

A View from Serenity Hill



La Hacienda's Alumni Newsletter

July 2011

Renew Every Day

I will admit to having picked up a bit of skepticism along my path over the past 61 years so when I heard a new magazine about recovery was going to hit the market, my response was somewhat less than enthusiastic. Last Spring at the NAATP conference, a fellow walked up to me and introduced himself. It was Jim Moorhead, publisher of the soon-to-be released Renew Magazine. As I looked over the layout of the inaugural issue, I was impressed by the quality, look and feel of the magazine; it wasn't at all what I had expected. I thought to myself, "Finally, something for the recovery community that will fit comfortably on a coffee table, in a doctor's office or a school library".

In this digital age, one could ask the question, "Why risk publishing an actual magazine? Why not just go online?" Well, it is online at RenewEveryDay.com, but this is one magazine that can't be fully appreciated unless you have a copy in your hands. I have received several issues of Renew. After the first one was borrowed and not returned, I admit to hoarding the current issue. The publisher states "we've brought together recovery and lifestyle experts that will help and inspire you to embrace recovery as the beginning of a new and better way of life." I believe they have achieved their goal. Renew magazine is all about living a life of sobriety that is joyous and free. It's on my "A" reading list; hope you enjoy it! RenewEveryDay.com

Art VanDivier
Executive Director

Save the Date

AAGgieland Convention
August 5-11, 2011

Hill Country Roundup
August 26-28, 2011

La Hacienda Alumni Reunion

September 23-25, 2011

Info: Joe H
800-749-6160 ext. 510



PO Box 1
Hunt, TX 78024

La Hacienda
Treatment Center

800-749-6160
www.lahacienda.com

Greetings from the Mother Ship

Hello Alumni!

Wow, I can't believe it's already been a year since returning to La Ha. I would like to personally thank all of our alumni support group facilitators for their continuous loyalty, support and efforts with our alumni. I would also like to thank all of you alumni for suiting up and showing up to encourage the newcomers just coming out of treatment.

The spring and summer have been quite busy out there in alumni land.

- ⊗ The Beaumont group held a workshop on "A Day in Recovery". Special thanks to Don Russell and Barbara N. for their hard work on this event. Dr. Boone and I were honored to be asked to speak. We had a great time, good food, fun and fellowship.
- ⊗ In June, we had our first Alumni Golf Tournament in Kerrville. The tournament went off without a hitch in spite of the fact that I had never done a golf tournament before. Thank God for all those involved in helping us pull this event off.
- ⊗ Julie Harvey and the Dallas bunch put on a workshop entitled "Sponsorship by the Dozen". It was a great workshop with great barbeque and great fellowship. The workshop was very informative and straight from the Big Book.
- ⊗ The Austin group just had their summer gathering at Boston Spring Pool. I sure wish I could have made this one. They had faith meetings and swimming. Rinay W. said those who weren't scared off by the heat had a good time. He and I recalled how the heat never stood in the way of our drinking or drugging. Hmmm!

I know the other groups have some events in the works so I will follow up with them in the next newsletter.

I'm on my way to Bryan/College Station for the AAggieland Convention. Leanne S. and the gang will be there in full force. Friday night I'm cooking hot dogs with all the fixin's with some help from Chris W. of Kerrville and Robert Park from our Houston Outreach office. The convention has a great lineup of speakers, workshops and other activities. For more info, go to www.aaggieland.com. Hope to see you there!

The annual Hill Country Round Up is August 26-28th. For info call Cade S. at 830-285-3268 or email nsaurage@stx.rr.com. As always, La Ha and the Kerrville alumni are hosting the alumni hospitality suite Friday and Saturday except during speaker times (of course!). We'll have lots of food and drinks available and we would love to see you so come by and say hello!

Last, but certainly not least, the 39th annual La Hacienda Alumni Reunion is coming up September 23rd-25th. We have some great speakers, food and all sorts of activities planned. Back by popular demand, bring your lawn chairs and head on over to the river property for our Friday night meeting by the river. If you pray hard enough for rain, we might be able to do a bonfire too! The theme for this year is Trust God, Clean house, Help others--a prescription for recovery from Dr. Bob himself. Get your hotel reservations booked now because Reunion will be here before you know it! If you have any questions, call me at 800-749-6160 ext. 510 or email me at jhartwell@lahacienda.com Check our website for a flyer with the schedule.

"But we aren't a glum lot. . . . We absolutely insist on enjoying life."
Big Book, p. 132

I hope to see you all at Reunion.

Peace, Love,
Joe

Serenity Hill

by Vanessa S.

Inspired by the beauty that awakens my soul
A gentle breeze signifies God's presence
As the sun slowly rises over the trees
Reminded of a fresh start; another day.

Memories of those before me line the way
With losses, grief, pain and hope
All with a common plea
"God, keep me sober one more day."

I turn my fear into prayer
"I give my life to you, Lord
Take away my arrogance & break down my wall
And open the eyes of my heart."

Up on this hill I leave my pain
Stripped of everything; only a skeleton remains
I'm finally willing to let God have all of me
To let go of bondage of self
and let God's grace set me free.

39th annual



La Hacienda Alumni Reunion

Sept. 23 - 25, 2011

Featuring Speakers:

Audrey C., Layla N., Robert D.

Welcome

Alumni, Family and Friends!

Schedule at a Glance

Friday, September 23

- 4:00 pm Registration
- 5:00 pm Supper
- 7:00 pm COLLEGIATE SPEAKER - Audrey C.
- 8:30 pm Meeting on the River

Saturday, September 24

- 7:00 am Registration
- 9:00 am Counselor Open House
Power Pole on Ropes Course
- 10:30 am SPEAKER - Layla N.
- 11:45 am Lunch
- 1:00 pm Announcements/Raffle
- 1:30 pm SPEAKER - Robert D.
- 2:30 pm Birthday Meeting

Sunday, September 25

- 9:00 am Meditation on Serenity Hill
- 11:00 am Alumni Meeting on the Lawn

Make hotel reservations NOW!

Check our website for a
list of local accommodations.

No Cameras or Pets Please!

R. H. SMITH. M. D.
2ND NATIONAL BLDG. AKRON, OHIO
TELEPHONE, RE-8923 REG. NO. _____

Rx FOR alcoholics
ADDRESS _____ DATE Feb 1937

always remember it

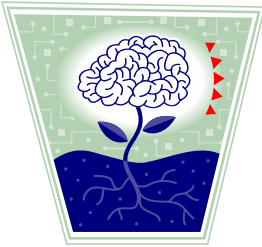
1. Trust God
2. Clean house
3. Help others

[Signature]

NR 1 2 3 INF.

Info: Joe (800) 749-6160 ext. 510 / jhartwell@lahacienda.com

You're busy, you live far away, or you think you won't know anyone at the Reunion. Your reason may be different, but the bottom line is you are reluctant to attend. It's important to remember that attending isn't "all about you". Reunions are based on strengthening relationships. Your experiences (including your struggles), your humor, and just your presence will be an encouragement to others. The word "encourage" means "to give hope, confidence, and courage". It will do just that for others attending, for the staff, and for those currently in treatment. If you can do it, they can as well. And when you return home to your individual lives, you won't really be leaving alone for you will take with you a new courage to strengthen yourself in your recovery journey. -- Robin Lacey



Brain Food for the Recovering Soul

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light. –Aristotle Onassis

Medical Rounds

Using Pain Medication in Recovery

by Scott Mitchell, LCDC

There are times in recovery in which an individual finds himself in a position to be in need of pain medication. These times include serious injuries and surgical/dental procedures. There can be times when pain medications are medically necessary. Relapse occurs when the medication is used outside of the parameters of the health care provider's instruction or prescription. Knowing that pain medication can trigger the phenomenon of craving, especially if it is the drug of the choice of the person in question, it is important that the individual take precautions. If the pain medication is not the drug of choice, it can still trigger back to the individual's original drug of choice and the same precautions apply.

In the event of medical or dental conditions that require pain medication, the following is recommended:

- Be completely honest with your healthcare provider regarding addiction history.
- You may opt to try alternatives to narcotics such as anti-inflammatories, alternating ibuprofen and acetaminophen, or using other non-narcotic pain medications such as Toradol. **Note: the use of Ultram or Tramadol is not recommended.**
- There are other alternative pain management techniques that may be appropriate such as TENS Units, acupuncture, meditation, etc. Your healthcare provider can assist you in determining your best options.

If it becomes apparent that a narcotic pain reliever is needed such as hydrocodone, codeine, or other similar medications, the following actions are recommended:

- Ask to have the medication prescribed for only 2 days. If your pain persists longer than that, return to the healthcare provider to determine why you are still having pain.
- Have the medication kept in the possession of a trusted friend or family member who will distribute them to you only at the appropriate prescribed dosing times.
- Be aware of obsessive thoughts that may occur about the pain or the medication. Go to your sponsor or therapist and discuss this.
- Double up your support for at least 30 days after finishing the medication regimen. Once you take a narcotic pain medication you have the possibility of experiencing cravings for that 30 day period. So, go to extra 12 Step meetings, help others twice as much, and interact with people in recovery as much as possible. Talk about your thoughts of using as soon as they occur with peers and professionals. Utilize prayer and meditation more frequently.

Focus Group

Step Two: The Solution

by Charlotte Safir, LCDC

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step Two is specifically designed for the mental obsession. I, in and of myself, cannot remove an obsession. The word "believe" is a verb. There is an action. Believe means "to allow". I am restored to sanity as a result of allowing something into my consciousness other than my own insane thinking and feeling. I find it intriguing that right after I identify the problem in Step One--no control, no choice, no power and my need for God--comes this simple solution.

A Power greater than myself that can restore me to my right mind. There are only two questions I have to answer. "Am I willing to believe there is a power greater than me?" and "Is it all or nothing?" I don't even have to have an idea about what this power is other than it be loving and caring. It started with my willingness to reach out and practice the rigorous honesty in the First Step. I had to get out of my head and into action. I have to be willing to let someone else know exactly what I am thinking and feeling. This meant I had to talk about what was really on my mind and in my heart. I had to be willing to be vulnerable. This simple action saved me from going back to using and drinking time and again when the obsession was so intense, I could not imagine it could ever be silenced. Without exception, every time I reached out for help, I received it. I called women at 1,2,3,4 o'clock in the morning and they all got up and talked to me. They each said the strangest thing--that I had helped them more than they had helped me. This was a clear demonstration of this Power working through others to help me stay sober although I did not recognize it at the time.

This Power continued to lead me as I went to meetings and heard exactly what I needed to hear at the precise moment I needed to hear it. As I worked through all the Steps, I became more conscious of this Power, myself and you. I came to understand the intrinsic connection between us all. The Second Step tells me I cannot do recovery alone. I don't have to figure anything out. I can begin to have an experience with this awesome Power that keeps me sober, gives me a new life and reveals more and more truth as I become more teachable and place more reliance on God than self.

How Can We Help You?

Frequently Dialed La Hacienda Phone Numbers

800-749-6160

Billing/Collections

Insurance Accounts

Last name begins: A – K

Ext. 671

Last name begins: L - Z

Ext. 673

Self Pay Accounts

(from admission or a balance
after insurance payments)

Ext. 674

All IOP Accounts

Ext. 670

Medical Records

Ext. 605

Alumni Support

Ext. 510

Alumni Followup

Ext. 516

Inquiry Call Center

Ext. 550

Operator

Press 0

How do I change my personal
information in La Hacienda's system?

It's simple!

Mail your personal information changes to:

La Hacienda, Attn: Medical Records, P.O. Box 1, Hunt, TX 78024

OR

Fax your changes to 830-238-6119

This simple written action will be shared with our Alumni Representatives so that they can reach you and see how you are doing. This new information will also be shared with our Billing Office so they can better serve you, as well as our Record Keeping system to further identify you for future requests.

If you have any questions about how to update your information, please call Medical Records at **830-238-4222, ext. 605** and we will be happy to assist you.

NOTE: In an effort to protect your privacy, we will not process personal information changes that come to us through email.

From Leonard's Kitchen to Yours

South Carolina Barbecue Pulled Pork

6 lb. Pork Boston Butt Roast

1 tbsp ground black pepper
2 tsp cayenne pepper
2 tbsp chili powder
2 tbsp ground cumin
2 tbsp dark brown sugar

4 tbsp paprika
1 tbsp ground oregano
2 tbsp salt
1 tbsp granulated sugar
1 tbsp ground white pepper

Combine the spices. Rub the roast with the spicy chili rub. Wrap it in foil and place in a 350 degree oven. Bake until meat is fork tender--about 1 hour and 45 minutes. Remove and cool. When it's cool enough, pull the pork meat into muscle sections; then shred the meat with fingers. Place the meat in a bowl.

Mid-South Carolina Mustard Sauce

1 cup cider vinegar
6 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp maple syrup or honey
4 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp hot red pepper sauce

1 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp salt
Black pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients. Mix the mustard sauce with the pork. Heat and serve on a bun.

Recovery Life - Family Life

It was years before the direct correlation of recovery life and family life came clear to me. My start in sobriety was just right for the person I had become as a result of my addiction. I surrendered to the fact that I was alcoholic and could not manage my own life. Some of the people in my life at the time saw that as an obvious fact. Some others were deep in denial of the facts or really kept unaware of the seriousness of the problem. Still others were having the identical problem and in denial about themselves and me as well.

Isolation had become my coping style. When in doubt, back out into the shadow. Stay below as much radar as possible. Keep "it" to yourself. By 1975, "it" in this case was almost everything I thought and felt. I had no confidant or anyone I trusted. My family relationships were distant and filled with disappointment and unsettled business. Treatment helped me to surrender and focus on the needed solution for my problem. I remember how hard it was to keep my attention on the fact that I was the one who was sick. I shifted to what others needed to see and understand very quickly and without real notice until I was deep in the focus on others. My inventory was slim in the first try. It did have quality and meaning in spite of the fact that it was short. As I look back, I think I wrote it in brief unfinished sentences. Regret, remorse and anger were the available feelings at the time. Loneliness was vaguely present all the time. Trust was a mystery. Love was thought to be possible for others but not for me. Family renewal seemed not to be possible. During the early years I attempted to understand the reason I started every thought and sentence with the word "I". My first sponsor pointed that out to me and it was a shock to hear it. I felt embarrassed and deeply self conscious for many months after that. It was an important awareness, but I didn't know what to do about it right then.

Being self focused is a tough place to spend time in early recovery. There are people who would be happy to get to know us and spend time, but even many of them too are self focused. It makes it tough to break through and find meaning in the relationships around us. It's a symptom of the illness and very common. Coming out, breaking free and testing the world and people around us will happen if we are courageous and humble in our search for the meaning in our relationships. On a good day we are not driven by loneliness to this end, but are more magnetized by the truth we see in those we choose. We have a pretty good ability to recognize the truth in others we meet and get to know. We have seen it before and turned away from it. We could not speak the language of truth. Sobriety changes all of that. Loving is the next major hurdle to jump over. It is difficult and risky if you try too hard or force the issue in relationships. It may seem foreign and out of reach since it too, has a language all its own. (Suddenly I'm thinking of the Tower of Babel). My ability to understand loving messages from others was so slight and such a "contradiction" in the beginning. I was completely surprised to find myself up against my own adolescent belief system and understandings.

There was tremendous confusion on this topic. My means to an end was tied up with fears and lies internalized over a twenty five year time frame. It was going to take honesty from some source to get me moving in a new direction. I would have to see that I made important, permanent decisions at too young an age. I was immature and scared, trying to be sure and full of certainty about my opinion. I was locked out of being hopeful and expectant about what life could bring to me. I had no hope of love or of being acceptable to God. I was all of thirteen years old when all of the decisions were finished and the developing picture seemed finished. Sobriety has a way of entering into us. Hope and the gift of acceptance come forward in this recovery in the time it takes for us to become ready. It happens during that new hand shake with God. Our hope is in the gift of grace we receive. With enough grace we can remain courageous and open to the possibility of love in our lives again. Learning from the inevitable mistakes we will make will also allow us to choose wisely in time. We can have grace and success if we ask and take the leap of faith that it was right to ask. Our acceptance of the gift of love may wobble about some in the beginning, but we will get the confidence to keep it steady through continuing to ask God for the guidance and re-assurance. Most of all, we need to accept and be grateful for the gift. It would be a mistake to turn it away. The idea of Family comes from the description and definition in our mind, as well as the memory in our mind and body. The concept is not the same in every culture and perhaps not even in every family unit. The value we place on family is a high one. It most often includes trust, safety, reliability, love, acceptance, honor, truth and loyalty. These amazing qualities can be wiped out by two or three generations of alcoholism/addiction. It happens. Even though it happens, our spirit is hard to kill. Individuals who seek a solution and reignite some faith in God's ability to heal our illness of mind, body and spirit can develop new hope and become quite lovable. So, combine the idea that we start to get well and start to honor our gifts to a point that we begin to see that we have gifts to share. We are moved to a point where love can be offered free of expectations and restraint. We evolve into people who, though previously needed to control every little thing and who lived in fear of all unknown things, begin to live in faith and enjoy the unknown. One way of saying it is "not wanting or needing to control all the outcomes, but definitely be there when they happen". Being present for our life can lead us to develop skills to be there for a relationship. Relationships become friendships, become families, become societies, and become the world and its people. Get ready for this gift. From the start there has always been more to sobriety than not drinking and drugging.

Recovery Life – Family Life
Welcome to the family of man.

--Anonymous

In the Spotlight

Blogs, Pokes & Tweets

We are rocking and rolling on the web with our new blog, twitter and facebook page! It is a great way for you to stay connected to La Hacienda. The staff is having a blast with it!! There is so much wisdom and recovery among our team and I love being able to share it with you. You will find all sorts of great information on 12 Step events at La Hacienda and all across the state, messages from staff, pictures of the facility, what's new at the bookstore and regular posts from Joe Hartwell! If you have been following us, let me know what you think! My email is kblack@lahacienda.com. Also, if there is something that you would like to see more or less of, I would love to know. Spread the word to your family and friends; there is stuff on there for them too!!!



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<http://twitter.com/#!/LaHacienda>



<http://blog.lahacienda.com/>

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Privacy by  SafeSubscribeSM

Much like the rest of the world, we are using technology to lower expenses which means using postal mail to get information out to you will soon be a thing of the past. In addition to our tweets, pokes and blogs, we will send out information in email blasts occasionally. If you are interested in being on the email list, go to the home page of our website to sign up.

www.lahacienda.com

Keep Comin' Back! It works, if you work it!

ALUMNI MEETINGS

AUSTIN	BEAUMONT	BRYAN/ COLLEGE STATION	DALLAS/ FORT WORTH	HOUSTON
Wednesday 7:30 pm La Hacienda's Solutions 2100 Kramer Ln. Suite 300 Austin, TX 512-835-1994	Monday 6:30 pm St. Andrews Presbyterian Church 1350 N. 23rd Beaumont, TX 409-296-3653	Thursday 6:00 pm La Hacienda- College Station 702 University Dr. Suite 100-D College Station, TX 979-846-9500	Monday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 1320 Greenway Dr Suite 135 Irving, TX 972-751-1500	Tuesday 6:30 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 2650 Fountain View Suite 120 Houston, TX 713-977-5202
KERRVILLE	PERMIAN BASIN	SAN ANTONIO	WACO	
Sunday 11:00 am La Hacienda Treatment Center Hunt, TX 830-238-4222	Thursday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 206 N. Midkiff Suite 1-D Midland, TX 432-697-0272	Monday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 8600 Wurzbach Rd Suite 702 San Antonio, TX 210-692-0001	Wednesday 7:30 pm 1725 Columbus Ave. Waco, TX 254-662-3439	

Heads up Kerrville Area Alumni!

Another alumni meeting is in the works. Stay tuned for more info in the near future!

FAMILY MEETINGS

AUSTIN	BEAUMONT	BRYAN/ COLLEGE STATION	DALLAS/ FORT WORTH	HOUSTON
Monday 8:00 pm La Hacienda's Solutions 2100 Kramer Ln Suite 300 Austin, TX 512-835-1994	Tuesday 6:30 pm St. Andrews Presbyterian Church 1350 N. 23rd Beaumont, TX 409-296-3653	Thursday 6:00 pm La Hacienda- College Station 702 University Dr. Suite 100-D College Station, TX 979-846-9500	Monday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 1320 Greenway Dr Suite 135 Irving, TX 972-751-1500	Tuesday 6:30 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 2650 Fountain View Suite 120 Houston, TX 713-977-5202
KERRVILLE	SAN ANTONIO			
Thursday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 429 Earl Garrett Kerrville, TX 830-238-4222	Monday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 8600 Wurzbach Rd Suite 702 San Antonio, TX 210-692-0001			

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