

Here's How

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Summer Temptations, Part II

Inside Out

BY ANTHONY M.

Every summer I hear the same statement from just about everyone I run into, "Man, if I was out there right now, I'd be riding around, or at the beach drunk out of my mind and probably high with a fine woman."

Others I hear say their idea of fun might be barbecuing or fishing, but ends the same with beer or drink in hand or a keg on standby. So it's funny to me when I saw the new issue was about "The Temptations of Summer."

As soon as the weather gets nice and I get the time to think, my thoughts always start out with, "How am I going to get it?" Allow me to explain. How am I going to, for me, means... go to a barbecue and not drink? Enjoy fishing without a cooler of beer in front of me? Tell someone "No thanks," when I'm offered a drink? Not to mention on my birthday! (Mine's at the end of June, lucky me!)

I consider myself a newcomer although I've been sober for three years now. Being a newcomer, I worry about running into old friends who may not be aware of my new life and the changes I've made. I worry if my family will respect my wishes to no longer drink at family gatherings, or will they expect me to be the same old party animal? And if I don't drink, will I worry what they are thinking of me?

I don't want to come off as "holier than thou." But one of my favorite passages from the Bible – one I have read often to myself – is Matthew 6:25, (and I'm paraphrasing), "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life what you will eat or drink (in our case not drink). Who of you, by

worrying can add a single hour to his life? See how the lilies of the field grow? That was it for me. My answer! The lilies! The freaking lilies!

And not just that, but the sun and the beautiful blue sky! After having one of my bouts with the "How am I going to's...." I reread that passage just before I made my way to chow. As I walked, I looked down and saw a dandelion. It was like I saw it for the first time. It was a beautiful yellow. Then I looked up, saw the sun and the sky, and it was like seeing them for the first time, too. There was a spiritual awakening for me. Suddenly A.A.'s promises were relevant to me and all the more evident in my life.

In the A.A. Big Book, it says, "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change." Mine did from that one dandelion! I was looking at it for the first time with sober eyes and

seeing the possibilities.

The "How am I going to's" were being replaced with the "What am I really missing out on's" if I were to drink and give in to the temptations of summer. I mean, let's face it; I can't just have a few drinks. I am definitely not going to miss the D.U.I.'s, the arguments with my loved ones, or the fights due to impaired judgment.

If I don't drink, I can enjoy the sun on my face and not be imprisoned by it. I can play with my girls and enjoy the happiness I give them. I can appreciate a flower or the sunshine or a beautiful day.

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This brings me back to my comment about feeling like a newcomer with three years sober. I am currently incarcerated as a direct result of my drinking and drug use. But in here, where I hear so much garbage and I see so many people stuck in their “stinking thinking,” I have found beauty, and reason and am reminded everyday why I can’t drink or use anymore. And it’s not because of my sentence. It’s because of seeing a flower sober I am reminded of how much beauty in the world I missed out on over the years. So if I can find beauty in my life here, how much more beauty can you find in your life where you are, looking with your new, sober eyes? Ask yourself, would you really want to trade that for one drink of misery? We all know where it leads... jails, institutions and death! So, remember what you’re fighting for. If you do, like me, you’ll be able to resist “The Temptations of Summer”! God Bless!

P.S. Don’t fret for me! I have only twenty months left. But I feel my Higher Power’s awesome hand at work. If He wills it, I’ll be enjoying my first summer in three years free this summer, and I’m determined to enjoy it sober with the A.A. fellowship at my side!

Here’s How note: *This article is a reprint from our 2007 “Temptations of Summer” issue. Efforts to contact the author have been unsuccessful. We very much hope that Anthony has enjoyed every summer since then in freedom and sobriety. Anthony, if you read this, please let us know how you have been.*



First Barbecue

BY JOSETTE S.

“I just won’t tell her.”

Somewhere between barely warm ashes of desperation and glowing embers of defiance, that thought flared in my consciousness. Six weeks into sobriety and I was contemplating how I would tell my sponsor I was going to an annual barbecue-beer bash. My next four-word thought sealed the deal.

“I can handle it.”

More thoughts cascaded to reinforce my decision:

“It’s a summer tradition.”

“I’ll fill the cooler with soda and water.”

“The kids won’t be deprived of a pool party.”

“My husband deserves to unwind.”

“This is what families and friends do.”

“Our friends will get mad at us if we don’t show.”

Then my rationalization and justification began to take on an edge:

“I can’t stop living my life because of AA.”

“My sponsor doesn’t understand my situation. She doesn’t have a family like me.”

“I haven’t wanted a drink for a while. I’ve got this.”

“I have a plan. Why do I need to ask a sponsor? Who does she think she is?”

We arrived at the party. It was a perfect summer day. Eyebrows were raised at the non-alcoholic beverages in our cooler, but my husband redeemed us by pulling out two bottles.

I did great ... for the first thirty minutes.

Without the comfort of a drink, irritability set in. It festered into



resentment, and then progressed into anger. From my perspective, everyone was having a fabulous time, but I couldn’t. I was in AA. I no longer fit in. It even seemed like everyone was avoiding me! Of course, I didn’t see what they felt. I was radioactive. I sat and seethed alone.

By the end of the evening, I had not taken a drink, but I was a toxic lunatic. I tossed the empty cooler in the back of the car, barked at my boys to get in and poured my husband into the passenger seat.

I tore down the road towards home. Rage boiled in me.

Out of the blue, a thought filled me:

“When was the last time your children were driven home from one of these things with a sober person at the wheel?”

My foot eased off the accelerator. I couldn’t remember. I heard the boys bantering in the back seat. With a flash of clarity, I realized I had put my children in danger over and over again without thought. They were my life. How could I do that? What kind of mother was I?

In that instant, I truly glimpsed the depth of the denial and unmanageability of my disease. Despair surged through me. Then, just as suddenly, I sensed the possibility that God was trying to help me. It was a moment of grace. My resistance to surrender took a seismic shift. I felt peace.

Today I call my sponsor before attending events that include drinking.

When it's appropriate for me to go, we talk about escape plan options:

- Driving separately from friends or family so I can leave if necessary.
- Going with a non-drinker.
- Staying busy by helping the host/hostess.
- Having a cell phone with my sober buddy numbers handy.
- Anticipating and steering clear of emotional booby traps.
- Knowing my limits and leaving before I reach them.
- Last, and most importantly, I pray before and during the event. I ask God to show me what to do; to grant me the willingness to do it; and, the strength to follow through.

It works.

It's 2012 ... and I'm celebrating my 10th sober summer.

Summer in Surrey

BY DEBBIE

My name is Debbie and I am an alcoholic living in Surrey, UK. A friend in Greece sent a copy of Here's How to me recently. I love how many and varied our choices are of passing on the message!

So I thought I would drop you a line on the topic of "Summer Temptations."

The time that springs to mind is one summer—in recovery—when I was driving home after a long shopping trip. It suddenly popped into my mind just how lovely a "nice" long cold beer would be right then. My alkic head ran away with the mental picture and I could almost taste the stuff, hitting the back of my throat (like I ever drank alcohol for thirst!).

Luckily I had something fizzy and non-alcoholic in the fridge so as soon as I got in I had a long glass of that instead. And guess what... the desire for the beer entirely disappeared. It seemed that the longing I had been feeling can just as easily be quenched with a non-alcoholic drink (probably better, actually)—it was the cold fizziness I was craving.

So now I always make sure there is a bottle of something fizzy in the fridge. Such a simple tip... yet it has worked many times since that summer.

I hope this finds everyone having a good and sober Today. I thank you for being there and for reading this.

Library of Congress selects Alcoholics Anonymous as one of the books that "Shaped America"

The Library of Congress—the world's largest repository of knowledge and information, founded in 1800; the nation's oldest federal cultural institution, has selected our Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, as one of 88 'Books That Shaped America.' The books selected will be on exhibit until September 29, 2012, in the Southwest Gallery, located on the second floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building, 10 First S.E., Washington, D.C.

For a full account and list of books selected, go to this link: <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-123.html>

The description of the Big Book reads: "Alcoholics Anonymous" (1939) The famous 12-step program for stopping an addiction has sold more than 30 million copies. Millions of men and women worldwide have turned to the program co-founded by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith to recover from alcoholism. The "Big Book," as it is known, spawned similar programs for other forms of addiction.

WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

A summer of sobriety having passed, we celebrate at the All-Chicago Open. We contemplate the past year and look forward to the holidays and a new year. Certainly, We Are Not Saints; but Are We A Glum Lot? Here's How thinks not; but what do you think?

Send submissions to: Here's How, 180 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 305, Chicago 60601 or hereshow@chicagoaa.org or hhcommittee@live.com.

Sunny Day

BY KEVIN S.

It's a hot summer day-I mean like, too hot to live. I already went to my morning meeting and had breakfast with some fellow drunks. Now what? I'm at home by myself and I do the next logical thing: make some strong coffee and pour it over ice.

After two big glasses of coffee, I'm out of my mind, thinking too much and not knowing what to do next. I call a friend over and we sit in my living room (air-conditioning) and comb the paper for movie show times. Everything either sucks or one of us has already seen it (and it sucked).

"Hey, remember sitting in a beer garden on a hot summer day and getting wasted?"

"Yeah, of course I do, like yesterday! That was the best."

"Sure, but the consequences..."

"Yeah..." "Is there a beer garden close by?"

We have a good laugh, because talking about the possibility of going to a bar or buying drugs is always amusing for some reason. Maybe it's because making fun of ourselves is one of the last few vices we as alcoholics can have. It's this or making fun of other people. Or we could go to the burger joint next door and get a couple of Oreo-banana-peanutbutter milkshakes. Wait-we could drink milkshakes while making fun of people! YES! What else? We could always troll the "women for men" posts on Craigslist. Would I respond to any of the posts? Maybe, maybe not-but it feels scandalous; sneaky; summer-y!

We opt to do none of the above because we know we're sick and disgusting. And sick. The beautiful part is that we've found each other through A.A. and can appreciate each other's neuroses.

As I pick up the paper to re-scan the movie page, I notice the paper's date: I have a year coming up. It's summer and I'm sitting in my living room laughing with a fellow sick recovering alcoholic and I'm going to be a year sober. Not to mention that it's summer!

Hey, thanks, God!

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 down-town 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 "5000 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 West Randolph on the 14th floor and the meeting hall had a seating capacity of eighteen hundred 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 to 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 to 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.



ALL CHICAGO OPEN

73

SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

* Doors open: 6 p.m. * Concession & Literature: 6-7:45 p.m. *

Meeting starts at 8 P.M.

- Special seating for old timers with 20+ years of sobriety.
- Simultaneous Spanish and Polish interpretation with an FM pocket radio and earphones. (Interpretación simultanea al español por radios portatiles FM con audifonos. Zabezpiecza równoczesne tłumaczenie hiszpańskie i polskiego radia UKF kieszeni i słuchawki)
- Meeting will be signed for the hearing impaired.

*The annual celebration
of the first AA meeting
in Chicago*

UIC Pavilion

Racine & Harrison

(This is a non-smoking facility)

Parking: cars- \$10.00 Buses- \$20.00

(prices subject to change w/o notice)

Directions:

From the NORTH, take the Kennedy (I90/I94 to the Eisenhower (I-290), exit immediately on Morgan St. south to Harrison, then west to Racine.

From the SOUTH, take the Dan Ryan (I-94) to Taylor/Eisenhower (I-290), south on Racine.

From the EAST, exit the Eisenhower on Ashland, south to Harrison, then east to Racine.



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

ALL CHICAGO OPEN SEPT. 22, 2012

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ONE YEAR OF SOBRIETY SUGGESTED

GET INVOLVED BE OF SERVICE

**Please just show up to
volunteer to:
UIC Pavilion
525 S Racine Ave @ Harrison
Chicago IL 60607**

YOU MUST BE AVAILABLE:

THURSDAY SEPT. 20, 2012 5-6:30 PM

AND

SATURDAY SEPT. 22, 2012 5:00 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

PEGGY L. OR DESHAUNA J.

TEL: 773-530-4414 OR 773-707-0360



Caso Corner

BY LAURA N.G., OFFICE MANAGER

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 22nd 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 and Polish simultaneous translation and a special section for those with 20+ years of sobriety. This year we celebrate A.A. in Chicago's 73rd year – Can you believe it! I look forward to meet you at the All Chicago Open or at some time in our journey in A.A.

Does your group want to do service work? Groups can now sponsor a shift on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The group needs a contact person to coordinate with CASO and to recruit volunteers to cover the telephones. Call and speak to me or send me an e-mail at CASO@ChicagoAA.org for more information.

We are flexible! If you want to make an important contribution to A.A., be of service, have a good time, and generally see what goes on in your Central Area Service 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, a current Group Contact filed with CASO in order to be listed in the AA meeting 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 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.

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.

Have a wonderful summer!

Gratefully Yours,

Laura N. Gonzalez
Chicago Area Service Office Manager



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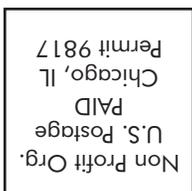
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