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# DISTRICT 40 NEWS

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Volume 26.10

October 2013

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## District 40 GSR Official Meeting Minutes Southeast Texas Area Alcoholics Anonymous

### *12 Traditions & 12 Concepts* *Reading and Summation*

**October 2013**

*Tradition 10/*

*Concept 10*

Deborah G./Betsy G.

**November 2013**

*Tradition 11/*

*Concept 11*

Corrie H./Trent P.

October 8, 2013

*Call to Order: Serenity Prayer, Preamble and Unity Declaration*

Tradition 10/Concept 10 reading and summation by Deborah G. & Betsy G.

Volunteers for next month...Tradition 11/Concept 11 will be Corrie H. & Trent P.

### Introduction of Attendees = (21):

**Albert C.** (GSR, First Light Group), **Betsy G.** (*Past D40 DCM & Area 67 Delegate*, Friends of Bill W.), **Chris C.** (GSR, Men's Supper Step Study), **Corrie H.** (D40 Nwsltr Editor, Alt. Area Secretary, GOD Mtg Group), **David V.** (GSR, Spring Shadows Group), **Deborah G.** (D40 Alt. Secretary, GSR, Rule 62 Group), **Jackie V.** (D40 IT Rep, GSR, GOD Meeting Group), **Jes K.** (D40 DCM, First Light Group), **Kate E.** (D40 PI/CPC Chair, Memorial Going Home Group), **Kelly C.** (GSR, Taking Care of Business), **Kris H.** (*Past D40 DCM*, Area 67 Treasurer), **Michelle H.** (D40 Alt. DCM, Rule 62 Group), **Nancy R.** (D40 Coffee Committee, GSR, Memorial Going Home Group), **Natalie D.** (GSR, The Broad Highway), **Peter C.** (GSR, Journey Group), **Rick Mc.** (GSR, Another Chance), **Sandy K.** (D40 Grapevine Rep, GSR, Tuesday Night Step Study), **Taylor K.** (D40 Literature Rep, The Broad Highway), **Trent P.** (D40TFC Rep, GSR, Wild West Group), **Wendy A.** (D40 Secretary), **Will R.** (GSR, New Oxford Group) -  
**\*Welcome New GSRs and Alt GSRs!\***

*continued on page 2*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1-2 Secretary's Minutes

1 History Corner

3 Treasurer's Report

3 District Servants

3 Upcoming Events

4 2013 Southwest Regional Forum Reports

5 2013 Southwest Regional Forum Reports (Cont'd)

5 SETA Committee's Meeting Schedule / District Map

### History Corner

**Nelson Newcomer:** I have decided to attend a SETA Area event called a gratitude dinner. I had not heard of this dinner, and am not sure what it is, and why it is held, but I understand that one takes place every year. What is it, exactly, and how did it get started? Do my group's 7th tradition contributions to SETA pay for it?

**Angela Archivist:** Thank you, Nelson, for your timely question! The Area Gratitude Dinner began in 1982 at the suggestion of Panel 31 past delegate Martha W. as a way for all groups in SETA to join together during Gratitude Month (November) and celebrate our gratitude for Alcoholics Anonymous and our individual sobriety, and as a way for SETA to thank the groups for their support during the past year. The first SETA Gratitude Dinner was held at the old Wyatt's Cafeteria in Meyerland, Houston, TX. David A. (Dallas) was the speaker and everyone paid for his/her own meal. It was a very small gathering, as Martha W. reports, because the Area Secretary forgot to mail out the flyers and not many knew about it. The second year, it was again held at Wyatt's Cafeteria, and was better attended. Bud S. arranged for the speaker, and it was Bob (San Antonio). Beginning with the third year, the Area began picking up the cost of the event, including an out-of-town speaker, and that year (1984), the event was held in Alvin. After that, except for a couple of years, the basket began to be passed to supplement the cost of the event. The basket collection has been sent also to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in appreciation of its support of our Area.

The last year that the Gratitude Dinner was funded from SETA area funds was 2005. Beginning in 2006, after the Area approved a recommendation from an ad hoc committee, the Gratitude Dinner began to be funded solely on the voluntary contributions of the members, groups, and districts within the Southeast Texas Area.

Please stay tuned for next month's edition. If you have a suggestion for a topic, please contact the Newsletter editor.

Betsy G.

**Normal Business:**

1. **Secretary's Report-** September 10, 2013 Unofficial Meeting Minutes adopted as submitted.
2. **Treasurer's Report-** the September 2013 Treasurer's report was accepted as submitted; current balance \$7,333.86; total income for the period totaled \$290.25, total expenses were \$66.44.
3. **News or Concerns from groups (GSRs) –** None.

**Committee Reports:**

- a) **Archives – OPEN POSITION.**
- b) **Coffee –** No news.
- c) **PI/CPC -** The Area PI committee met during assembly last weekend and discussed their work on distributing PSA's to radio stations. During the Area CPC committee they discussed the 2 presentations that we made recently, one at the Harris Country Psychiatric Center and one at HCC. The committee has an upcoming opportunity for a presentation with Parole and Probation officers.

Your D40 PI/CPC committee met on September 28th. We are discussing different ideas for PI opportunities in Church Bulletins and in the small emergency clinics that are opening in shopping centers. We developed a proposal for our 2014 budget. It was determined that we wanted to explore the cost of doing a PSA in the movie theaters during the Christmas holidays. The bid came in at \$1680 for running the PSA at both the Cinemark 19 and The Katy Mills Mall theaters. The committee has a balance of (\$837.58) in our 2013 budget. We are requesting additional funds from the district of \$880.00 to pay for the PSA. Our next meeting will be October 26th at the Spring Branch Club from 1-3 PM.

- d) **CFC- Not present/No Report.**
- e) **Grapevine –** No plans for projects. Barbara, Committee Chair, would like to do a presentation for D40. This will be coordinated through Jes & Sandy.
- f) **Intergroup Liaison –** Unanimous motion to approve Peter C. as the new liaison. Next Delegate Meeting will be held October 17<sup>th</sup>.
- g) **Information Technology -**

Positions Open: Secretary, Alt. Secretary, Alt. Chair, Alt. Postmaster, Alt. Support.

The IT Committee is in need of a laptop. Betsy G. will be donating a laptop and printer to SETA who in turn will give to the IT Committee to distribute accordingly. Consequently, the IT Committee will keep the laptop to use for SETA business and will determine who in the Area has the most need for a printer.

We are making headway on determining what hardware and to some extent what software we have are obsolete; however we will not be able to dispose of them until the

third section of the IT Guidelines has been formalized, submitted to and approved by the SETA Assembly. Work on this section of the IT Guidelines which is now in draft/bullet-type form was tabled until our next meeting in November.

Side note: I have submitted our D-40 Newsletter for the months of April-July, 2013 to SETA webmaster. If they are not already posted on our web page, they should be shortly. D40 agreeable to putting Jan, Feb & March Newsletters on web page too.

- h) **Literature –** Committee currently has an interim Chair.
- i) **TFC –** has had inquiries about participation; ongoing need for assistance with Bridging the Gap at the PaRC.
- j) **Newsletter –** Need articles for the monthly newsletter. If you're interested in submitting an article let her know!

**Current Items For Discussion**

1. 2013 Gratitude Dinner Update – D40 responsible for paper products & appetizers using a 500 count. D40 voted to make a \$200 contribution as well as having Will R. purchase \$200 worth of paper products. GSRs will ask their groups to provide the appetizers for the Italian theme dinner.
2. 2014 Gratitude Dinner Co-Host – Guidelines & responsibilities were provided via email and a vote was taken in which D40 has a willingness to co-host.
3. 2014 Proposed Budget – proposed budget presented and accepted change to Service Workshop (increase from \$0 to \$250) then approved as submitted.
4. District 40 Inventory – Proposed giving SBMC \$2 per person attending inventory.

**Announcements:**

1. **Southwest Regional Forum –** October 11-13, 2013, Biltmore Hotel, 401 S. Meridian Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73108
2. **District 40 Inventory –** November 2, 2013, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Spring Branch Memorial Club, 1200 Blalock, Ste. 378, Houston, TX 77055
3. **SETA Gratitude Dinner –** November 17, 2013, 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Jimmy Burke Activity Center, 500 W. 13<sup>th</sup> St., Deer Park, TX 77536

Meeting Adjourned / Responsibility Statement



## 2013 SOUTHWEST REGIONAL FORUM

First, I would like to thank you my District for the opportunity to attend this year's Forum. I was fortunate enough to arrive a day early & visit the Oklahoma National Memorial & Museum. I experienced the story of April 19, 1995, the day the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed. I have to say that if you are ever able to sit outside with the "Survivor Tree" and see the 168 beautiful chairs & their monument, please do. I walked away a changed woman that is Oklahoma's mission, to change us, to offer comfort, strength, peace, hope and serenity. This is how I walked into the Forum's registration on Friday to discover they did not have my registration. There was a Kris H. from Katy, Texas, but no Michelle. When I told the volunteer that he was my husband, he simply added a dash & hand wrote my name on the badge...*solution!* As I walked away, I thought to myself how very grateful I was because not too many years ago I would have never associated myself with him intentionally if I could avoid it. Area 67 members thought this badge was very fitting, everyone else just called my Kris! I felt as if I belonged. I belong to my husband, my family, my District, my Area, my friends and to my God.

Area 67 was represented *very* well at this Forum. From Past Delegate, Current Delegate, Committee Chairs, DCMs, GSRs, Reps, Alts to a few curious but interested members. There were several regular faces that were missing this year; however I do believe they will return.

There were many ideas I have made notes of for the PI/CPC and Grapevine Committee, for District/ DCM & Home Group. I gathered these through the 2 workshops I attended, "Spirituality and AA" and "Service Committees: Ideas for Districts and Group Projects". I will report these to each committee or level as I attend the monthly meetings.

I would like to share a few things that had an impact on me during the Delegate, Staff, Trustee Presentations and the General Sharing Sessions. There was great talk of the Third, Fifth, Seventh Traditions, our primary purpose, how to support each other in service, Anonymity and utilizing the resources we have literally at our fingertips.

*THE* reoccurring question has always been, "How do we get more members involved, more participation?" I heard a new answer this year, "Show them the results of what we do!" That is what I saw through the presentations that weekend, not just servants producing results, but enjoying the results of service and individual spirituality. Praying for love and tolerance before we attend a meeting of any level will help us feel a part of, not an outsider. It will ensure us the effectiveness in sharing the opportunities with others. Some questions presented by Trustees were "Are you going back to a home group or a home meeting?" "Are meetings and actions mandatory or optional?" "Do we use the Traditions to justify non participation in all Three Legacies?" "Are we matching our personal agenda with God's, with AA's?" "Are we remembering that we are Alcoholics Anonymous, not Alcoholics Invisible?" "What are you responsible for?"

I heard a current Delegate encourage us to be responsible enough to say get in the car, go get the good stuff and bring it back, take others to see the diversity and beauty in AA. A past Trustee stated that we all bleed at times, please use a Band-Aid, not a tourniquet; we will grow into the elders. The most amazing moment was when I heard a brand new GSR on fire about AA, Service and God. She just wanted to understand better & encourage others to experience what she was experiencing. I was her at my first Forum! All I could tell her was that we all heard you this weekend; we know what you are out there doing in your District and Area. When you feel alone or tired, remember that there is a room of 750 members that are doing, feeling, thinking and praying the same things you are all across the United States. We know...you are not alone even when you have the wrong badge name!

Michelle H.  
D40 Alt. DCM

## My First Southwest Regional Forum

From the very beginning, my sponsor encouraged me to be involved in service. At first, this just meant showing up at meetings, making coffee and sharing with those even newer than I was and participating in a group conscious. I found it hard to believe that no one was in charge and the offices in New York were really at the bottom of the triangle, not the top. As I sobered up and felt new life, I knew that I wanted to be of service to AA in any way I could. For years I have been involved in the SE Texas Area CPC committee and then when the D40 PI/CPC committee was formed, I dedicated time to help on that committee too. So attending the Regional Forum was just a natural step in participating in my recovery and enjoying a road trip.

While standing in line to check in, I reached out to shake the hand of the person behind me in line and discovered it was someone from the General Service Office. Not only that but it was someone I had spoken to over the phone in regards to the work I have done with CPC. I was so excited to put a face with the name and to thank her in person for the help she had given to me in answering questions and sending information. It suddenly hit me how much time that the people on staff at GSO give to support the fellowship and to help the still suffering alcoholic.

When I entered the ballroom for the first sharing session, I was overwhelmed and brought to tears when I saw the table with all the copies of the Big Book in various languages, as ordinary as Spanish and as diverse as Swahili. To see in action how this program is shared across the world was powerful. In one of the sessions GSO informed us that a translation in Arabic was about to make its way to Qatar and that they were planning a party to celebrate having the book in their own dialect.

I had not given much thought to identity of the nonalcoholic trustees on the Board. That first evening, I heard some of them share on how their lives had been touched by AA and how important it is to keep the fellowship thriving. When they shared, you could tell that they felt it a sacred responsibility to use their professional talents to support us and then to stand in front of us, to tell us what they were doing. My dedication to AA is somewhat selfish, in that the fellowship saved (and continues to save) my life; however these nonalcoholic trustees exhibit dedication without that experience. These Trustees reinforced how important the position of GSR is, since it is that GSR Representative that sends the information down the triangle to them, so they know how to proceed on our behalf.

I sought out other people who are involved with CPC/PI committees in other parts of our region. It was really fun to hear what projects they are working on and get new ideas for our D40 committee. One idea we hope to use is the idea of a breakfast meeting where we invite professionals and share information about what AA is and what AA isn't.

In addition to all the general sharing sessions, I attended a couple of workshops. One was on A.A. and advancing technologies. We discussed ideas for making sure that AA uses these technologies in a responsible way. The fellowship may need to hire specialists in this area, similar to how the Archives committee functions, in assuring that the work we do doesn't disappear when someone rotates out of a position. One member shared how important it is for us to consider the blind when designing IT programs, so that they can use the available "talk" technology to have the material on a web site read to them.

I was glad we were discussing this issue and there were people leading this sharing session that had a depth of knowledge who will be able to help the fellowship.

I am grateful that I made the effort to be a part of this forum and I will be attending the Southwest Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly in October of next year. I hope to see some of you there.

Kate E.

## REGIONAL FORUMS

Regional Forums originated in 1975 at the suggestion of Dr. Jack N., then Chair of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. They were to be weekend sharing and informational sessions designed to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with A.A. members, trusted servants and newcomers to service throughout the A.A. service structure.

REGIONAL FORUMS: Originally, at the invitation of a region, four Regional Forums were held each year. Since the U.S./Canada service structure is composed of eight regions, a Regional Forum was held in alternate years in each region on a rotating basis. In October 2006, the General Service Board approved the concept of an Additional Regional Forum to be held upon request in each region every eight years, also on a rotating basis, bringing the possible number of Regional Forums held each year to five. In 2012 the General Service Board agreed to discontinue Additional Regional Forums after completion of the eight region cycle in 2016.

The location and agenda for Regional Forums are decided jointly by the Regional Trustee, Area Delegates and G.S.O. The Host Contact is responsible for the initial contact with the hotel. Hotel arrangements and contract are handled by the Regional Forums Coordinator. The Forums Coordinator at G.S.O. distributes registration forms to groups and service workers throughout the region and, working with the Host Contact and Regional Trustee, coordinates the details of the Forum.

There is no registration fee for Regional Forums or Additional Regional Forums. The General Service Board covers the expenses of meeting rooms. In many places, area committees, districts and groups cover or defray the transportation and lodging expenses of the trusted servants representing them at a Forum.

As all Forums are intended to be sharing sessions, no formal actions result. Sharing at Forums is captured in Forum Final Reports which are distributed to all attendees. Regional Forums Final Reports are available on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site. Forums provide unique opportunities to share and exchange valuable experience, ask questions and spark new ideas. Regional Forums and Local Forums carry A.A.'s message of love and service by improving communication at all levels of our Fellowship.

### **2013 Southwest Regional Forum Report**

By Jes K., District 40 DCM

The Forum provides an opportunity to expand our experience and view of the AA Fellowship beyond our groups, our district and our area, not only to the Southwest Region, but to AA as a whole. My first forum was in 2011 at Wichita, Kansas, and it provided a surge of energy into my commitment to AA service. I wondered if this one would do the same, and I was not disappointed.

To be honest, I sometimes feel constrained in my own home group. The views and opinions of my close friends are well known, and as I read the Grapevine, I know I am in a very small corner of the AA universe in the familiar comfort of the First Light Group. I can't over emphasize the joy of getting outside that comfort zone for an event like the Forum.

One of the frequently repeated questions and comments at the Forum is "how can we get more people interested and involved in AA service?" There were many specific suggestions, but one that was repeated over and over again merged with my own experience at this very forum. Being in Oklahoma City, a nearly perfect 500 mile, 8 hour drive away, I decided to take the car and my daughter Taylor, our literature chair. I asked her to see if she could get a couple of AA friends to join us as well. The district paid for my room, and my driving expense, and I thought it would be a great opportunity to pay for her room myself, especially if she could get a couple of her friends to come along. That she did, as Natalie and Jessica agreed to come, which brings me to that repeated suggestion. Over and over people related that at some point in their service life, an AA friend or sponsor said to them, or they said to someone else:

Hey you! Get In The Car!

The AA road trip was on. For those eight hours, AA was the prime topic of conversation, both on the way and on the way back. The hours flew by, and the forum experience was multiplied by 4. In my own case, it seems the experience multiplier was even greater, as Jessica emerged as forum dynamo. She hit that microphone and cornered those AA servants with an enthusiasm I can barely aspire to. She asked me on the way up if I had an extra copy of the service manual, which I did, and by the end of that trip that thing was more worn than the copy I have been using for three years. Natalie and Taylor are got in the act, too, and the entire experience filled me with gratitude for the life that AA makes possible for me.

As to the nuts and bolts of the event, the Grapevine discussions were most amazing to me. What an awesome tool we have right at our fingertips. From Boston to Calgary, from Seattle to Key West, you cannot escape the fact that we are people who normally would not mix, and yet we do mix. We are all different, and we are all the same. We can learn from every member, and really, I believe it is our responsibility to experience the wide diversity of the AA fellowship. When a newcomer arrives at our home group, can our hand be there if our mind is closed? The Grapevine opens my mind and gives me the exposure to AA experience from every point of view you can imagine. When a point of view is expressed in the Grapevine that seems foreign to me, I seek to understand. The fellowship of AA and the steps gave me that willingness, and what a gift it is.

Thank you District 40, it was an experience I am glad I did not miss. The next one that comes along, don't forget – get in the car.

The following Committees meet at:

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

Literature Committee  
1st Saturday of the month - 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

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 10:15 am to Noon at:  
Post Oak Club -- Moved to Northwest Mall  
9600 Hempstead Road, Suite 306  
Houston, TX. 77092 Telephone: 713-956-5061

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 quarterly (or as needed)  
at the Area Assembly at 4:30 pm  
Contact Lee G. for more information

\*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  
NOVEMBER 12, 2013 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](mailto:SETA-40@aa-seta.org) and [intergroup@aahouston.org](mailto: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](mailto:SETA-40@aa-seta.org) and attend the monthly District meeting at the Bear Creek Community Center. HWY 6 at Patterson Rd.

