Thank you to everyone who sent in articles on their Step 3/Higher Power experiences. I enjoyed hearing the difference in how everyone came to this “God” thing. This month I printed the newsletters on colored paper. It costs the same as white paper, so I decided to make them a little more appealing. Next month's newsletter topic is on Resentments! More specifically, “Holding on to Resentments vs. Letting Go of Resentments”. I personally always have lots to work on when it comes to resentments. As always, I would love all feedback from everyone, good or bad.
- i. **Public Information/Cooperation with Professional Community – PI/CPC** – At our February meeting we discussed confirming the Emergency Clinics on our contact list and start the process for our mail out in April. Discussion about our Dentist Office mail out after our Emergency Clinic mail out is completed. Discussion about a future mail out to the School Districts within D40. Upcoming event for our committee is the District 40 Traditions Dinner date and time to be confirmed, will be in June on a Saturday. We still have an open position for Alternate Chair. Our next District 40 PI/CPC committee meeting will be held on March, 28th from 1Pm – 3PM at the Spring Branch Memorial Club.
- j. **Treatment Facilities Committee – TFC**– Nothing new to report

District 40 GSR Official Meeting Minutes Southeast Area Alcoholics Anonymous

everything that is going on in the Area. Also, he has great jokes!!!

- b. Melissa discussed her main task as the Delegate. That is to take the groups' voices to GSO. She has asked that the GSR choose an Agenda item and take it back to their group. Discuss it with them and bring back any information to the next Area Assembly. There will be collection boxes available at the assembly to turn in the response forms. After the GSO conference, a summary will be provided of what was discussed and decided on and the final report will be provided by August.
1. April Area Assembly Preparations – Michelle H. & Corrie H.
 - a. Documentation will be sent out prior to Assembly on what will be covered at the round tables. D40 sits front right in any room. Book your room now if you are going to stay at the hotel.
2. 2015 Gratitude Dinner Report – Cheryl B.
 - a. Looking for a venue to accommodate everyone (approx. 400 people). The budget is for \$1,000. We are currently looking at schools or churches. We need to choose the venue before the April Assembly.
3. Area Literature Committee Presentation in April – Michelle H.
 - a. The Area Chair will be coming out in April to discuss what the committee does for the Area.

Group News:

1. Breaking the Chains is a new registered prison group in D40. Meets at the Jester 3 Unit on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.
2. PI area meeting in on Monday – Talking to the wardens next week.
3. Clark's group update – Contributions have been made and the group has worked on the issues they were facing. A new Alternate GSR has been appointed. Welcome Jeff!
4. Go back to your groups and ask if they have any workshops they would like to have within the district.

Announcements:

- **D33 Unity Conference**, March 6 – 8, 5:00 pm, 794 Harvey Mitchell Parkway, Bryan, TX 77807
- **D52 Workshop "How To Lead An Effective Meeting"**: March 7th, 11:00am, 5114 Avenue H. Rosenberg, TX 77471
- **D70 Recovery Sponsorship Workshop**: March 21, Noon, 1300 E. 13th St. Deer Park 77536
- **D40 PI/CPC Committee Meeting**: March 28th, 1:00 – 3:00pm, SBMC



"This ability to laugh at yourselves to accept the puncturing of your own self importance is one of the basic steps in A.A. I believe — of course it makes every individual more livable and lovable whether alcoholic or not. What little I have been able to absorb made life much simpler for me, I know."

Ruth Hock - Alcoholics Anonymous' 1st Secretary

Treasurer's Report

District 40 Financial Report Period Ending 4/14/15	Current Month	Budget*	Year to Date	Current %	YTD %
INCOME					
Traditions Dinner Donations		\$250.00			
Service Workshop Donations					
State Conv - Hospitality Suite					
SETA -Hospitality Suite			\$365.00		
Fellowship Fest					
Group Donations	\$605.09	\$9,644.00	\$365.00		3.8%
Another Chance Group	\$5.00				
Chapelwood Tues 8pm	\$115.00				
God Meeting Group	\$60.04				
High Hopes	\$20.00				
Katy Crossroads Group	\$136.20				
Outpost Group (Men's)	\$140.00				
Post Oak Group	\$25.00				
Tuesday Night Step Study	\$28.85				
Wild West Group	\$75.00				
Total Income	\$605.09	\$9,894.00	\$1,993.13	6.1%	20.1%
*** EXPENSES ***					
DCM		\$600.00	\$148.46	0.0%	24.7%
Alt. DCM		\$600.00		0.0%	0.0%
Secretary / Copying		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
Treasurer		\$75.00		0.0%	0.0%
Newsletter		\$220.00	\$71.43	0.0%	32.5%
Rent/Coffee Donation		\$180.00		0.0%	0.0%
Coffee		\$25.00		0.0%	0.0%
PO Box		\$70.00		0.0%	0.0%
Literature Committee		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
PI/CPC		\$2,500.00	\$180.00	0.0%	7.2%
Grapevine		\$80.00		0.0%	0.0%
CFC		\$250.00		0.0%	0.0%
TFC		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
Archives Committee		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
Intergroup Liaison		\$0.00		0.0%	0.0%
IT Committee		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
Miscellaneous		\$100.00		0.0%	0.0%
***Gratitude Dinner		\$300.00		0.0%	0.0%
*** Fellowship Fest		\$250.00		0.0%	0.0%
*** Traditions Dinner		\$800.00		0.0%	0.0%
*** Service Workshop		\$250.00	\$184.19	0.0%	73.7%
***SWRAASA (Even Years)		\$0.00			
*** The Forum (Odd Years)		\$1,500.00		0.0%	0.0%
*** State Convention Hospitality Ste		\$0.00			
***SETA Assembly Host District		\$0.00			
*** SETA - 2015 Hospitality Suite ***		\$1,800.00	\$1,762.01	0.0%	97.9%
Total Expenses	\$0.00	\$10,100.00	\$2,346.09	0.0%	23.2%
*Budget Approved as of 11/09/14					
<i>Beginning Bank Balance</i>	\$7,365.34				
<i>Total Expenses</i>	\$0.00				
<i>Total Income</i>	\$605.09				
<i>Prudent Reserve (0.25xBudget)</i>	\$2,525.00				
<i>Unrestricted Funds</i>	\$5,445.43				
Ending Balance / Total Funds	\$7,970.43				
<i>Unspent Portion of Budget</i>	\$7,753.91				

Deposit 04/14/15	
Check #	Amount
1196	\$20.00
1149	\$25.85
4511	\$75.00
1109	\$5.00
13652	\$25.00
4967	\$63.04
80985	\$115.00
2563	\$136.20
	\$140.00
	\$605.09

Treasurer's Report - The March report period ending 4/14/15. Opening balance was \$7,365.34. Group Contributions received this month totaled \$605.09. The expenses this month totaled \$00.00.

The closing balance is \$7,753.91 .



“Right then and there, Ebby established the principle that A.A. in action calls for the sacrifice of much time and a little money.”

A.A. Comes of Age, pp. 141

SPONSOR STEPS



I've been privileged to work with several women over the years. Not all of them have stayed sober, some have chosen to work with a different sponsor and a few I am still blessed to be a part of their sobriety. My sponsees have taught me many things about myself. Each time I've done a 5th Step with one of them, I've seen my own shortcomings glaring back at me. It's one of those amazing lessons that God reveals to me from time to time, among many others. Recently, I've learned a "Sponsor lesson" that I've yet realized. The newest lady I've been working with has a bit of a different story than I do. Since I like to worry about the future, I started questioning how I was going to be able to do a 5th Step with her. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to provide the guidance that she would need. When I expressed my concerns to my own sponsor, she basically said what I would say to a sponsee worrying over the same thing... "You're not there yet." Holy Cow! What a concept! The sponsor has to take it a step at a time just like the sponsee. I can't jump to Step 5 if my sponsee is only on Step 1. It's so simple. I'm just one drunk talking to another drunk. Walking her through the Big Book. When the 5th Step comes along, I'll have already gone through 1, 2, 3, and 4. I will be able to be of service when the time comes as long as I keep God in the middle of it!

Deborah G.

DISTRICT SERVANTS

DCM
Michelle H.
dcm-40@aa-seta.org

Alternate DCM
Corrie H.
dcm-40-alt@aa-seta.org

Secretary
Ana D.

Alt. Secretary
OPEN

Treasurer
Mike W.

Alt. Treasurer
OPEN

Literature Chair
OPEN

IT Representative
OPEN

Treatment Facilities Chair
Pam F.

PI/CPC Committee Chair
Jim B.

Correctional Facilities Chair
Cindy M.

Intergroup Liaison
OPEN

Grapevine Chair
OPEN

Newsletter Editor
Deborah G.

Coffee Chair
Scott S.

Archives Chair
Tom B.

Upcoming Events

D82—Mouth of the Brazos Conference

Friday, May 15th—Sunday, May 17th

D52—Rose Rich Group 8th Anniversary

May 23rd, 11:00—4:00 PM

Twin Cities Facility

D40 PI/CPC Committee Meeting

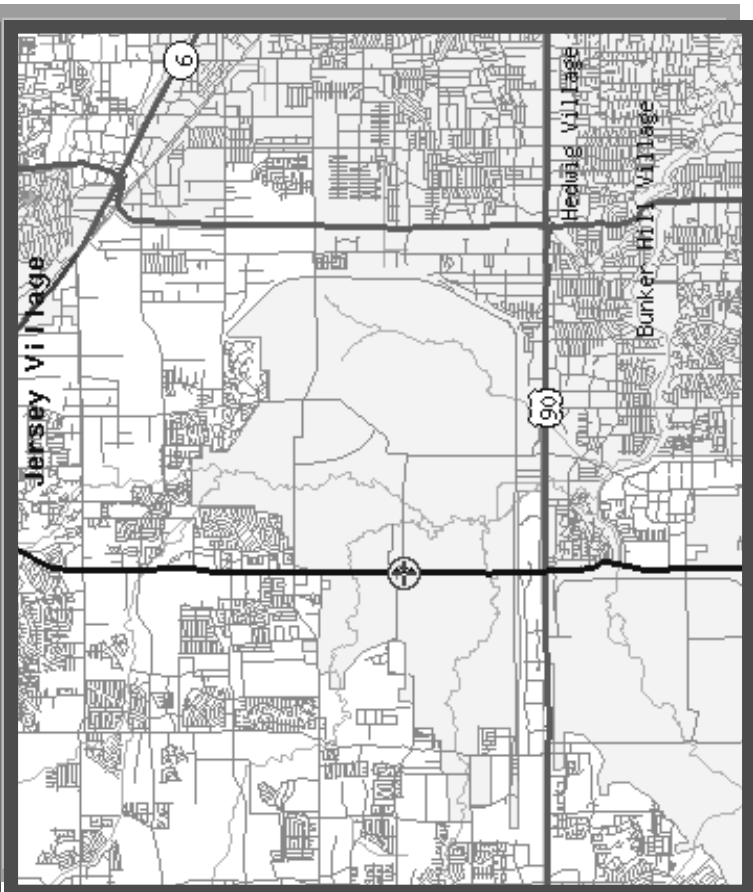
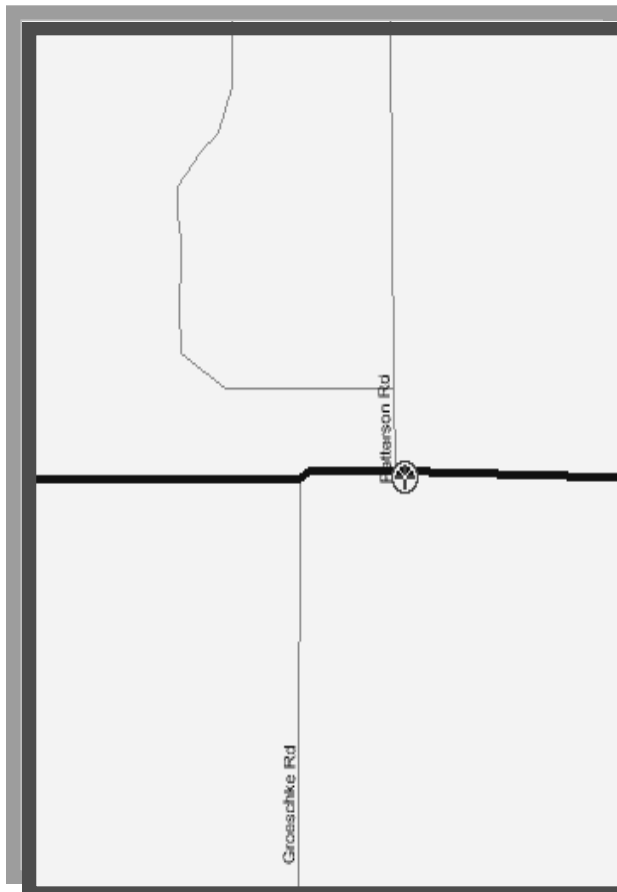
May 30th, 1:00—3:00 PM, SBMC

**See flyers on SETA/Intergroup Websites*



"You may want what I have and be willing to go to any lengths to get it, but I am still going to run this past my sponsor." - James, New Zealand

aagrapevine.org



If you have a story, quote, cartoon, or image you would like to see published in the District 40 News, please send it to dcm-40@aa-seta.org

Committee	Meeting Time	Location	Area Assembly*
Archives	2 nd Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM	521 N. Sam Houston Pkwy East, Suite 215 Houston, TX 77060	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)	1st Monday of the month at 7:15 P.M.	Houston Council On Alcohol And Drugs 303 Jackson Hill Houston, TX 77007	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Correctional Facilities (CFC)	3rd Wednesday of every month from 7:30-9:00 PM	The Delta Club 6400 Westpark Dr, Suite 355 Houston, TX 77057	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Grapevine	3 rd Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM	The Delta Club 6400 Westpark Dr, Suite 355 Houston, TX 77057	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Internet Technologies (IT)	4 th Saturday of the month from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Spring Branch Memorial Club 1200 Blalock, Suite 378, Room C	Saturday, 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM
Literature	2 nd Saturday of the month at 12:00 PM	Bay Area Club 2111 Webster St., League City, TX	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Public Information (PI)	3 rd Monday of the month at 7:15 PM	Houston Council On Alcohol And Drugs 303 Jackson Hill Houston, TX 77007	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Treatment Facilities (TFC)	–	–	Saturday, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
District 40 PI/CPC Committee	Last Saturday of the month from 1:00-3:00 PM	Spring Branch Memorial Club 1200 Blalock, Suite 378, Room C	–

*Area Assembly meets in the months of April, July and October at Sheraton North Houston 15700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston, TX 77032; January Assembly meets at the SETA

THE NEXT DISTRICT MEETING IS
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 7:00 PM

District 40 meets on the 2nd Tuesday
of every month from 7:00 PM—9:00 PM at the
Bear Creek Community Center
3055 Bear Creek Drive, Houston, Texas 77084

**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 may also contact Intergroup at 713-686-6300.