



the bits newsletter

Seattle Al-Anon Information Service

May 2024

When I first came to Al-Anon, my Tradition 5 Experience

by Sarah B

When I first came to Al-Anon fourteen years ago, the Traditions didn't mean much to me except for one, Tradition 5: *Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.* It was the part of that Tradition that said we practice by "encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives" that jumped out at me. Really? That was the last thing that occurred to me to do. However, like other program literature, why not think about it and try it? I focused on encouraging and understanding my son, an addict, and it brought about a shift in my thinking.

This new way of looking at the situation with my son was just a first step, but it led to a long journey of what my relationship and my purpose was in relation to my son. It took more years, program, literature, sponsorship, meetings, writing, and, of course, prayer, to get to a point where I stopped trying to change my son; stopped being responsible for his life; stopped feeling like it was my job to get him sober. The shift brought me to, believe it or not, just loving and enjoying my son.



Photo by Linda W

I came to a decision and said this out loud to my son - that I respected his dignity to make his own decisions. He appreciated my new

thinking and commented on “my maturity.” Somewhere in this process, I began to see my son more clearly, and I noticed he had matured on his side as well, and our relationship completely changed for the better.

The truth is, my son does not say he is committed to being sober. I can't say that he's in recovery, but I am in recovery. Tradition 5 was a beginning in my recovery, and because I have the program and all the tools, I will find acceptance and serenity, no matter what my son does or doesn't do down the road. And thanks to the program, I am able to love my son unconditionally, and my serenity does not depend on his sobriety.

AIS Phones Experience - Volunteers Requested

by Heather R - AIS Phones Coordinator

For years I ignored requests for volunteers to help man AIS's (AI-Anon Information Services) phone line. I felt too busy and it was too scary. I wasn't sure I knew enough about the program to help anyone. I'm also crabby when it comes to learning new technology. So, I decided I was a bad candidate and hoped others would step up.

Then COVID happened; I was forced to learn how to Zoom. Slowly I got more comfortable with the technology, even daring to join meetings via my phone on occasion. That tiny shift in attitude was the beginning of my becoming willing to volunteer.

Every month our GR kept announcing the need, so I had to admit either no one was volunteering or not enough were. I started asking questions: How do you get trained? (You meet with the Phones Coordinator, who trains you over Zoom.) What days do they need covered? (As of May 2024: Mon, Wed, Thurs, and weekends.) How long is a shift? (3 hours.) How many calls during a shift? (The average is 1-2, during the day shifts.) What kinds of calls do they receive most? (Requests for information on meetings or literature—and the occasional person who needs a kind ear, known as a 12 Step Call.) How do calls get forwarded to me? (By signing-in to AIS's account, on the Zoom app, via your mobile phone or computer.)

Even after I received the training, I remained reluctant; I was so concerned about getting a call I might not know how to answer. I was also challenged by how to read (or use) the spreadsheet for shift sign-ups. Then it dawned on me... I don't have to do this perfectly. I just have to be willing to try—and ask for help when I need it.

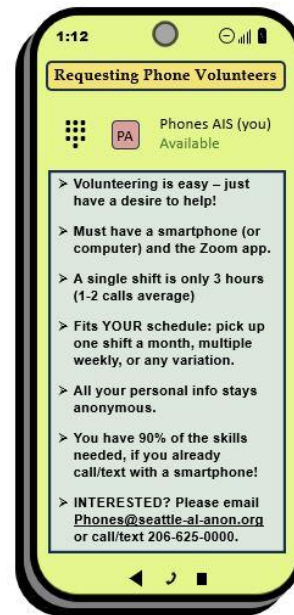
Repeated exposure to what I didn't know caused me to learn it. In the beginning I leaned heavily on Dave, the Phones Coordinator. I had him enter my shifts on the spreadsheet (now I can do it myself). And I would text him whenever a caller asked something I didn't know. (He always answered, or found someone who could.) I learned a lot by reading the text threads from more experienced phone volunteers. They taught me new information about AI-Anon and links for accessing it. I discovered new details about the AI-Anon Family Groups mobile app. (Yes, we have an app!) And I became more adept at navigating and finding information on our websites, especially AIS's and Washington Area's.

Before volunteering I'd assumed most calls would be 12 Step. My actual experience taught me two things. The majority who call and text our 24-hour phone line are members or newcomers having technology challenges or questions not easily found on our websites. Two, because "12 Step Calls" require more time, we have a referral list of volunteers willing to take those calls. And on the occasions I had the time, I found that simply listening to someone is more important than knowing what to do. Al-Anon taught me it's not my job to solve people's problems—but sharing my experience, strength and hope lets them know they're not alone.

Being a phone volunteer has been some of the most satisfying and enjoyable service work I've ever performed. After only nine months of weekly phone shift work—I agreed to become the new Phones Coordinator in January 2024. A whole new level of learning (doing it imperfectly and asking for help) has commenced. And I am in awe of the kindness, dedication and knowledge of our active phone volunteers. They exemplify the Al-Anon Declaration:

Let It Begin With Me.
When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help - let the hand of
Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and
Let It Begin With Me.

If you're still unsure about being a phone volunteer, call or text us at 206-625-0000 and ask a volunteer what it's like. Or shoot me an email at phones@seattle-al-anon.org



Requesting Phone Volunteers

Contact the Phones Coordinator:
Phones@seattle-al-anon.org or
Call/text 206-625-0000

Order the Forum Magazine



Al-Anon's monthly magazine features timely sharing's from Al-Anon and Alateen members, suggested meeting topics, and the latest information on worldwide Al-Anon recovery. Experience and insight you won't find anywhere else!

Has Your Meeting Changed?

- Gone back to meeting in person
- Become hybrid or concurrent
- Has a new physical location
- Made other changes that members need to know about
- Has an alternate Holiday Schedule
- Has disbanded

Please send all meeting changes to the WA Area Group Records Coordinator [<https://wa-al-anon.org/meeting-changes/>]

Changes and Updates are made Weekly.
(Seattle AIS is automatically cc'd in the change request)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Seattle AIS updated meeting schedule, please contact meetingdirectoryeditor@seattle-al-anon.org

Adhering to Policies without Policing

The introduction to the [“Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,”](#) the second section of the *2022–2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v3, states, “The ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies’ reflects policy statements that grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides, the [Twelve Traditions](#) and the [Twelve Concepts of Service.](#)”

Policies offer consistency when members or groups seek clarification on matters relating to the Al-Anon fellowship. Before a policy is adopted or changed, it goes through a thorough review process, with final approval given by the World Service Conference,

Al-Anon’s largest representative group conscience.

When fellowship questions arise, consider:

- Looking at the experience expressed in the policies
- Referencing the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” during group business meetings
- Sharing the information with other members
- Including the source of the information so members can know where to look
- Hosting a workshop on the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies”

Finding ways to share the policies helps support the consistent message of help and hope that has been carried for more than 70 years. Every member of Al-Anon is a guardian of the Twelve Traditions—no permission is needed!

The Forum, April 2024

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[READ MORE IN THE “SERVICE MANUAL”](#)

Step Five

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



Photo by Soren S

Hybrid Fall Assembly

- HAVE TECHNOLOGY SKILLS?
- WILLING TO DO NEW AL-ANON SERVICE WITH LIKE-MINDED FOLKS ON A FUN TEAM?

**WA AREA 59
AL-ANON**

Help Us Have A Great Hybrid Fall Assembly 2024

Email area59.communications@gmail.com

Are you tech savvy and willing to do Al-Anon service with like-minded folks on a team? WA Area has approved reimbursement (travel and lodging) for up to three on-site volunteers for Fall Assembly 2024. You will train and work as a team member to help ensure Fall Assembly is a success for both in-person and virtual attendees.

**Looking for
Volunteers with**
Basic computer skills
Willingness to be trained
Availability Oct 4-6, 2024
Familiarity with Zoom
Audio/Visual skills a plus
NOT a current GR/DR

We want to get an early start on the process of building a strong team - so please step up to these new service positions now!

We are happy to announce - WA Area Hybrid Assemblies coming in 2024! AND, **exciting new service positions enabling hybrid assemblies have been created!** Basic technology skills needed. You will train and work as a team member and ensure the Assembly is a success for all participants. Volunteers will be **reimbursed** for their travel and lodging expenses (shared rooms, shared travel, etc.).

We want to get as early a start on the process as possible in building a strong team - so please step up to these new service positions now!

We will need three volunteers and three alternates for the following in-person roles:

- 1) Audio/Video Volunteer (runs the sound board and coordinates the sound board input to Zoom, monitors video cameras and mini-PCs)
- 2) In-room Zoom Volunteer (Zoom, voting, waiting room, chat monitor, breakout rooms, Zoom naming monitor, calling on zoom speakers)
- 3) Zoom voting volunteer (Zoom roll call, motions, polls; also available for troubleshooting)

NOTE: Since these are technical roles, volunteers need to be able to focus on these tech roles only - they should not be participating GRs or DRs.

***If you are interested or have questions, please email
George S., WA Area Meeting Technology
Coordinator at:
area59.communications@gmail.com***

Tradition Five

Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.



Photo by Soren S

NOT EVERYONE TRAPPED BY ALCOHOL IS AN ALCOHOLIC.

Families and friends are suffering too.

•

Do you worry about how much someone drinks?

•

Al-Anon and Alateen can help.

.....

1. Go to the Play Store app on your phone
2. Search for and download "Al-Anon Family Groups" app
3. Open the app and create your account
4. At the bottom, click on "Meetings"
5. Under "Meetings" search for "WA Area Alateen Room"
6. When it is time for the meeting, the "Join" button will be red. Click on "Join"

Join the Alateen Zoom Meeting Monday Nights At 7 pm!

AL-ANON.ORG

Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

“Has the minority opinion been heard?” to give anyone hesitating to speak a clear opportunity to be heard.

Most people at this meeting sit quietly and listen when someone offers an idea or opinion that is different than the previous offered ideas. I have been led to change my mind several times. Our group has prospered through the kindness and openness to new ideas created by listening to those minority opinions. While not from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature, the idea of not falling into “contempt before investigation” is brought home to me every time we ask for the minority opinion.



Photo by Allen L

So how does Concept Five relate to the photo?

The majority opinion is represented by the largest part of the photo. Those pretty flowers growing in the flat, gray expanse of concrete represent the minority opinion. If I can listen with an open mind and heart, that is to practice Concept Five, I can often find those flowers of a new idea which can brighten my day.

Concept of the Month

by Allen L

Concept Five

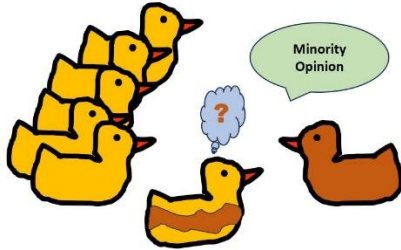
The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

The accompanying photo might at first glance appear to have nothing to do with Concept Five, but hear me out.

I can't remember the exact details of why it came up but WSO sent out a reminder that groups should always ask for the minority opinion while taking a group conscience. My home group now routinely asks the question

Concept Five

The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.



AIS Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is Thursday, May 9th, 2024, 7:30-9:00 pm. Check the AIS website calendar (<https://www.seattle-al-anon.org/events>) for the zoom link.

AIS Board Meeting

Thursday, April 18th, 2024 at 7:00-8:30 pm. Check the AIS website calendar (<https://www.seattle-al-anon.org/events>) for the zoom link.

2024 Board Meeting Schedule

July 18	7:00 - 8:30 PM
October 17	7:00 - 8:30 PM



West Seattle Al-Anon SAT A.M. Speaker Meeting

SATURDAY - MAY 4th, 2024 830 AM to 1030 AM

[3050 California Ave SW Seattle, WA 98126](#)

St John the Baptist Episcopal Church ~ Parish Hall

Please Join Us - All Welcome - Parking @WSEA High School

Hosted by: West Seattle Saturday Morning Al-Anon Family Group

- Refreshments & Light Breakfast Provided •
- Accessible • ASL Interpreter • 7th Tradition Observed •

"My Experience, Strength, and Hope"

M.E.S.H.



MONTHLY SPEAKERS MEETING

Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Hosted by Richmond Beach AFG
Shoreline, WA.

2nd Saturday MESH Speaker Meeting AFG
St David Emmanuel Episcopal Church
18842 Meridian Ave N, 98133

IN-PERSON ONLY, 90 minutes
Families, Friends, & Observers Welcome

Please join us on the 2nd Saturday of each month as
An AA Speaker and an Al-Anon Speaker share:

AA Speaker: Sasha P.
Al-Anon Speaker: Sandy L.



Horas de Aperatura de Seattle AIS

El Primer SÁBADO del Mes

11 AM - 3 PM

No se requiere cubrebocas

All Pilgrims Church
509 10th Ave E. Seattle, WA 98102

¡Únate a nosotros para disfrutar de golosinas, café y compañerismo! Sin oradores, solo mucha literatura aprobada por la Conferencia para echar un vistazo y/o comprar y ver a los amigos! ¡Los recién llegados y veteranos todos son bienvenidos!

Recogida en la acera disponible.

Nota: Ingrese por la 10th Ave por la PUERTA AZUL (NO por la Broadway). PRESIONE EL TIMBRE DE AL-ANON. Estacionamiento gratis en la calle. Hay dos sitios que se paga el estacionamiento que es QFC y E. Republican entre Broadway y Harvard.

Voluntarios: ¿Te necesitamos? ¡Por supuesto!
Envíe correo electrónico al
vicechair@seattle-al-anon.org





Seattle AIS Office Hours

First SATURDAYS of Every Month

11 AM - 3 PM

Masks OPTIONAL

All Pilgrims Church
509 10th Ave E. Seattle, WA 98102

Join us for treats, coffee and fellowship! No speakers, just lots of Conference Approved Literature to browse/buy and friends to see. Newcomers and Long Timers Welcome!

Curbside pickup available!

Note: Enter on 10th Ave via the BLUE DOOR (NOT on Broadway). PUSH THE AL-ANON DOORBELL. Free street parking available. Paid Parking at the QFC or on E. Republican between Broadway and Harvard.

Volunteers: Do we need you? Of course we do: Email
vicechair@seattle-al-anon.org for more info




Need a Free Newcomer Packet?

Anyone local to Seattle who is a newcomer and wants an individual newcomer packet (or in Spanish, too!), please submit your request via the [New To Al-Anon](#) page, or send an email to outreach@seattle-al-anon.org with the name and mailing address.

2024 Washington Area Event Schedule

SSA: May 17-19

WAAC: July 19-21

AWSC: August 3

FALL ASSEMBLY: October 4



Out of the Toolbox

by BITS Columnist Callie D.

Let It Begin with Me

The growth factor of my personal recovery journey has been monumental. I grew up in a family that was heavily impacted by generations of alcoholism and other dysfunctional patterns. Even as a “tween” I knew something was terribly wrong. The role reversals of adult responsibilities, arbitrary punitive punishments, and intermittent terrifying rages became the norm. I just wanted everyone to be okay, and to feel like me and my siblings were safe. Most of the “adults” were heavy drinkers, and kids like me were forced to leave childhood behind.

I took great risks to try to get help for my family, but it ended up just making things worse for me. Bringing up a distressing reality was met with denial and pressure to comply with the insanity. That is a lot for a young teen to survive. I wish I had known about Alateen, however, I am so thankful that it is more available to teens today.

Getting outside help of any kind was frowned upon. I was routinely silenced and shamed for attempting to ask questions. Anything that made the adults uncomfortable was taboo. Years later in Al-Anon I learned about; “Don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel.”

The walls of alcoholic homes tend to hold many secrets. In the Al-Anon reader, *Courage to Change* there are 5 pages dedicated to “secrets.” I remember my mom sharing bits and pieces of her traumatic

childhood, with the common denominator of the wreckage inflicted upon her by relatives affected by alcoholism. It truly is a “family disease,” and I have experienced intergenerational opposition just by forging my own path.



Photo by Callie D

It is heart wrenching to witness the deterioration of a loved one in the evil grip of the bottle. The best parts of them seem to slip away as the malevolent liquid brings out the worst. I have knocked myself out trying to reach my loved ones, but it is as if there is this impervious bubble that surrounds them.

My latest journey has taken me to a deeper level of acceptance of very painful realities. Coming out of denial is a gradual process that seems to ebb and flow. My deepest travels are often preceded by extremely painful events, the consequences of my own actions and/or the actions of others connected to me.

Let it begin with me! I believe I have been breaking free from some of the generational chains that were forged in the past, and unintentionally passed on to me. I am the only one who can do my work, and my hope is to make the road a little less treacherous for those who endeavor to embark on their own healing journey.

April 2024 AIS Council Meeting Minutes (Summary, not yet approved)

Seattle Al-Anon Information Service Council
Minutes April 11, 2024 7:30-9:00 pm

Meeting opened at 7:30 pm by Dave M - Chair

In attendance: 16 attendees

Serenity Prayer

Introductions

Readings: Concept 4 - Scott M

Secretary Report: Kathy K - Approval of March minutes: March Council Meeting minutes accepted as presented, 3 Abstentions

Chair Report: Dave M

Pre-Con Update

Increase Washington Wanderings to \$25.00 per year. **Passed.**

Create committee to Host WA State Speakers Meeting was **removed** from the agenda. The Chair did not create a committee.

Washington Area Group Records submission form reformatted. All information on the new form is **required.** (Effective immediately?)

Provide Spanish translation for Assemblies. 3 translators per Assembly. **Passed.**

All 6 motions related to having hybrid assemblies were reviewed. **Passed.**

Fall Assembly Committee is still looking at venues. A flyer will be created when the site is known

April 6 Office Opening Sold over \$1,000 in Literature.

Created a Bestseller List for the First Quarter.

Title

A Little Time for Myself
How Al-Anon Works
Courage to Change
Newcomer Packets
Paths to Recovery
Hope for Today
Reaching for Personal Freedom
Path to Recovery Workbook

Vice Chair Report: Nothing recorded

Treasurer's Report: Gary H

- Sales tax rates were updated between literature sales on Thursday March 28th and April 1st, when they take effect. This means that in the new quarter we will correctly apply the updated local tax rates for the appropriate locality to literature sales.
- Financial reports: Seattle AIS remains financially stable.

Coordinator Reports:

Phones: Heather R

VOLUNTEERS:

We have 16 trained volunteers. Of those, ten (10) actively covered shifts in March. I am down two ACTIVE (2) volunteers in April, and have lost contact with a 3rd, who I've been trying to schedule a refresher with.

CALLS & TEXTS: We received 58 calls and 22 texts = 80 points of contact

UNCOVERED SHIFTS: We received 14 calls/texts during uncovered shifts.

Most common weekday vacancy:

THURSDAY, 4-7pm shift

MONDAY, 10am-1pm shift

Most common weekend vacancy:

SAT & SUN, 1-4pm shift,

APRIL VOLUNTEERING NEEDS: let your home groups know.

Mondays, two shifts: 10am-1pm /4-7pm

Thursdays, three shifts: 10am-1pm/1-4pm/4-7pm

Fridays, three shifts: 10am-1pm/1-4pm/4-7pm

Sat/Sun, daytime, but especially the 1-4pm shift. (Tend to be 12 step calls)

ACTIVITIES:

Planning to do individual follow up with trained but inactive volunteers, to see what assistance may get them active.

Offered general refresher training to volunteers with the April shift sign-up, so far, no takers.

Follow up on a suggestion from last month's meeting, to attract new volunteers, by writing an article for the Bits regarding my experience as a phone volunteer. Would like to reach out to other active volunteers to tap a story or experience from answering the phones.

LDC: Mary R and Linda H

Received donations of literature from groups that are now meeting online and don't have the requirement of maintaining a library.

New Literature, M82 Alateen Just for Tonight Bookmark out now, and P95 Healing Within

Our Alcoholic Relationships coming out this fall. Guidelines G18 updated, G4 AIS Linked to LDC, S16 order form downloadable from download section on web, no new Service Manual until new panel, updated replacement pages available on web - print new and replace old – under download section on WSO web, and more.

Communications: MJ

I got a question about whether there is an app for *Courage to Change*. There is no app. But there is a Kindle version of the book and you can read it via a Kindle app on your phone. The person who asked the question was delighted by this information.

An AI-Anon member who works for a company that is generous with matches to non-profits wants to know if she can donate to AIS, WA State or WSO and include a company match. Or does the 7th Tradition where it says “declining outside contributions” preclude this kind of matching donation?
Discussion held; we are not able to accept outside donations.

Teresa H found some data from Google about how people communicate with us.

Here's the info:

Profile Views: 3032

Mobile: 2026 67%

Desktop: 883 29%

Google Maps: 123 4%

Take away: **Make our website as “mobile friendly” as we can!**

Tech: Pierre J

Looking for feedback on emails bouncing?
No complaints reported.

Investigating options for Chat feature on Website per Heather request at March meeting. Chat Bott is a fit with Squarespace but seems spendy.

Outreach: Solveig W

I responded to 5 website form requests for Newcomer Packets (acknowledged and sent them) and two email requests for meeting information.

In addition, Tom K. from D16 and I staffed an Al-Anon table at the Mukilteo School District Health Fair March 23 from 11 AM - 1 PM at Meadowdale HS, at the invitation of a Naranon Outreach person. There were 100 attendees, and we handed out several Newcomer Packets and other Al-Anon flyers in both English and Spanish. Feedback from one of the organizers after the event was that one person specifically commented afterward how grateful they were that Al-Anon was at the event.

I have not had a chance yet to look at the Seattle AIS website statistics but received access from the Web Editor. I am looking forward to understanding the web traffic in service of improving and optimizing the second year of our holiday Sound Transit advertising campaign this fall. I'd like to discuss the possibility with the Council of adding back a digital ad campaign this year with tailored keywords (if there is budget to do so).

In addition, I'm including the informative summary below forwarded by Kathleen S. (DR16) for those of you unaware of the great outreach **Zoom Newcomer Orientation** she is helping coordinate twice a month:

The Al-Anon Handshake: An Orientation for Newcomers is a co-operative multi-district outreach supported by Districts 7

(Yakima) and 16. It provides an online orientation session on the 2nd & 4th Friday of each month and will celebrate THREE years of service on April 9th.

Old Business:

Brief discussion on ASL.

New Business:

Time to start planning Ice Cream Social. 3 possible dates in August with August 18th appearing to be the best choice. Will be contacting the church to confirm openings.

The suggestion was made that we investigate having an Al-Anon Information Table at Pride Day, June 28th in Seattle as an opportunity to increase our visibility to the public. Preliminary investigation reveals a cost of \$175.00 for a table and two chairs at the event. To be discussed in detail during the May 9th Council meeting.

Seventh tradition

<https://www.seattle-al-anon.org/donationsforms>

Next Council Meeting

Next meeting will be May 9, at 7:30 PM

Next Board Meeting

April 18, 2024

Adjournment: Al-Anon Declaration

Respectfully submitted by:
Kathy K, Secretary

Thank you for your donations and your support of AIS!

Our funding now comes primarily from:

*Donations by Members, Groups, and
Districts

*Literature Sales

Please send all AIS mail, including checks for
literature orders and donations, to:

Seattle AIS

505 Broadway E #400
Seattle, WA 98102-5023

[Donate Now](#)

And More ...

MEETING SCHEDULE: registered Al-Anon groups in the Greater Seattle Area. Hybrid, Concurrent, and in-person meetings are listed. Local Alateen meetings and Global Electronic meetings are also linked.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Information on and a calendar of upcoming events is available via this link.

EVENTS

Please visit our **Member Resources** for the most up-to-date information on:

- List of AIS Officers and Coordinators
- Where to Send Donations
- District Representatives and Business Meeting Information
- AIS Financial Information

Meeting News

News from the Meeting Directory Editor

Meeting changes were received since those reported in the April BITS.

- Friday, 7:30 PM, Redmond Recovery, in person only, new meeting (4/10)
- Friday, 7:30 PM, Redmond Friday Night, Zoom only (4/10)
- Monday, 12:00 PM Monday Nooners AFG, in person only (4/18)
- Monday, 12:00 PM Monday Gratitude, Zoom only, new meeting (4/18)

Seattle Al-Anon Information Service
Meeting Directory Editor
