



# the bits newsletter

Seattle Al-Anon Information Service

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June 2023

## Tradition 4 / Hexagon

by Michael G

“Nobody likes being bossed around. Also, it doesn’t work.”

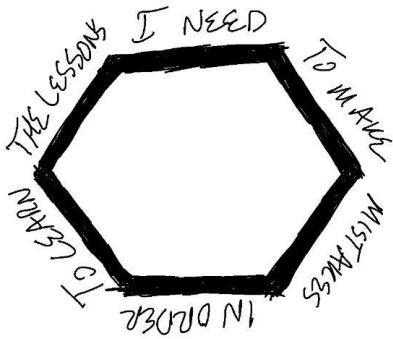
Al-Anon’s Legacies give me perspective on the family disease of alcoholism, and they serve as a guide to living a healthier life. It may come as no surprise: Addicts, alcoholics, and Al-Anoner’s all can be stubborn at times. Interestingly, the compulsion to control is not exclusively an Al-Anon trait. Other programs talk about the often-disastrous consequences of trying to enact and enforce rules and regulations in their groups, and Tradition Four likewise helps them to accept mistakes as part of the process of recovery.

My membership in Al-Anon does not exclude me from those descriptors. I’m often stubborn, defying outside influence even from my fellows in recovery. At an early age, I took on the family tradition of finding fault in and trying to control others. In my early recovery, the two most difficult words in Step Four were, “... of ourselves.” My serenity is

dependent on me minding my own affairs, working my own program, taking my own inventory, and learning from my mistakes. Every attempt to manage, direct, or correct someone is a step backwards toward unmanageability. Tradition Four encourages me to practice autonomy while allowing others to find their own path.

Lately I’ve struggled with the idea of mistakes. I notice feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety around past and future mistakes. Why? Because at a very early age, I learned that I would be criticized for every small mistake I made. In the hopes I could make myself immune to criticism, I tried to be perfect. (This did not work.) My perfectionism is a defect of character that has kept me stuck, not safe, and perpetuates those toxic emotions of anxiety and shame. The simple fact is this: The only way I’ll continue to learn and grow is by making mistakes.

A similar phrase got stuck in my head and I repeated it like a mantra. I repeated these words so many times I couldn’t remember their order. I began to notice there was a pattern to the words and the message was intact no matter where I started. The words fit nicely around a hexagon, and I could visualize this shape spinning like a prayer wheel with no beginning or end.



By Michael G

- I need to make mistakes in order to learn the lessons I need.
- Make mistakes? In order to learn the lessons, I need to.
- Mistakes: In order to learn the lessons, I need to make mistakes.
- In order to learn the lessons, I need to make mistakes in order.
- To learn the lessons? I need to make mistakes in order to learn.
- The Lessons: I need to make mistakes in order to learn the lessons.

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## Ready and Willing

by Clif H

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

By the time I got to Step 6 many of my defects had become clear. What was even more clear was that I have a higher power that loves me and supports me. Am I ready though? Entirely ready?

I had struggled with the part of the phrase “all” these defects. However, someone once described the actual removal like the old Johnny Cash song, One Piece at a Time. It’s not like poof, all the defects are gone. It’s a slow process, pushing aside a defect here and a defect there. With practice, persistence, and

patience I get better at leaving the defects with God and not pulling them back out of the bag of tricks at inappropriate times.

Throughout my efforts to work this, and the prior steps, it came to me that each step had a component of effort for me and an effort for my higher power. In this step, his effort was somewhat easy. All he had to do was to help me understand that I was ‘ready.’ While reflecting on my readiness, his message was clear to me: ‘Get on with it. Take the next step, do what it takes to make myself a better person tomorrow.’ That’s when I knew, I was ready.

I was entirely ready! I had sufficient recovery to understand that I could continue my recovery by diligently working this and further steps. I knew I was ready to lay my plate, bucket, or backpack of identified defects before God and begin the discussion with him about my desire to have them removed. A key word here is identified. There was no doubt in my mind that my list, though significant, was not a complete list. Surely there would be more identified over time. This was a great time to remind myself that this is a Program of progress not perfection. My role, my responsibility to myself, was to address those defects which I had been studying.

As other defects become visible to me, I can treat them with the same care I treated the initial set of defects.




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# Friends



by Allen L

I saw a story the other day about a man who slaughtered a cow and started to barbecue it. He told his daughter to tell the neighbors and friends to come eat.

The daughter instead ran down the streets yelling "FIRE at our house".

Some friends and neighbors came, some ignored the cry. Those who came feasted, while the others missed out.

The father asked where some of the missing friends were and the daughter explained what she had done.

The moral of the story of course is that true friends show up when I need help. Sometimes I haven't recognized who those true friends are until I needed help.

When I go to my Al-Anon meeting, I both need help and give it.

When I have experience, I give it, when I don't have experience, you give me yours.  
When I have strength I give it, when I don't have strength, someone shows me theirs.  
When I have hope I share it, when I don't have any hope others share with me.

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## Order the Forum Magazine



Al-Anon's monthly magazine features timely sharings 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](mailto:meetingdirectoryeditor@seattle-al-anon.org)

### **KENT ALL MEN'S AL-ANON FORT WORDEN WEEKEND**

**June 2 - 4, 2023**

Arrival: Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Departure: Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon

The 40th Annual K.A.M.A. Fort Worden Weekend is packed with remarkable meetings, lasting fellowship, spiritual growth and recovery that goes on and on and on.....



With all that there is still time for games, music, good food and yes, the Saturday night bonfire.

An experience not to be missed and then made a tradition!

Set aside the first weekend in June and join us!





**"WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP, LET THE HAND OF AL-ANON AND ALATEEN ALWAYS BE THERE"**

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity to serve, two Zoom training classes will be held in May and June. Class focus will be on explaining how system works and answering questions potential volunteers may have.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT THE SEATTLE AIS PHONE SERVICE IS STAFFED BY A CREW OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS WHO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH THE PEOPLE THAT CALL IN ASKING FOR HELP AND INFORMATION? WHEN VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, THE SYSTEM ALLOWS PEOPLE TO LEAVE A VOICE MAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE AND THE NEXT VOLUNTEER ON SHIFT CONTACTS THE PEOPLE CALLERS ARE AMAZED WHEN A REAL PERSON ANSWERS THE PHONE AND ASKS, "HOW MAY I HELP YOU?" WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN ON A REGULAR BASIS.**

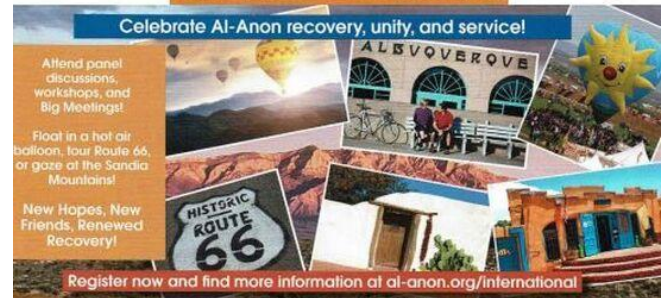
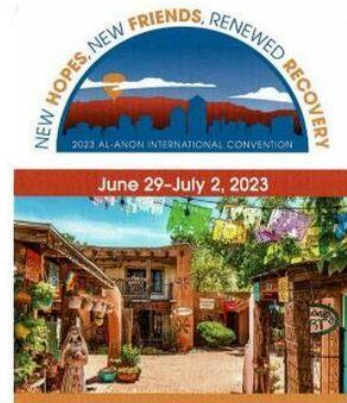
**ZOOM TRAINING:**

May 25, 2023 7:00 – 8:00 pm  
Meeting ID: 889 8262 4513  
Password: 228966

June 6, 2023 7:00 – 8:00 pm  
Meeting ID: 889 8262 4513  
Password: 228966



*Let it Begin with Me!*



**North End Men's Meeting AFG**

St. David Emmanuel Episcopal Church  
18842 Meridian Ave. N.  
Shoreline, WA 98133



**Annual Gratitude Dinner and Speaker Meeting**

**Tuesday June 13, 2023**

**6 PM to 8:30 PM**

**Come and help us *celebrate!*  
Family and friends are all welcome!**

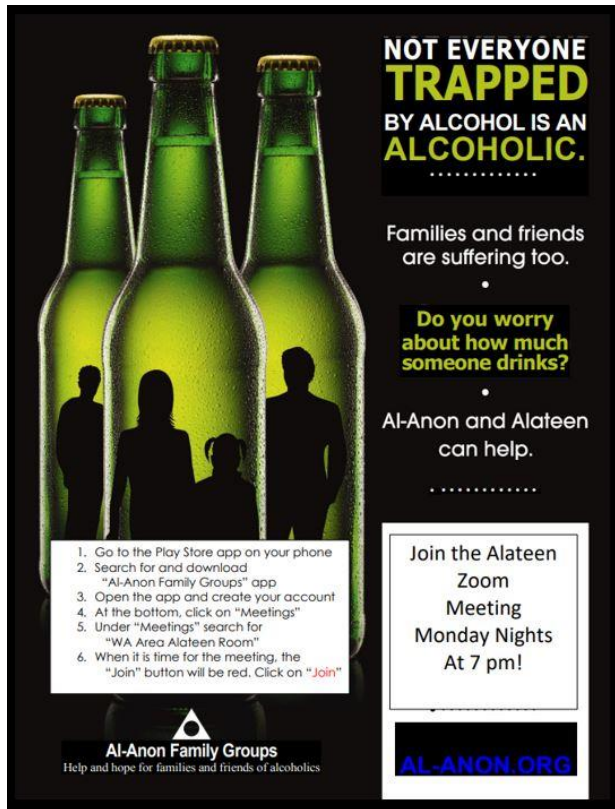
Dinner is potluck and starts at 6PM.

Following dinner, members of our Al-Anon Family Group will share their stories!

**Step Six**

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.





**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

# Learning from Al-Anon's Example to Grow at My Own Speed

Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA

Page 387 of Many Voices, One Journey (B-31) states, "Al-Anon as we know it today was not born whole and complete. It developed gradually and took shape over many years." This idea and the numerous examples shown throughout our history have given me great comfort and hope in my personal recovery.

Growing up in the rigidity of the family disease of alcoholism, I felt that whatever I did had to be perfect—even if I was doing it for the first time. Because my first attempts at anything—whether completing a homework assignment, playing a game, or learning to be a friend—were always tentative and often flawed, I assumed I was doomed to be a failure.

When I joined Al-Anon, I learned that few worthwhile things ever happen instantly. I stopped letting unrealistic expectations—whether my own or those of others—sap me of motive and esteem. Learning about the development of the Al-Anon Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps gave me a concrete example of gradual improvement that helped me change my attitude. I had always assumed that the Preamble, that inspiring description of our program often read at the beginning of our meetings, had been there from the start. Discovering that,



## WANTED

### Phone Volunteers



**Requirements:**

- > Desire to help others
- > Limited cell phone and internet savvy

**Benefits:**

- > Satisfaction from helping others
- > On the job training
- > Flexible hours

To Volunteer or get more information please send an email to [phones@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:phones@seattle-al-anon.org) or call 206-625-0000 and leave your contact information.



like me, it started small but underwent numerous changes along the way has inspired my personal search for “Progress Not Perfection.”

According to page 63 of *Many Voices*, a suggestion from the Vancouver Al-Anon group in 1953 encouraged our Cofounders, Lois W. and Anne B., to develop a Proposed Welcome and a Proposed Preamble to the Twelve Steps. In that first version, the only words the Preamble had in common with today’s version were “relatives and friends of alcoholics.” Instead, most of it ended up in what is now the Suggested Welcome. (See page 64 of *Many Voices* for the original wording.)

The Preamble and the Welcome were completely revised in 1964, coming much closer to what each contains today, with only small differences, including a sentence in the Preamble that stated, “The only requirement for membership is that there be a relative or friend with a drinking problem.” This version can be found in the Appendix on page 155 of *The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition (B-5)*.

In 1973, what was by then referred to as the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps was revised one more time. These words have become such a standard description of our program that in 1985, the World Service Conference carried a motion “that the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps be included on the copyright page of all Conference Approved Literature as a statement of purpose.” In 2004, due to limited space on some copyright pages, the Motion was reconsidered and amended so that the Preamble appears in every piece of CAL, “preferably on the copyright page.”

The Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps has kept its current wording for the last

50 years. I am so grateful for the lesson I’ve learned from it: that growth does not have to happen all at once and is worth the wait.

By Tom C., Associate Director—Literature  
The Forum, May 2023

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## Tradition Six

Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.





## Horas de Aperatura de Seattle AIS

El Primer SÁBADO del Mes

**11 AM - 3 PM**

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.

*No se requiere cubrebocas*

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




## AIS Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is Thursday, June 8th, 2023, 7:30-9:00 pm. Click the AIS website *2023 Calendar* link on the *Events* page (<https://www.seattle-al-anon.org/events>) for the zoom information.

## Concept Six

The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.




## Seattle AIS Office Hours

First SATURDAYS of Every Month

**11 AM - 3 PM**

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!*

*Masks OPTIONAL*

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 send an email to [outreach@seattle-al-anon.org](mailto:outreach@seattle-al-anon.org) with the name and mailing address.



# Out of the Toolbox

by BITS Columnist Callie D.

## Loving Someone from a Distance (Part One)



Living within a household dominated by alcoholism, I have had many disturbing experiences. When the alcoholic is home, it is like there is this “static” in the atmosphere. I never know when they might thunder or if lightning is going to suddenly strike, seemingly out of nowhere.

I have done the “definition of crazy,” and kept trying to connect with the alcoholic, even though I was getting zapped about three quarters of the time! I so wanted to have a good outcome with communication and be close to my loved one! Even conscientious notes were often misconstrued. However, I have learned the hard way about the negative traits alcoholism tends to ignite in a person. I have had enough “shock treatment” to fly over the cuckoo’s nest to be willing to try a new flight pattern!

Sadly, the more time I am around the alcoholic’s disordered behavior...the less I can be my authentic self. I end up monitoring what I say or do in front of them, trying to avoid their sharp tongue. I find myself compulsively checking if a window is shut or a light turned off, because I have been routinely castigated, as if I were an irresponsible child.

After 5 years of having my life eclipsed by the devastating impact of alcoholism, I am finally learning to “focus on myself.” It hasn’t been easy to redirect my ingrained “rescuing” and “fawning” behaviors. The alcoholic tends to demand my compliance and lashes out with verbal abuse when I express a reasonable boundary.

In my experience, it is essential to get away from the house, and have “mini retreats” from a few hours to a few days. I revel in prayer within the healing cathedral of nature. It is an opportunity to process the dysregulated atmosphere I have been exposed to, and find the footing back into my own life. My sanity and serenity are slowly restored.

After traveling and being away for a few days, I took the “long way home,” meandering through beautiful scenic routes. I happened upon a small town, and found a tiny park with a much-needed restroom. I noticed a touring bicycle equipped with camping gear. Then a man appeared clad in Lycra, and we began a deep conversation that proved to be destiny.

As it turned out, he was a fellow traveler, in more ways than one. I found myself sharing about my personal journey living with an alcoholic. I spoke of the pain and heartache of trying to navigate the dysfunctional relationship. He spoke one sentence that became a catalyst to a new perspective; “It sounds like you need to love them from a distance.”

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# May 2023 AIS Council Meeting Minutes (Summary, not yet approved)

**Meeting Opened** at 7:30 PM with the Serenity Prayer

**Attendance:** 24 individuals

**Introductions:** all

**Readings:** Concept 5 by Heather R

**Secretary:** Kathy K: April meeting minutes were approved.

**Chair:** Karen L:

April Board Meeting:

The board discussed our financials and where we are YTD. The point was made that literature sales do not generate a lot of money for AIS but we sell literature as a service to our members both in our districts and beyond. Our primary revenue is donations from groups and members.

May 15 event "AIS What It Is and What It Is Not"

The event will discuss what AIS does and doesn't do as per title. It will focus on how we make policy and operational decisions.

Summer Seminar Assembly (SSA) Workshop on AIS May 19<sup>th</sup>.

We have been asked by the Area chair to do a workshop on AIS which Gary H. has volunteered to lead.

Treasurer: Gary H: Seattle AIS remains financially stable.

Vice Chair Report: Dave M: Office report: Has been open for 4 months. Last month we had \$60.00 in sales. The curbside pickup worked well. Another volunteer has been partially trained. The next opening will be 6/3/23.

**Coordinators:**

**LDC:** Mary R. LDC is doing well and selling lots of literature. A shipping volunteer is still needed to work on Thur. for 2-3 hours per month in the time frame the volunteer chooses. Groups are ordering on line.

**Communications:** Jackie T: A Meeting Directory Editor is needed urgently. We still have a temporary

editor but need a permanent replacement. The volunteer needs to know how to format tables and use Word. The position takes about 15-30 minutes a week. There is info in the May BITS about this position. Meeting changes must be made on the WA Area website. Do not send them directly to AIS or WSO. AIS will automatically receive notification of the change. Articles for the BITS are due by the 20th of the month. With prior arrangement, the editor may occasionally accept submissions as late as the 25th.

**Outreach:** Solveig W: She has had a slow month in requests for information via email and newcomer packets. AIS has been asked to participate with an information table in a resource center counseling and referral service located in Milton WA on June 3. This has not been confirmed as of yet.

**Phones:** Dave M (outgoing Coordinator): Total number of volunteers :14, 64% of shifts are covered with 62 calls and 26 needed assistance. We have coverage from 9 AM-5PM every day. They are getting more voice mails and texts.

**Tech:** Pierre J: The computers have been upgraded to Windows 11 in the office. It should be transparent and all is working well.

**Old Business:**

Need a phone coordinator, Need Meeting Directory Editor, Need shipping volunteers in LDC

**New Business:** August Garden Party- All Pilgrims Church is available 8/20/23 or 8/27/23 and group vote was decided to pick 8/20/23 by show of hands. Need Chair and sub-committee leads. Linda H volunteered to do purchasing. Mary will do literature sales. This could be a group activity as well. Request to add "Ice cream" to name.

**Next Council Meeting:** Thursday, June 8th, 2023 from 7:30-9:00 PM

**Next Board Meeting:** Thursday, July 20th, 2023 at 7:00PM

**Adjournment:** AI-Anon/Alateen Declaration at 8:41 PM

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.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

Please visit our **Members** section 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](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

## Meeting News

### News from the Meeting Directory Editor

When submitting log in and passcode information to WA Area, please include the URL for your meeting. That allows us to link the "Zoom Meeting" text in your listing so attendees can click that link to enter directly.

Please consider volunteering to serve as the Meeting Directory Editor. Information about the position can be found in the May issue.

Again this past month, there were very few meeting changes. So if you see a date at the top of the Meeting Directory that is a week or two old, please don't assume that our schedule is not up to date. All changes are usually made within a couple days of their submission to WA Area via the form on their site. AIS is immediately notified when you submit the change to WA Area.

The following changes were made from April 24 through May 21.

- Friday, 7:00 AM, **Hope for Today AFG**, Removed Need to Request Zoom Log In Info {5/5}
- Wednesday, 7:00 PM, **Edmonds Alateen Serenity for Youth (EASY)**, Now Meeting Weekly {5/5}
- Monday, 7:00 PM, **Boundaries Not Walls Women's AFG**, Rejoined WA Area & District 20 {5/9}
- Thursday, 3:30 PM, **Sammamish Plateau Alateen**, Meeting Closed {5/17}
- Thursday, 7:30 PM, **Eastside Parents AFG**, New Zoom Log In {5/21}
- Saturday, 10:30 AM, **First Things First Women's AFG**, NEW MEETING {5/21}}