

# HERE'S HOW

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CELEBRATE WITH US  
ALL CHICAGO OPEN-SEPTEMBER II

## *The History of the All Chicago Open*

The All-Chicago Open is held annually near the September anniversary date of the first AA meeting in the Chicago area in 1939. It is a successor to special anniversary meetings organized by the Chicago Metropolitan Group at its downtown Tuesday night meeting location.

At that time, early members of the Chicago Group organized special programs to celebrate our anniversary. At our fourth year anniversary meeting, in 1943, Judge John T. gave a talk that was later condensed into the pamphlet "God's Instrument" also known as "Why We Were Chosen," which is still available in the Chicago Area Service Office bookstore today.

In September 1948, an article in the Chicago Tribune was titled "5,000 in Alcoholics Anonymous to Observe 9th Anniversary Here". The article goes on to say "Earl, the founder of the Chicago group; Sylvia the first woman in the organization, and one or two of the earliest members will speak."

In 1957, the open meeting format which developed at the Tuesday night meetings was adopted and the first All-Chicago Open was held on October 22 of that year. The location for the meeting was at 32 W. Randolph on the 14th floor and the meeting hall had a seating capacity of 1800 people. The open returned to the same location in 1958 and again in 1960.

To commemorate our 20th anniversary in 1959, a dinner dance was held at the Medinah Temple. The three speakers included Father Ed Dowling, Bernard Smith and Sylvia K. The program listed the Chicago AA Milestones up to that point and was dedicated to early members of the AA program, their families and above all a Higher Power.

From 1961 - 1978, the Open was moved to McCormick Place, with the exception of 1973, when we were at Lane

Technical High School.

The Medinah Temple was host to the All-Chicago Open meetings from 1979 through 1984, and in 1985 we moved to the UIC Pavilion.

On September 23, 1989, at the All-Chicago Open, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first meeting here. The theme for the event was "50 Years of Miracles."

From 1991 – 1993, the Open was relocated to the Rosemont Horizon, which is now known as the Allstate Arena. Our final move back to our current location took place in 1994.

A few years ago, we changed our format to two speakers; we now have a countdown and take a collection to be self supporting. Also, we provide literature sales for your convenience.

## *Changing Our Attitudes* anonymous

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. It is more important than anything we possess or experience. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day of our lives regarding the attitude we embrace for the day.

We cannot change our past. we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change

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the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...

I'm convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes.

### *Kathy's Story*

Kathy R.

I grew up in NW Indiana and graduated from Highland High School in the town of Highland, IN. My younger sister was very out going and I wasn't a social butterfly but I had my share of friends. I didn't pick up my first drink until I was a Freshman in college at Purdue University Calumet with my boyfriend and his friend. During the cold winters when you couldn't go outside unless you were really prepared for the frigid below zero temperatures of NW Indiana winters then you stayed indoors waiting for a warm day. Our companions became fancy red label whiskeys, rums, vodkas, and beer you name it we had it.

In 2001, I had a car accident with a friend in which we both were drunk. I was sent to the hospital with brain injury and my friend was sent to jail for driving drunk and for the harm of another person because of it. Three weeks in the hospital and a spiritual awakening gave me the will to quit drinking. Doctors told me if you drink you won't be like others who drink, and three months later I was drinking again. No one at that time could stop me or tell me what to do. I was hired and fired from five to six jobs a year, and living with three to four men. I had never felt more burned up and washed out in my life. I wanted to die. I felt I didn't deserve to live.

My boyfriends good college friend had a rich grandfather who owned the best Italian restaurant in Highland, IN where I worked. We drank his grandfathers alcohol, bought our own many times, and watched movie blockbusters while playing pool. When I started going to the bars my favorite drinks were the chilled orange vodka martinis and any concoction with a cherry on top. I enjoyed experimenting with my alcohol, and I was always open to varieties of concoctions. Fruity mixes were my favorite though and I never had a problem with budgeting my paycheck for my drinks of seven or more at a time.

When I graduated from Indiana University in 2003, the changes from an academic life to a working life gave me more of a reason to drink and socialize in the bars. It wasn't until I had received a job at a corporate company from a referral of a college friend and was let go that I knew I wanted to quit and after many relapses I went to AA and relapsed again. Until I got a response from a phone number with a such a cheer in her voice, that I went back to AA

a year later and kept going back.

I'm a grateful alcoholic who is six months sober and have reached out to others who are just like me in many ways. I pray the Serenity Prayer everyday, and continue to keep going back to meetings. I'm volunteering with the elderly, and have even been able to train as a social worker who brings runaway youth to safety. I'm grateful to God today and for my family and the changes we AA members are making together one day at a time.

### *Resent Somebody*

anonymous

The moment you begin resenting a person, you become his slave. He controls your dreams, absorbs your digestion, robs you of your peace of mind and good will, and takes away the pleasure of your work. He ruins your religion and nullifies your prayers. You cannot take a vacation without his going along!

He destroys your freedom of mind and hounds you wherever you go. There is no way to escape the person you resent. He is with you when you are awake; he invades your privacy when you sleep. He is close beside you when you eat, when you drive your car, and when you are on the job.

You can never have efficiency nor happiness. He influences even the tone of your voice. He requires you to take medicine for indigestion, headaches, and loss of energy. He even steals the last moment of consciousness before you go to sleep.

So, if you want to be a slave, harbor your resentments!

### *Kevin's Story*

I'm Keven and I'm an alcoholic. By the grace of God, I have been sober since May 1990 and I'm currently 34 years old, which means I joined the AA fellowship at the age of fourteen. Originally from Elk Grove Village, IL, I was born into a loving non-alcoholic family. At the age of 3, I was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. While this can create a severe disability, my symptoms a minimal and most days unnoticed. Yet, as a child, it was the first of many reasons why I didn't feel like I could fit in.

As I grew into my teen years, fear and depression seeped into my life. As I have heard from other AA members, alcohol seemed like the cure for my suffering and social insecurities. It wasn't long before the alcohol use was discovered by my parents. Not having any experience with

addiction, they brought me to a treatment facility which later introduced me to Alcoholic Anonymous.

At that time, I saw my life as being really bad: now, looking back, I know I was fortunate that I had a relatively high bottom. It doesn't mean I can forget the pain. Whenever there is a high school shooting being covered in the media, my reaction is just like everyone else. I'm shocked at today's youth. Then I have to remember that it could have been me. I remember being in grade school and carrying around weapons, or having parties in the eighth grade where people were firing off handguns in my parent's backyard. When I was ten years old, I broke a classmate's neck

I'm not going to say that I immediately wanted what the AA members had, but I knew I didn't want what I had. Like many other new members in AA, I didn't have a driver's license (except, my reason: too young), so my parents drove me to and from AA meetings until I was old enough to drive myself. Never having any experience with AA or Al-Anon, they went on faith that this "anonymous" group could help their young son.

In AA I have experienced a lot. I have had many firsts. I graduated from high school and then the college of my choosing. I bought my first car, and I totaled my first car. I got my first job, and I got fired for the first time. I fell in love for the first time, and I got my heart broken for the first time. Each time I went through something new, I had people in AA to go through it with me. I became a firefighter, a black belt in judo, a scuba diver. In 2005, I married the most beautiful woman I have ever seen (she has never seen me drink). I moved to Nashville, TN and connected with the wonderful AA community here. Just a few months back my first son was born. I don't believe any of this would be possible without Alcoholics Anonymous.

With the twenty years that have passed, and with the birth of my son, I have a new perspective. I look at my son, and I'm filled with hopes and dreams for him. None of those dreams include having an addiction to which there is no cure for. I can only assume my parents had similar dreams for me. I use to give full credit to God and AA for my life and sobriety. Now I see that the faith of my parents to support their teenage son to be in a fellowship where the members are years or decade older, and often have questionable criminal records, has allowed me to be who I am today. I'm not sure I could ever take that leap with my son, but I am truly grateful that they did. Also, my non-alcoholic wife, who hasn't experienced my active alcoholism first hand, has been patient while I spend hours away

## **WE NEED YOUR STORIES!**

Tell us about "what it was like, what happened and what it is like now." In upcoming issues, Here's How will publish your 500-800 word stories about:

**We Are Not a Glum Lot**

**Balance in and out of AA**

**The Steps**

**Living Our Dreams In Sobriety**

**AA Humor/ Jokes**

**Or send us stories on any topic sobriety related!**

**e-mail: [hereshow@chicagoAA.org](mailto:hereshow@chicagoAA.org)**

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going to meetings or helping a new comer.

It is completely apparent that I owe my precious sobriety to so many, both inside and outside of the Fellowship, that I'll never be able to repay them. It looks like my only option is to "practice these principals in all my affairs."

### *Blueprint*

Robert M.

To every type of procedure there's a process to follow, and a blueprint to reference when you run in to trouble. Yes today is today and tomorrow [tomorrow] seek the truth and be happy; burn the blueprint for sorrow.

### *Committee Report*

**Q:** Who are you and what is the name of your committee?

**A:** Kimmy H, Chairperson, Public Information Committee

**Q:** What is the function of your committee?

**A:** PI carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to schools, colleges and various public agencies and other interested organizations utilizing all the available media in accordance with The Twelve Traditions and guidelines of CASA.

**Q:** What are some of the challenges this committee faces as you see them?

**A:** Getting volunteers to come to the workshops, to speak at DUI classes and participate in health fairs. Also, another challenge is the last minute requests

**Q:** Could you share some of your experience participating on this committee? How has it served our primary purpose in your estimation?

**A:** Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help others achieve sobriety, I think by speaking at non-aa events we plant a seed so that when someone reaches out for help they will know where to go for it. Also, we have had many members on the committee and it has helped them enhance and maintain their sobriety.

**Q:** How has your participation in this committee affected your sobriety?

**A:** I have been on the committee since August 2001 I think, I had 3 months sober and my sponsor suggested I get involved in service. At that time I had no clue what PI was about, or for that matter what it meant to be of service. I picked the PI committee, because I thought Public Information meant I would do Public speaking, Ha, I was so self centered! Anyway, I soon found the best place for me was behind the scenes, coor-

inating. That where I am the most use. I have earned so much in the last 9 years about serving, working with a team, responsibility, commitment, delegating. It has been the longest job I have ever had! I will be rotating off the committee this year, and am truly sad to give it up. I have worked in different roles in The PI committee and have learned so much from each one. I know that the whole experience has made me feel so much closer to the center of AA and to my sponsor, fellows and ultimately, God. I know that God's will for me is to serve always and I have been very grateful to serve this committee.

**Q:** Do you need volunteers for this committee? If so, is there a sobriety requirement?

**A:** Yes we always need volunteers, and different types. We need people to be active members of the PI committee. This means people who show up on a consistent basis to our monthly committee meetings and hold a commitment and help with the organization of events and the execution of our primary purpose. We also need some who can be a regular member of the committee and take on the role of Media coordinator, this person will be handling all the videos, Public Service Announcements, press releases and making sure our stuff is being seen and heard where it should be. We have not had a person like this for the last year and I feel this is an area that is sorely neglected. In addition we need someone to take on a database administrator type of role, someone who can create and manage a database that will streamline our volunteer contact info process. We also need volunteers to participate in events, not be a reg member of the committee but to sign up for periodic happenings, such as speaking at schools, DUIs and manning booths at health fairs. In order to volunteer for this you need to have 1 year sober and attend one of our speaker workshops which we hope to put on monthly. If you would like to volunteer for these things and have not attended a workshop and there is not one coming up and then I urge you to attend one of our monthly committee meetings and maybe we can a mini workshop prep session to prepare you for some upcoming talks. We have DU classes that need to be filled every month, and we need about 4 volunteers for that every month. Health fairs happen all the time and we always struggle to get people to volunteer for this.

**Q:** For anyone interested in participating in your committee, when and where do you meet? Please list committee contact info.

**A:** My name is Kimmy H, my number is 773-678-8122

my email is khkimze@yahoo.com. We meet every month, alternating between the first Saturday and the first Monday of the month, at the downtown office, CASO at 180 Wabash. When we meet on a Monday, it is at 7pm, when we meet on a Saturday it's at 10am. Our next meeting is Monday August 2nd. you can also check the service calendar for details

## *Odes To Sobriety*

### *New Path*

Rex R.

Walked in alone in despair, yelling, "none of this is fair"  
 With life all out of joint, he stood at a turning point  
 Then, when the mind was clear  
 Saw nothing more to fear  
 All the ghouls in his head  
 Would disappear

Found a group of new friends  
 Who vowed to stay till the end  
 Asked nothing in return —  
 Only to listen and learn  
 Without grave concern,  
 No more bridges to burn, or lives,  
 To burn

They'd take him through new doors  
 Where he'd find new miracles to explore  
 Clear ways to think  
 Instead of teetering on the brink  
 For now — one day at a time —  
 He stayed away from even one drink

It was a match made in the heavens  
 Days filled with lucky sevens  
 Peace came to mind  
 Surrounded by souls of his kind  
 Now he could finally unwind

He then reached out to those in need  
 Now he lived by a new creed —  
 To love and understand  
 The time had come to surrender  
 To this thing so warm and tender  
 At his side stood a higher power in command —  
 A force from above  
 Filled with nothing but love

### *Steps*

By Everett D.

A child takes his first step  
 It's a time to rejoice  
 From the first to the last  
 Each step is a choice  
 Should I follow Dad's footsteps  
 As best as I can  
 Or strike out alone  
 And be a self-made man  
 The decision is easy  
 I'm clever and witty  
 Leave Dad on the farm  
 And head for the city  
 On the business ladder  
 I stepped to the top  
 I dare not look down  
 It's too far to drop  
 From high up the ladder  
 I can see far and near  
 But I'm sort of depressed  
 It's lonely up here

I need some excitement  
 I like to have fun  
 I step into a bar  
 "I'll only have one"  
 This stuff sure tastes good  
 I won't stay all night  
 But I'll have a few more  
 'Cause I've earned the right  
 Then I stumbled for years  
 My steps were uncertain  
 I was praying that God  
 Would pull down the curtain  
 But he showed me a way  
 To get rid of the pain  
 Dust myself off  
 And start over again  
 The most powerful steps  
 That I've made 'til today  
 Are the twelve that I found  
 In God's gift of A.A.

### *There He'll Be*

Robert M

Being the author of my story,  
 I give to God all praise and glory;  
 for by His side with Him I'm soaring,  
 my cup continues overflowing.  
 Ever I'm scared, yes, He protects me,  
 He keeps me safe from that which vexes;  
 and if I fall and scrape my knee,  
 when I get up, Lo there He'll be!

**ALL CHICAGO OPEN**

**September 11, 2010**

**Doors Open: 6:00 PM  
Concession & Literature: 6:00-7:30PM  
Meeting: 8:00PM**

## **Annual Celebration Of The First AA Meeting In Chicago**

- Special seating for old timers 20+ years
- Simultaneous Spanish interpretation with an FM pocket radio and earphones
- Interpretación simultanea al español por radios portátiles FM con audiófonos
- Meeting will be signed for the hearing impaired for those wearing hearing aids with a "T" switch an audio loop will amplify sound

**UIC Pavilion  
Racine & Harrison  
Non Smoking Facility**

**Parking Available: Cars \$10 Busses \$15**

*(price subject to change)*

**Directions: From the NORTH, take the Kennedy (I-90/I-94) to the Eisenhower (I-290), exiting immediately on Morgan St. south to Harrison, then west to Racine. From the SOUTH, take the Dan Ryan (I-94) to Taylor St. west to Racine, then north to Harrison. From the WEST, exit the Eisenhower (I-290) south on Racine. From the EAST, exit the Eisenhower at Ashland, go south to Harrison then east to Racine.**

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Alcoholics Anonymous

# CASO Corner

By Laura N Gonzalez

Summer time in the City there is always such a buzz. We are in the midst of A.A. Conference season, summer fests all around the Chicagoland area, group softball games, picnics and outings to watch all of the lakefront activity. Things as usual are buzzing here at the office; we are at the tail end of preparation for the All Chicago Open. This annual celebration of the first AA meeting in Chicago takes place September 11th at the UIC Pavilion located at 525 S. Racine at Harrison in Chicago. I hope to see you all there. We will have a section for the hearing impaired, Spanish simultaneous translation and a special section for 20+ sobriety who will be ushered to their seats right in front of the stage. I hope to see and look forward to meet you at the All Chicago Open or at some time in our Spiritual Journey in AA.

Volunteer! We always need volunteers, not only to answer the phones, but to help out around the office collating, straightening up, making Beginners Kits, and generally doing the stuff that an office needs to do. As you know this is a “we” program and a “we” office.

Does your Group or Meeting want to do service work? Groups and Meetings can now sponsor a Volunteer shift on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The Group or Meeting needs a contact person to coordinate with CASO and to recruit Volunteers to cover the telephones. The minimum sobriety requirement to answer the phones is one year of continuous sobriety. Then the Group or Meeting needs to contact CASO to arrange for training. The Volunteers can be trained individually or as a group. The Group or meeting will take responsibility for covering the selected shift with trained Volunteers. We have 21 four-hour shifts (9 AM-1 PM, 1-5 PM, and 5-9 PM) to choose from: three a day, seven days a week. Evenings and weekends seem hardest to cover. We are in need for coverage for Saturday morning, some Saturday PM and for some Sunday morning and evening shifts.

We are flexible! If you want to make an important contribution to AA, be of service, have a good time, and generally see what goes on in the Central Office, give us a call at 312-346-1475.

Make sure you are listed in the Directory! We've said before, it has been a requirement for some time that a meeting have—at minimum—current Group Contact information filed with CASO in order to be listed in the directory. Unfortunately, many Group Contacts and GSRs have moved or changed phone numbers, leaving meetings without a contact. Please be sure to keep your meeting information, including Group Contact and GSR, current. You can download forms from our website: [www.ChicagoAA.org](http://www.ChicagoAA.org) or we would be happy to mail or fax them to you. Please note you do not need to contribute financially to CASO (Chicago Area Service Office) to be listed in the directory. This is a myth. Our meeting directories are getting smaller and smaller each year mainly due to lack of group contact information. Help us keep your meeting directories current. We always want to hand of AA to be there.

Thank you all for the support you have shown to your Chicago Area Service Office, Area 19. Please let us know how we can serve you today.

## Questions Corner

**Q:** Who are the recipients of the milestone printing copies of the Big Book?

**A:** The one-millionth copy was presented to President Richard Nixon in April 1973, and the two-millionth to Joseph Califano, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, in June 1979. At the 50th Anniversary International Convention in Montréal in 1985, the five-millionth copy of the Big Book was presented to Ruth Hock, who typed draft after draft of the original manuscript. The ten-millionth was presented to Nell Wing, Bill W.'s longtime (nonalcoholic) secretary and A.A.'s first archivist, in July 1990. The 15-millionth was given to Ellie Norris, widow of former trustee chairman John L. Norris, M.D., in 1996; and in the year 2000, the 20-millionth copy was presented to the Al-Anon Family Groups. The 25-millionth copy was presented to Jill Brown, warden of San Quentin Prison, in July 2005, at the A.A. International Convention in Toronto.

**Do you have a question you'd like answered? Send it to us and we will post the answer in an upcoming addition of Here's How.**

Name .....  
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State ..... Zip ..... Country .....

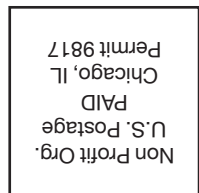
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