

**To:** Sister Parish Committee  
**From:** Carl Scheider  
**CC:** AKF  
**Date:** 2007/08/06  
**Re:** July 2007 To-Do Ideas.

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## To-Do List

As promised, this is my to-do list from our recent trip. I think each one is worthy of consideration. I tried to put them in some rough order of priority – first things first – but your input is the first order of business. If you want to help with any of these, we'll put that one at the top of the list.

### 1. **Resurrect the Sister Parish Committee.**

It feels like we are coasting to a standstill. We only had one delegate for this summer's trip. And there are a world of ideas and things going on that we can do and help with. My gut says that the way to do this is to be about **DOING** things, not about recruiting members. If we are doing worthwhile things, people will come and help. If not, they have more important things to do, I am sure. So, here are a few things. I propose we put these in front of the parish by means of some of the following:

#### a. **Monthly Announcement.**

Make a monthly 2 minute announcement at all of the Masses, giving the Parish a status report of our efforts. When we get a letter from the community, read it to the whole parish before Mass. Make copies available to anyone that wants one. Post it on the GA web site.

#### b. **Monthly Angelus Article.**

Publish a more detailed summary of the status each month in the Angelus, with invitations to participate. We need a leader for this, who can assign topics to a group of volunteers so that we can get different perspectives and involvement.

#### c. **Monthly Letter to the Editor.**

Send a similar summary once a month to the Woodbury Bulletin and Lake Elmo Leader. In my experience, they love articles like this.

#### d. **Pamphlet.**

Put together a nice colored brochure from the history – see separate task – to be handed out at the Festival and for the Speaker's Bureau.

#### e. **Festival Booth.**

Staff the festival booth with pictures and projects and sign up sheets for these various activities. Have Nicaraguan music playing, coffee for sale, etc.

#### f. **Speaker's Bureau for GA.**

Put together a history of The Sister Parish – see separate task. Pull an outline from it, with pictures and music, and assign volunteers to present this to every group in the parish – the council, Women's Club, Men's Club, Retirees, and every religious education group and class. Update it and repeat it yearly.

g. **Spread the Speaker's Bureau to other area Churches.**

Invite ourselves to the other area churches to do a very similar song and dance, using music, etc.

h. **Celebrate a Christmas Event for children around the 3 Kings.**

Learn their traditions and celebrate them with our families.

2. **Write Monthly to Teustepe – the Community AND individuals.**

They **ALL** ask us to write, and they remember when we do. They are not great about replying – but it is much more expensive for them, and many of them have some difficulties with writing and grammar. Compile a list of the community with their pictures and addresses. Get a list of volunteers to write, others to translate. Mail them directly, to lessen some of the burden on AKF. Worst case, send the English to AKF and ask them to communicate. They will be pleased to do so, I am sure.

Send a personal photo with each letter of something here – people meeting, parish festival, family, snow, etc. They love the pictures.

3. **Set up a weekly call to talk with the Community Leader.**

They all seem to have cell phones, and I believe that there is no incoming call charge in Nicaragua. We need a list of the leaders or leader that can talk with us, and an agreed upon time when we could call. We can use SKYPE and do a conference call on this end so someone here can listen and translate. We could use some volunteers for this. I hate to ask AKF for this level of effort, and we should be able to manage this.

4. **Learn the song Nicaragua – Nicaraguita.**

Learn the words and music for this lovely song, so that we can serenade them with it at our next encounter. It always seems silly singing English songs in one part harmony! We could practice it at our monthly meetings.

5. **Organize Teustepe Assistance for Some Projects.**

This may sound like charity, but it is what most people are doing. While we are working with them to put them in charge of their lives, there are things that need doing desperately, which will help lay the foundation for their self-sufficiency in the future. Clearly, these have to be things that they want, and that they run completely. They may need help in visioning what is possible, and locating resources to assist. But these are their projects. AKF has committed to doing a planning session around their vision yet this year – I think we should ask them to focus it on concrete things such as the following suggestions. We should craft up the chosen one as an RFP for the local Rotary and have at it. This is basically Bob Walz's proposal.

a. **A Teustepe Water Project.**

Connect the Teustepe Community with the water project in Boaco. I believe Barb has the details on this. Our community members did not attend this session. I don't know how to go about this, but I don't want to lose the idea. See detailed notes on how this works.

There are funds out there – we need to get them connected to them in some major way.

The community needs a bank account, and some ability to control it as a community, with transparency, reports, etc., to support projects from outside.

b. **College and Technical School Scholarships for the Community.**

Just an idea, and up to them. They would need a selection panel, since funds are not unlimited. They should choose the best qualified, from their own established criteria. They

should set the requirements, such as grade, attendance, for continuing it for additional years, the amount, the institutions that qualify, etc. There are individuals and organizations that would contribute just for something of this nature.

This has been regarded negatively in the past, because of potential divisions within the community, but it is time for them to grow up and learn how to do this kind of thing. Some rules would help, such as committee members recusing themselves for any potential conflict of interest with one of the candidates, some form of scoring evaluation, etc.

c. **Clothing Coop.**

Many members of the community sell used clothing. They buy it from a local supplier, but it is generally not very useful, of poor quality for the climate. AKF knows a supplier in Managua that would give them a higher quality of clothing, but they would have to buy a much larger quantity. This proposed “clothing coop” would organize themselves, with assistance, as a joint effort, and buy the better clothes with the assistance of the loan program. This idea has been raised with them in the past, but they have been reluctant to undertake it. I think some small part of that hesitancy in the general Nicaraguan mistrust of people around money – but, again, that is something that they need to learn to do. This needs to be structured in some way as to reduce their apprehension. Perhaps we could solicit a grant to cover half of the first purchase? That way they have to repay something, and the earnings would be enough to cover part of the second one. Other ideas?

6. **Develop our own history as a joint community as a book.**

This would have major benefits as a project for both North and South, and we can use it for presentations. Some simple steps:

- Nail down the major events in a timeline. Past GA files and members would have these.
- Flesh those out with stories from North and South.
- Add pictures.
- Translate the whole thing into both languages.
- Give everyone an electronic version, post one on the GA web site, and send a hard copy to Teustepe.

Rosario said she would be glad to help. We would use it as the basis of articles in the local papers and the Angelus.

7. **Promote a young person delegation – both N to S and S to N.**

Let’s face it – we are all getting older, on both sides. The High School kids we engaged in the past are all off about other things. The Nicas are off in Costa Rica or somewhere making money, or going to school. Our kids are in college and busy. I’d like to see us recruit some young adults. I don’t have any wonderful ideas on how to do this. Let’s make it a long term project.

8. **Sister Cities stuff.**

Look at this web site and their stories. I think we could learn something about projects through these folk. There were lots of these people at the Conference.

9. **AKF marketing liaison.**

Lots of the communities from the North at the conference were looking for people to facilitate their communications with their communities in Nicaragua. Suggest to AKF that they structure a “fee for service” model for these folks. Perhaps a retainer based on their level of planned activity, with a regular log of calls, visits, expenses against that retainer. There must be an approved mailing or email list of the attendees through Nicanet, or the Sister City web site.

AKF could also provide a service on connecting the various communities – both north and south. I saw several examples where the folks in Teustepe would benefit from talking with the people doing water projects in Nicaragua, and other things.

10. **Get better at Spanish.**

I need someone to practice with. I would be pleased to help others learn as well. I have a way to go, but I am determined to get better at this.