

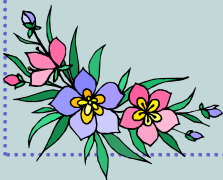
Presentations

by Karen Hall

For 2025



Workshops/programs are about one hour in length, and typically consist of a PowerPoint presentation (45 to 50 minutes) followed by a question and answer/discussion period. Longer workshops are available on most topics. All of these programs are intended for adult audiences. Typical fees are \$300 for a Zoom workshop, \$350 for in-person in Chicago suburbs, with an additional charge for mileage and parking outside that area. The Zoom platform can be provided for programs if desired.



Topics Currently Offered

(Via Zoom or In-Person)

Historical and Literary *Illustrated Talks with PowerPoint*

White House Weddings: The 20th Century

In the 20th Century, there were five daughters of Presidents married at the White House, including Alice Roosevelt, Jessie Woodrow Wilson, Eleanor Randolph Wilson, Lynda Bird Johnson, and Tricia Nixon. In this program, we will look at the five weddings of "American royalty" including how their weddings represented changing American values about this celebratory custom.

First Pets: American Presidents and their Furry Family Members

Most U.S. Presidents have had companion animals live with them at the White House. These pets have served to both unite -- and sometimes divide -- the nation. (Cat lovers vs. dog lovers, for instance) Pets have even played a role in international diplomacy. This program presents some of the highlights of First Pets in the White House over the last 70 years, with heartwarming and sometimes surprising stories.

A Century of Deliciousness: Cookies

Let's explore cookies in the United States, from the late 1800s through the 1990s. We will talk about the origins of some classics, such as chocolate chip, oatmeal, peanut butter and snickerdoodle. We will look at some favorite commercially prepared cookies and how cookie offerings have evolved. A program sure to leave you hungry!

The Green Book

In the 20th century, it could be extremely dangerous for people of color to travel. Many businesses would not provide service to people of color and would make clear they served "whites only." For nearly 30 years, a guide initially called the "Negro Traveler Green Book" offered advice about safe places to eat and sleep. Victor Hugo Green and later his wife Alma published this guide from 1936-1966. Learn about the Green Book its role in the struggle for civil rights.

Rotating Jails: 1880s Jails that Spun like Squirrel Cages

A unique architectural design for small jails emerged in the 1880s where a round cellblock of wedge-shaped cells was spun around like a carousel. A few examples still stand, including one in Crawfordsville, Indiana that still revolves. Learn about the history of this special design and the gruesome reasons it fell out of favor.

Topics Currently Offered (continued)



Historical and Literary continued

Cherishing Our Dead: Unique American Gravestones and Memorials

Cemetery markers are often expressions of our love for those who have passed. Sometimes people have tried to capture the personality of the deceased that a marker is memorializing in a special way. This program explores unique headstones and statues created to remember loved ones, found across the United States.

19th Century Spiritualism in America

Spiritualism is the belief or practice of communicating with the dead, often through mediums. In the 19th century, many people tried to communicate with their deceased loved ones. How did this movement emerge? And what historical events (including the Civil War) contributed to its enthusiastic reception?

The History of Wedding Dresses and Wedding Traditions

Learn about the origins of wedding dresses and their history in the United States. Why are wedding dresses white? (It's not what you think!) What are the meanings behind American wedding traditions?

Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*

When it was first produced in 1934, this play was so controversial that it caused the author to be blacklisted from Hollywood. Learn about the origins of the play, and why it stirred up such backlash. This drama is about the tragic repercussions of a schoolgirl's malicious gossip. It remains a haunting reminder of the dangers of intolerance.

Holiday/Trivia Programs

*Illustrated Talks with PowerPoint; can be presented as a program or as a contest
These are full programs which include a variety of interesting historical and cultural information.*

Easter Trivia

This program covers a variety of topics related to Easter, from the history of Easter eggs and Easter lilies to famous movies like *Easter Parade* and bunny books like *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Romance and Wedding Trivia

Perfect for Valentine's Day and the wedding season, this trivia program explores the historic background of many of our romantic and matrimonial practices and beliefs.

Historical Halloween Trivia

This fun trivia presentation embraces traditional Halloween themes and allows participants to test their own knowledge – and gain a few new facts to impress friends.

Thanksgiving Trivia

A trivia program that explores the foods, customs and culture of American Thanksgiving, including parades, television programs, and what determined our traditional Thanksgiving dinner favorites.

Christmas Trivia

Test your knowledge of historical trivia about Christmas. This presentation includes lots of fun facts including customs, food, music, TV shows and movies.

The History of Christmas Trees

This presentation examines the origins of celebrating Christmas with trees; looks at different historical types of trees, ornaments and lighting; discusses famous trees, such as the National Christmas Tree and the Rockefeller Center Tree; and compares Christmas tree traditions internationally.

Topics Currently Offered (continued)

Personal Development

These practical workshops teach tools that can be used to achieve greater well-being.

Self-Care for Caregivers

Being a caregiver to someone you love may be rewarding, but it can also be challenging. It is easy to lose track of one's own desires and needs while taking care of someone else. In this program, we will look at ways that caregivers can take care of themselves and manage their stress. We will discuss topics like boundaries and priorities. And how, if you don't take care of yourself, you won't be emotionally present to provide your loved one with the best care. Self-care is essential for caregivers.

Emotional Intelligence: What It Is and Why It Matters

Emotional intelligence, a concept made popular by Daniel Goleman with his 1995 book of the same name, is the ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions. It can help with both work and personal lives, reduce stress, and today is considered a key leadership quality. It can also assist in building meaningful, lasting relationships.

Transforming Fearful and Anxious Thoughts

If we don't manage anxious thoughts, they can quickly spiral and lead us to increased fear and worry. Regardless of what is going on in the world around us, we can still learn tools to help us gain greater control over what we think.

Mindfulness and the Art of Being Present

Creating greater awareness of the present moment, and being fully engaged where we are, can lead to more meaningful interactions and help us reduce stress. What is mindfulness and why is it considered so beneficial?

Positive Thinking

Today it is considered a virtue to be able to bring a positive approach to a situation. Many of us were raised to be aware of what could go wrong, and either view the glass as half empty or worry about it being only half-full. Learning to bring optimism and positivity to our perspective of the world can make life easier for us, and those around us.

Growing Happiness

What is happiness? Many of us know we want more of it. While there are commonly accepted values that being happy is good, it can also seem elusive. Happiness is very personal, and what makes one person happy might not be as meaningful to someone else. Let's assess what is meaningful to you and discuss how to create more joy in your life.

Building Self-Confidence and Enhancing Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a subjective evaluation of our own self-worth. Regardless of what others tell us, how do we feel about ourselves? How can we learn to view ourselves in kinder, gentler – and usually more objective – ways? There is a difference between feeling self-confident and presenting one's self confidently. How can those feelings align?

The Power of Forgiveness

We are taught as children how important it is to forgive someone we feel has wronged us. And that when we wrong someone, we should apologize and ask for their forgiveness. This work can feel harder as we become adults and the issues seem more complicated. But there is incredible power in forgiveness. Ultimately, forgiving is a gift we give ourselves. Learn about the importance of forgiveness, gain a new understanding of what it means, and how forgiving can free us to move forward in our lives.

Managing Stress Constructively

Everyone experiences stress. The challenge is not to avoid it but learn how to manage it. How can we release unnecessary stress and not create more? How can we channel the energy that stress can provide into positive outlets? Stress is not the enemy; it's a natural part of life. But we need to embrace its benefits, manage its demands -- and learn how to keep it in balance.



Topics Currently Offered (continued)

These workshops can be presented as training for staff and volunteers or adapted for public presentation.

For Non-Profit and Other Organizations

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

Formerly Senate Bill 75, Public Act 101-0221 requires all Illinois employers to provide sexual harassment prevention training to all employees every year. This training meets the statutory standards from the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR). *(This is the training for non-profits and businesses, not restaurants.)*

Identifying and Transforming Internal Racism and “Good Intentions”

Everyone is welcome to this workshop, originally designed for white audiences to gain a greater understanding of internal racism. It is not about inducing guilt, but a chance to awaken awareness and have honest conversations. While we may be well-intentioned, how can we recognize any internal racism which may exist within ourselves and our organization? How can we move beyond good intentions and help to make a difference in the world? *(This program can be presented to the public or as staff development.)*

Understanding and Transforming Implicit Bias

When can an individual's age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or other characteristics affect the way that we view them and treat them? Even when we want to be unbiased, there can be times that we are unconsciously "reading" or "labeling" people. How can we become attuned to the thoughts and feelings that may occur outside of our conscious awareness? And how can we reduce or eliminate this type of bias? *(This program can be presented to the public or as staff development.)*

The Volunteer Academy: Making the Volunteer Experience Work for Your Organization and its Volunteers

This workshop discusses the value of volunteers in non-profit organizations and covers topics like recruitment, retention, training, and creating a meaningful experience for your volunteers. Designed for staff or board development at non-profit organizations. This workshop can be tailored to the unique needs of your organization.

Karen Hall, the presenter, has been a director at non-profit organizations for over 20 years and has a master's degree from Michigan State University. She began offering many of the personal development programs when she was director of the Women's Resource Office at Purdue University. She has presented on diversity/inclusion topics and sexual harassment/assault prevention to conferences, organizations, and universities. Today, she works as CEO of a mental health non-profit. Historical/literary topics reflect personal interest and fun!

Questions? For More Information:

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Or check the website for the most recent listing of programs: thoughtstepping.com



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