



# the bits newsletter

Seattle AI-Anon Information Service

[Newcomers Packet](#)

July 2020

## The 6th Annual Resentment Bonfire Scheduled for August Goes Up in Smoke by Eliza D, AIS Chair

At the June AIS Council meeting, the 6th Annual Resentment Bonfire came up for discussion. A flyer had been made in English and Spanish and posted on the AIS Events web page. A chair had not yet stood up to lead the effort. The reservation was made months ago. But, in considering the level of quarantine we are under in King County where large gatherings are not allowed, the question came up, “should it be canceled this year?” Discussion followed. Votes were cast. The Ayes have it. We will cancel the Summer Resentment Bonfire—end of discussion.



But is it the end? Some talked of staging a Virtual Resentment Bonfire, who knows where that might lead. Quite frankly, I am tired of the quarantine. I relished the idea of gathering with 40 or 50 program folks for a potluck picnic, a program of readings in English and Spanish, and the celebrated event of throwing our resentments in the fire, followed by marshmallows roasting afterward and conversation. The August event will not happen this year. We have made a reservation for next year on August 15, 2021, so mark your calendars!

Some of you might wonder how this Resentment Bonfire got started. I asked around and got the answer. Sandy L, our past special worker, had subscribed to several newsletters from across the country. She came across a notice in the newsletter from Boston that they had a Resentment Bonfire! What an interesting idea, she thought. She found out from the source that it was a fundraiser, and that they charged each member who attended \$10. It brought in \$3000 one year. Sandy L brought the idea to the AIS Council to see if there was any interest.

Dan G from Kent All Men’s AI-Anon (KAMA) immediately said, “I’m in! I’ve got a few resentments and a barrel of wood to donate!” Sandy L volunteered to bring the black markers. It started to come together.

Discovery Park had a fire pit. We could rent the shelter or a few tables. A committee was formed: Soren S, Karen T, Brian G, Dan G. AIS would provide hot dogs.

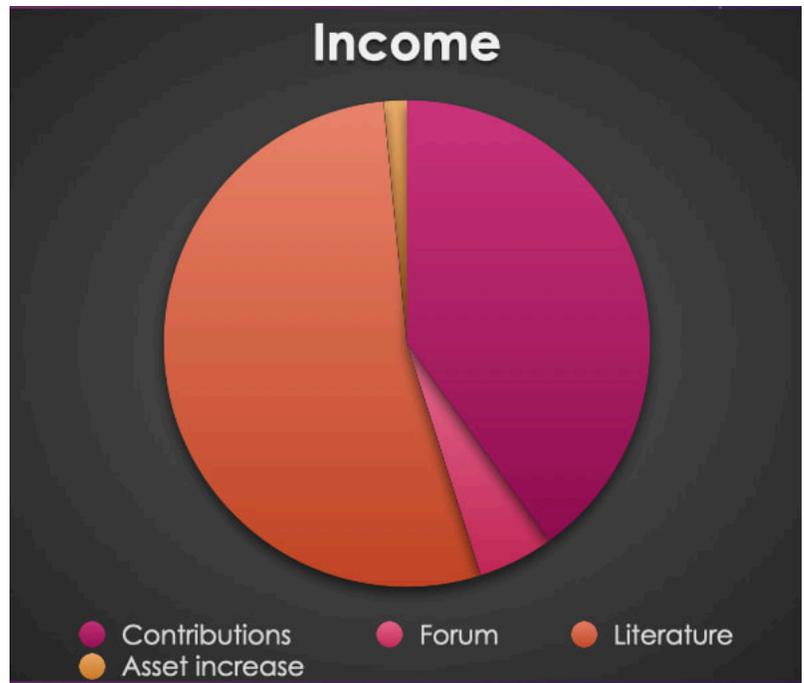
It was a hit. In the planning for the following year, someone suggested we try reaching out to include our Spanish-speaking Al-Anon members. Soon after that discussion, Charo S, Marisol, and Ferman (Marisol's husband) came into the AIS office to purchase Spanish literature. They learned about the event and wanted to help. Sandy L asked if they would help to translate the flyer. Wheels started turning, and eventually, it became a bilingual event with English and Spanish readings. Sometimes English was read first. Sometimes Spanish. It has been an event that many members in the Greater Seattle area look forward to every year. I am so glad to hear how it all started. This is truly an excellent example of how decisions are made in Al-Anon.

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## The SSA Delegate Report Summary by Teresa H

This year delegates attended the WSC (World Service Conference) via WebEx. Below are some highlights of our Delegate Kathy D's report.

- 2019 was a good year financially for WSO. Net literature sales exceeded the 2019 budget by \$64,400! Contributions exceeded the budget by \$136,643. Bequests provided additional funding of \$223,000. The prudent reserve is just shy of \$1 Million. In 2019 about 62% of Groups in the Washington (WA) Area contributed to WSO with the average amount being about \$134.



- Financially, 2020 is a different story due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our meetings. Cost-cutting measures have been implemented. That still leaves a shortfall. They are asking all Groups and members to give what they can.

- A Thought Force of Conference members has been formed to look at the “fear of change” in Al-Anon as a whole and another Thought Force to look at ways to look at service in relation to roles, terms, and possible roadblocks.

- Two chosen agenda items were selected by Conference members. The first was: “How is Al-Anon going to reach new members in the 21st century and the millennial generation? The average age of Al-Anon members is 56-60 years old. If we continue doing the same things, Al-Anon Family Groups will struggle with difficult times. So, Al-Anon needs to explore new ways to reach out to potential members.”

- The second chosen agenda item was: “Our Envisioned Future sees Al-Anon being a global organization with barrier-free access to the program; how do you see this manifesting? Today, approximately 40% of our groups exist outside the World Service Conference Structure. This does not even include electronic meetings, which are without geographical limitations. These groups and meetings are growing, while our face-to-face groups seem to be getting smaller. The creation of an actual worldwide group conscience is not only desirable but imperative. All voices must be heard. How to make Al-Anon a truly global organization is a difficult task, with

many visions.” Your thoughts on these items would be appreciated. Please send them to WA Area Delegate at [delegate@wa-al-anon.org](mailto:delegate@wa-al-anon.org).

## **OTHER SEGMENTS of SSA**

### Outreach Workshop

• District 26 gave a presentation of their Outreach program. It includes Outreach Kits and education for those doing the outreach, which members have requested. For more information, please contact WA Area Public Outreach Coordinator at [outreach@wa-al-anon.org](mailto:outreach@wa-al-anon.org).

### District Rep and Group Rep Handbooks

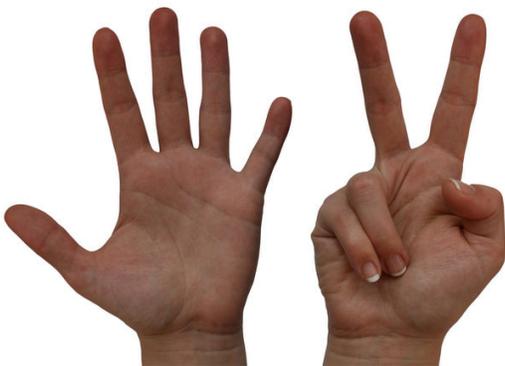
• A couple committees were formed to create “cheat sheets” about being a GR and DR for members in WA Area. They are a summary of what is included in the Service Manual and the WA Area Handbook only with less detail and more graphics. If you are a GR, you are encouraged to email your DR for a copy.

### How to Initiate a Motion for Vote at WA Area and Beyond

• Motions can start at the group level, district level or with a random group of Al-Anon members. The motion along with the supporting KBDM (Knowledge-Based Decision Making) component are sent to the WA Area chair for inclusion at an AWSC (Area World Service Committee) which is a meeting of all the WA Area Officers, Coordinators, and District Reps. If the topic is deemed ready for discussion by AWSC, it is put on the agenda for the next Area Assembly. At Assembly, each group in WA Area has one vote. A representative from the Group must be present to vote since the motions are discussed at the Assembly in a group conscience process prior to voting.

## **Step Seven**

**Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**



## **How to List Your Zoom Meeting on the WA Area Website** by Eric G

Browse on over to the Washington (WA) Area Al-Anon [website](https://www.wa-al-anon.org) [https://www.wa-al-anon.org], and you’ll find many meetings listed under their MEETINGS tab. But if you click under the tab “ONLINE MEETINGS”, you’ll find only one Seattle meeting listed so far. (Congrats to the Queen Anne Midday AFG, you win the virtual door prize!)

Since we’ve been coming to electronic meetings for a few months now, and will for the foreseeable future, I thought it would be wise to pass along an easy-to-follow video tutorial that was made by the WA Area help groups list their meetings on the state-level page. It’s surprisingly easy, and I include the link [HERE](https://wa-al-anon.org/virtual-meeting-setup) [https://wa-al-anon.org/virtual-meeting-setup].

Please list your meeting if you are in charge of your group (\*cough\* \*cough\* Group Rep \*cough\*) or talk to your GR if you want to take this on.

## Electronic Meeting Reactions, Part Four

by Eric G

I don't think anyone thought we wouldn't be having in-person meetings this long. I remember when the previous Communications Coordinator invited me to this newsletter editor job in March, and we both felt it would be a month or two before we go back to "normal." Now it's June, and who knows how much longer these interviews will go on. I'm sorry to put you through even more misery by reading these, haha, just trying to have some fun. Thank you for allowing me to continue to write them. Enjoy.



**So it has been scientifically proven that if you see someone yawn in person, you are also likely to yawn yourself. Yet during meetings, I hardly ever see it happen. Why do you think that is?**

**Emily S:** I know what you mean. I think there must be something lost in the digital aspect of seeing a yawn on a screen vs. seeing one in person.

**Josh S:** My home group is 100+, and I usually have the screen on speaker view, so I guess that most people don't see the person who yawns 😊.

**Dave L:** I think people don't yawn mostly because we are interested in what people are talking about. If we are tired, we stifle our yawns because we are so polite, you know.

**What would be the ideal location for you to be at during a Zoom meeting?**

**Emily S:** I'd love to experience Zoom meetings in a variety of ways. One time I'd like to be on a deserted island and have some sense of peace and focus. Another time I'd love to experience a meeting during a stressful event, like at a protest, and see if I can retain some peace. Each meeting I want to try somewhere new but I always settle for my room.

**Josh S:** My back patio on a beautiful day.

**Dave L:** Outside in the sun sounds good.

**Say you were a doctor working on a cure for alcoholism. How would you balance your drive for finding a cure and the "cure" of the three Cs of Al-Anon?**

**Emily S:** I couldn't.

**Josh S:** Surrender to HP's Will.

**Dave L:** I'd have to separate the medical cure from the Three Cs. The first has to do with science and is about the world around us at large. The second has to do with emotions and is about the person inside.

**Are there any features on Zoom that don't exist that you wish would?**

**Emily S:** I wish the glare on my glasses would go away. Fix that, please.

**Josh S:** When I'm host or co-host, I lose the ability to use the 'raise hand' feature, which makes no sense. I'd love to talk to the person at Zoom who decided that it would be good to understand why.

**Dave L:** I wish the sounds from all the different microphones could be delivered simultaneously, so there wouldn't be such confusion communicating.

## AIS Council Meeting

Thursday, July 9th, 730p - 9p

### Electronic Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting:

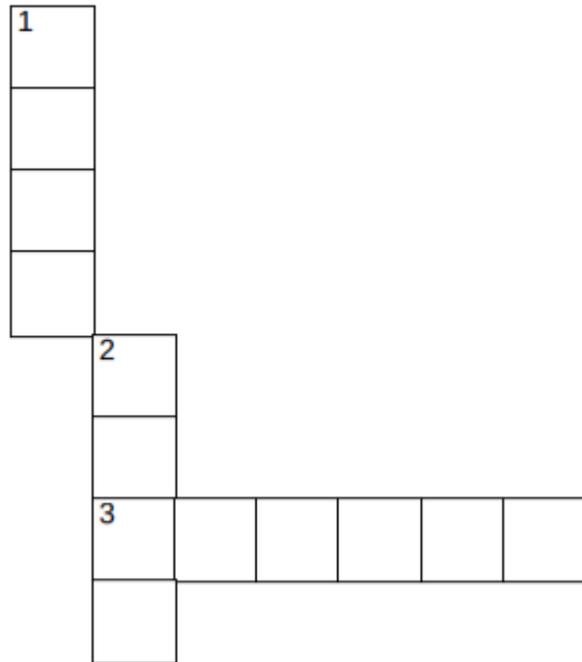
[Click Here](#)

Meeting ID: 839 6957 0120

Password: 001086

The AIS Council Meeting is the business meeting for the Greater Seattle Al-Anon Information Service. Each Group has a vote and is encouraged to send a representative. All Al-Anon members are invited to attend.

## Al-Anon Slogan Crossword



### Across

3. 1988 Eddie Murphy movie "\_\_\_\_\_ to America"

### Down

1. I'm sorry to \_\_\_\_\_ you waiting

2. A call\_\_\_\_\_ is when a comedian recalls a joke or punchline they used previously in their set

**Greater Seattle AIS is looking for volunteers to help us with Spanish translation on the AIS website. If you are willing to help, please contact [communications@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:communications@seattle-al-anon.org)**



## How It Works for Me

by Allen L

The older I get, the more I think that while living a lot of years may not have made me wiser, it has given me perspective. Some events in my life that seemed precisely to be what I wanted to be turned out badly, while at other times things I didn't wish to turn out well.

I was raised by parents who married in the middle of the Great Depression and remembered rationing during WWII. Having overcome enormous challenges, they taught me to suck it up and keep working toward my goals. The Army of the 1960s taught me to "drive on." I learned to think of my issues as "no big deal," stuff it and get the job done.

An Al-Anon member shared an idea in a meeting, "if it's a big problem in my head, then it's a BIG PROBLEM!"

That simple statement made me take a second look at my past practice of minimizing my issues. I started asking myself if I would take this issue seriously if a family member or program friend came to me with that same issue for help or support. Would I tell them, "that's no big deal, just ignore your feelings and move on?" Would I treat it with respect as an issue that needed a friendly ear and perhaps some program insight? If I would support someone else's need to share and their desire for a little program help, why wouldn't I treat what is going on in my head with the same respect and consideration?

If it's a big problem in my head, then it's a big enough problem to share with my sponsor, with program friends, and in a meeting. By sharing my issues or calling a topic meeting, I can access a wealth of ideas that I would otherwise miss.

Ever so slowly, I am learning to give my feelings the same respect that I grant my friends and family members feelings.



# Seattle Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Is Looking for Help

## DO YOU ENJOY TALKING ON THE PHONE OR SLEEPING ON THE JOB?

Early birds, night owls, those at home, or those on the go...

## PLEASE CONSIDER SERVING AS AN AIS PHONE VOLUNTEER

You can work from your home or while you are out and about.

Shifts are available 7 days a week in 3-hour intervals starting at 7am during the day, and at night there is one shift starting at 10:30pm, which goes until 7am.

The focus is to answer questions about Al-Anon and Alateen's meeting times and Zoom availability, to give hope to people whose lives may be affected by someone else's drinking and to help others reach the appropriate source of help.

A manual is provided with resource numbers and helpful suggestions on maintaining anonymity and talking to people in distress.

Phone volunteers are a resource for information. Support is there for phone volunteers. We have 12-Step volunteers who make their number available to return calls to callers seeking a more detailed conversation.

## FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

[phones@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:phones@seattle-al-anon.org)



Out of the  
Toolbox  
by BITS Columnist Callie D.

## The Daily Art of “Let Go and Let God”



It feels like I have had my share of challenges, and they don't seem to come solo. They usually come in an overlapping string of unfortunate events! For instance, in the last couple of months, I have had three different things wrong with my car, one after the other! One of the issues diagnosed at the first shop was an expensive brake system problem, and they didn't work on my kind of car! I was so stressed out as I had just paid to have the keys replaced for the second time in a year! I took a long walk on a trail, prayed for God's intervention, and let my car and other pending issues “go” into God's capable hands.

I tend to think in practical terms and sometimes limit the resourcefulness and expanse of my Higher Power's power! A fellow traveler had recommended a trustworthy shop, and the owner took the car in back as I waited for my ride. Before we were out of the parking lot, I was urged to take my car around the block to see what I think. I got in and started around the first turn, and the brakes were back to normal! I was so relieved that I burst out crying and I couldn't stop! It was just a cap off of a vacuum hose and no charge! I thanked the mechanics through a torrent of "happy tears."

In a previous article, I might have mentioned that my computer crashed and corrupted all my documents, in addition to my passwords on all my accounts. I also apparently got scammed on the purchase of a replacement writing program, which did further damage. There was no doubt I needed a new laptop, but I was already bleeding money with car issues and vet bills! Once again, I took to another prayer session as I was pretty distraught and felt like I couldn't handle it anymore. I tend to feel responsible for more than my part, and it can be quite a struggle for me to "Let Go and Let God."

Someone close to me was witnessing my strife. The person handed me the cash to purchase a new computer! I was shocked and filled with gratitude. I never imagined how HP planned to meet my needs. It wasn't up to me to figure it all out and carry that stress into a sleepless night. These were issues with material "things," but the real grappling starts in letting go of people I care deeply about who are adversely affected by alcohol. The hard-wrought gift of release is serenity.

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## Tradition Seven

**Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**



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## HEAR is Back!

by Allen L

The H.E.A.R. (Hope, Experience, & Acceptance in Recovery) Meeting is an Al-Anon speaker meeting with AA participation. Before the pandemic lock down, the meeting was held on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 7:30 pm. With the arrival of COVID-19, the HEAR meeting, like all meetings, was shut down for the duration.

I didn't realize how important the HEAR meeting had become to me. The attraction for me was the variety of Al-Anon and AA speakers from all over Puget Sound. I get to hear AA stories that I would never hear since except for special events, I don't often attend AA meetings. I also get to hear Al-Anon stories that I would miss because the speaker's home meeting is too far away for me to attend conveniently.

In regular meetings, I only hear a small part of someone's story because they only have 3 to 5 minutes to share. With about half an hour at the HEAR meeting, I get a complete picture of their journey and their program. I very often get a fresh perspective on how I might expand my program.

Fellowship is a central element of my recovery, and I see people at the HEAR meeting that I only see that one time a month. I also have the added benefit of making new friends outside my immediate circle and discovering that the broader community reinforces that I am not alone, weird, or strange. I'm just like everyone else, struggling through the same life challenges.

The HEAR meeting is reopening as an on-line (Zoom) meeting on Saturday, July 18, and is open to all Al-Anon, AA, friends/family, and all other interested people. You can find the flyer attached [here](#).

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## How long have online meetings existed?

According to the current [Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual](#) (p. 27), "In 2001, the WSO started registering on-line meetings, and in 2007 phone and other electronic meetings."

If any reader has ever been to an online Al-Anon meeting before 2020, please contact me at [newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org)



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### Literature Review: *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (current edition) by Eric G

I felt so lost reading the 1967 edition of *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* that it quickly became a book of what NOT to do, how NOT to think because of its backward views of gender. But with the 1971 version, Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG) ironed out a lot of kinks. The current version is basically the 1971 version, reprinted in 1991 as a paperback. Gone is the entire back section that gave women "Checklists to Review Once in a While," thankfully. The entire length of the book expands from 65 pages to 99. I learned from this edition.

## The book cover features a solid green background. The title 'THE DILEMMA OF THE ALCOHOLIC MARRIAGE' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. The word 'DILEMMA' is highlighted in red. At the bottom, there is a small white triangle logo followed by the text 'AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS®' and 'hope for families &amp; friends of alcoholics' in a smaller white font.

For starters, I learned about communication, and "Do you say what you mean? Do you mean what you say?" (1991, p. 15). The author writes, "Not letting them [the alcoholic] know how we feel is dishonest. It's just another way of pretending we accept the situation when we don't" (pp. 15-17). This hit close to home for me, as all my attempts to smooth things out with the alcoholic in my life often meant ignoring what bothered me in favor of not upsetting them because they might drink even more. My imagined future happiness was at stake, I

thought. Communicating is a two-way street, and I like how the authors addressed this.

One section of this book titled “Whose Fault Is It?” (1991, p. 53) also resonated with me. It addresses areas that I went through.

1. Doubt that the drinker will stay sober (me: very hard to trust after all the broken promises)
2. Not letting the alcoholic have control over you (me: this one should be #1)
3. Punishing them for the pain they have caused you (me: a failed attempt to get “even”)
4. Martyring yourself (me: as I tried to make myself feel better)
5. Demand something they keep asking for (me: which in various forms does work but feel manipulative)

At the end of this book, the steps are broadened to include thoughts and questions to help the reader gain an understanding of themselves and what might be happening in their lives. I found these helpful, as they act as a guide for anyone, especially 1971 newcomers. For instance, for Step Four, the following questions include “Knowing that no one is perfect, can I concede that I am not perfect either?” and “Do I understand the healing relief of honest acknowledgment of faults?” (1991, p. 84).

I like this current edition better after reading the 1967 edition. Before I read the older edition, this book always seemed outdated and inadequate for me. But seeing the history of this book change and the progress it made, I appreciate it more. It still holds gender ideals that are not suited for present-day use as a whole. I felt like it assumed men are the drinkers, and women are not, even though it updated the pronouns. It's worth a read, once in your lifetime.

This edition can be purchased at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).



## Yes, You Can Read Al-Anon Literature on Your Computer (or Phone)

Are you stuck at home, and need something to read? Conference Approved Literature is available for purchase in paper, audiobook, and e-book formats. Also check out the free downloads! Please consider purchasing through [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) to further support our organization during this time.

**The AIS Literature Distribution Center remains closed at this time. An announcement will be emailed once it has re-opened.**

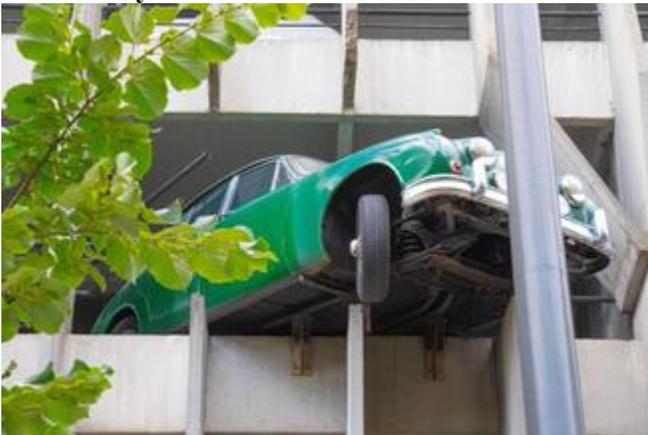
# Concept Seven

The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.



## Al-Anon Joke of the Month

Have you seen the Al-Anon handshake?



**Answer:** (Shakes finger disapprovingly at other person)

Do you have a funny Al-Anon joke? Please send it along to [newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org)

## AIS Needs You!

### Current Service Opportunities

- \*Events Editor\*
- \*Archivist Coordinator\*
- \*Tech Co-Coordinator\*
- \*Office Volunteers\*
- \*Phone Volunteers\*

If you are interested in a particular area of service, please contact [chair@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:chair@seattle-al-anon.org)

## Would You Like to Write for the Newsletter?

(Pen Names Accepted)

Let us know at [newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:newslettereditor@seattle-al-anon.org)



# An Ode to Ft. Worden

by Allen L

The 39th annual Ft. Worden Men's weekend hosted by the Kent All Men's Al-Anon (KAMA) was forced to cancel because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many attendees "keep coming back" year after year, so they must be getting something valuable from the weekend. I took the time to check, and I have attended 13 times over my 22 years in Al-Anon. I only missed attending when jobs took me out of the area, and I couldn't take the time to travel back.

There is enormous social pressure on me and all men to appear "strong." I don't often talk about some of my life issues, even in the privacy of an Al-Anon meeting. Even subjects that I will only speak about one-on-one with my sponsor, I find I can share at Ft. Worden. Speaking in a more public place about these hidden issues allows me to confront things that I haven't been able to face up to anywhere else.

I attend other weekly meetings with many of the "Ft. Worden regulars." The week before the now-cancelled weekend, a number of them shared that they felt restless, irritated, and discontent because they would normally be packing to head out for the weekend. I share their feelings of loss at not being able to put aside my daily thoughts and focus on renewing old friendships and getting a fresh perspective from listening to people I only see this one time a year.

While all of us are trying to practice accepting this thing we cannot change, I still feel a sense of grief at the break in the chain of 38 consecutive years of recovery. Another member reminded me that the virtual meeting allows members from outside the Puget Sound area to attend the Friday Night Kent All Men's Al-Anon meeting who are learning about the weekend and are expressing an interest in attending next year.

Perhaps the silver lining to this gray cloud will be new attendees with a fresh perspective on recovery from which I can learn.

I extend an invitation to the men of Al-Anon to consider joining us in 2021. KAMA has reserved the weekend of June 11-13, 2021, to restart our annual event. The event flyer is generally on the Seattle AIS website events calendar by the March before the event with the cost, event reservation form, and contact information.



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## June 2020 AIS Council Meeting Summary

by Roxanne T

**Secretary's Report:** Roxanne T read the May minutes. Josh S moved to approve the minutes, and Mickey K seconded. The group approved the minutes unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Linda H gave an overview of the current financial status. We are currently in the black and are receiving donations greater than our monthly expenses. We are continuing to make a \$25 monthly donation to the church for our space.

**Outreach Coordinator Position:** Eliza D has talked with our Outreach Coordinator, who has been unable to attend our meetings. She is considering if she can continue in the position and will notify Eliza D in the next week.

**Spanish Translation on the AIS Website:** Eliza D asked about translating the BITS into Spanish to better serve our Spanish-speaking members. The group discussed the possibility of having this work done by a paid contractor. Doug L said he and Julie R were contacted by a member of a Spanish-speaking group. They will work with her to better understand their needs and make the website more user friendly for Spanish-speaking members.

**Communication Coordinator's Report:** Cheré F shared a new page on the AIS website for newcomers to AI-Anon. The Electronic Events page is being updated daily, and the Events calendar is also being updated. The Members' page will be getting some changes soon. Eric G has done a phenomenal job on the BITS newsletter, and Cheré F had only one request for a print version of the BITS.

**Resentment Bonfire:** Eliza D asked if we had a volunteer to coordinate the Resentment Bonfire. There was a group discussion about cancelling the event or holding a virtual event via Zoom due to the current pandemic. Linda H moved that we do not hold an in-person Resentment Bonfire, and we explore having a virtual Resentment Bonfire. Helen V seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. Roxanne T will contact the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department to see if we can get a refund.

**Future AIS Council Meetings:** We discussed whether we should continue using Zoom for AIS Council meetings once the restrictions on large gatherings are ended. There was a general feeling that Zoom is convenient, but it would be good to have occasional in-person meetings. We agreed to continue to use Zoom for our meetings and discuss potential changes later in the year.

**LDC Co-Coordinator's Report:** Doug L reported that he and Julie R are trying to figure out how to start selling literature again safely following the State safety guidelines. They will continue having discussions and will keep us informed.

**Phone Volunteers Coordinator's Report:** Helen V reported on the phones. She is holding a Zoom "Tea" with the volunteers for training and sharing.

**Attendance:** 18 members were present.

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## Thank you for your donations and for 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:

505 Broadway E #400  
Seattle, WA 98102-5023

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## And More...

Please visit our [Members](#) page 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
- [2020 Calendar of Events](#)