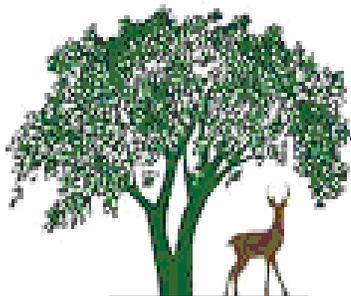


June 2007

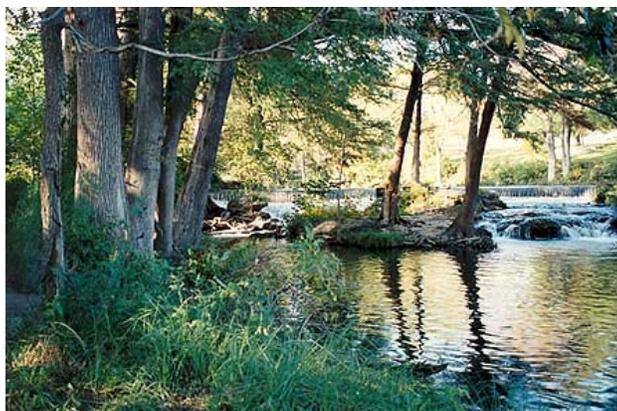


LA HACIENDA TREATMENT CENTER

A View From Serenity Hill

La Hacienda's 35th Reunion was a HUGE Success!

The 35th La Hacienda Reunion was held the first weekend in May and we had a record attendance! There were at least 1300 people on the campus of La Hacienda. Friday night Ashley S. from Austin was the collegiate speaker. Ashley had an amazing story of hope for all young people trying to get sober and how good life can be! Saturday morning Bart R., from New York started the day with his incredible story. Earl H. from California was due to speak Saturday afternoon but was not able to due to an illness. Chris Raymer (with encouragement from



his boss) stepped up and delivered one of his best talks ever! Funny how things work out. Chris would never take it upon himself to speak at the Alumni Reunion. God had other plans of course.

Many people had problems finding reservations so we suggest you make your reservations NOW! The reunion is always the first weekend in May. For 2008 the

dates are May 2 – 4. For a list of local hotels, bed and breakfasts or cabins email Kristen at ksmith@lahacienda.com.

3rd Annual Recovery in the Park

September 28th and 29th, 2007 is the 3rd Annual Recovery in the Park. La Hacienda will host an alumni hot dog cook out and speaker meeting at the Louise Hays Park Pavilion in Kerrville on Friday night. This year the concert will be all day Saturday at Louise Hays Park, from 11am to 10pm, with Ray Wylie Hubbard and special guests. Watch our website for more information or go to www.recoveryinthepark.com. This year promises to be the biggest and best ever so make your hotel reservations now!

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Cruising Sober!

La Hacienda Alumni's

*1st Annual Alumni
Cruise Update*

There's still time!!



Chris R

So...I'm on my way to Omaha to do a talk last week. I'm in a window seat and a little kid gets seated right next to me. Patty always laughs because it seems to ALWAYS happen. The one guy that hates kids and I get picked to chaperone!

Anyway, we take off and I try my best to just ignore him ("HIM" is probably 5 or 6, burr hair cut, thick glasses, just cute as he can be). He's not saying a word just staring straight forward. I notice he is trying to cover his little skinny legs and I realize the air is blowing right on him. He is freezing! I decide to break my vow of silence and ask him if I can adjust the stupid air vent. He thinks a few seconds and shakes his head yes...I turn the thing down.

About this time the flight attendant comes by and asks if we want a drink. I take an OJ and he takes nothing. The second time I catch him eyeing my drink and I caught on. This little guy didn't have a clue

about this flying stuff! He didn't know what was ok to do and what was not (I know his mom was on the same plane but I never saw her).

I instantly took this kid under my wing. I explained that the Pretzels and the drinks were FREE and in a minute, he had his own glass! He was smiling big and so was I.

As I got off the plane he waved across the airport terminal. It dawned on me that this same deal goes on in our meetings everyday. Just as I had assumed that the kid knew what to do on the plane...we assume that everyone knows what to do in our meetings. We assume that the guy sitting behind us in the meeting has been here before, that he knows what a big book is, where the coffee and the bathrooms are, and what the collection basket is. I realize that I have been assuming way too much. I'm going to watch myself in my meetings. I'm going to watch the guys I sponsor too. We are all going to commit to be "awake" for that newcomer and

his/her UNASKED questions.

Patty and I are still off the smokes. No tobacco in about 4 months. I'm feeling MUCH better about it all. Buddies, those first couple of months were a bear! At the talk in Omaha I had to walk through a 100 folks all smoking outside the hall.....not a bit of sweat!

Recently I sold my bike and bought some time with a trainer. That boy is going to kill me! I should be looking like a hunk by the time the CRUISE comes around. Oct 15-20 is our first La Ha sober cruise. It's filling up so you better sign up quick. We are going to have a scream (even if I still don't look like a hunk)!

Aug 24-25 is the Hill Country Round Up at the Inn of the Hills. We will be there cooking hotdogs in our hospitality suite as usual so make those reservations NOW!
cmr

Spiritual Awakening

**When a man or a woman has a spiritual awakening,
the most important meaning of it
is that he has now become able to do, feel,
and believe that which he could not do before
on his unaided strengths and resources alone.
He has been granted a gift which amounts
to a new state of consciousness and being.
He finds himself in possession of a degree of honesty,
tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind,
and love of which he had thought himself
quite incapable.**

What he has received is a free gift . . .

Bill. W.

c. 1952 AAWS, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 106-7

Alicia N...

Hello Alumni –

As always, I hope this finds you all doing well. Things here on the hill are busier than usual – we have an absolutely packed house, so needless to say it is very exciting. Still moving along on my own little journey and new lessons keep popping up all over the place so new growth is inevitable...good stuff. Ethan graduated kindergarten and turned out to be quite a great reader ...I guess my days of spelling things so he doesn't know what I am saying are over! Time sure flies by fast... thank God I am sober so I can enjoy it all.

While I was writing this article, my phone rang...as I heard the voice on the other end of the line I knew who it was. A hopeless Alumni that I have known ever since I have been sober...he has struggled for so long with this disease... treatment center after treatment

center...dying. With slurred speech and a tearful voice he began to tell me what was going on in his life today. He has moved to another town, has a new job, trying to figure out if he should go to church or AA and he is drunk at 9:00a.m. My heart breaks as I hear the utter despair in words...his teenage daughter, whom he loves so much, wants nothing to do with him, no treatment center will take him now and he wants to end it all. It was so hard to even find the words to say to this man...mainly because we have had this exact same talk many times. All I know to tell him is that somehow he has got to keep fighting. ..this disease wants him dead but he can't give up. I try to tell him that God has such a plan for his life if he will only turn and seek Him... that God is going to use his story to help save so many peoples lives if he will only rise up, take action, and seek. I pray that something

changes for my friend...he deserves the same freedom that so many have found.

This is just one of many calls that will come to this hospital today and I feel so blessed to work at a place that allows us to tell people the truth about God and the truth about this disease. Thank you all for standing in the trenches with us to fight this battle. Thank you carrying a message of truth. Thank you for using your past as your greatest asset in order to help others live and find freedom. It's all about love...ok, that sounded kinda cheesy, but you get the point...I hope. Keep in touch this summer!

Peace and Love –

Alicia New

800-749-6160, ext 512
anew@lahacienda.com

Louis R....

Greetings to our Alumni and their Families~

It has only been six months for me in the Alumni Department and time has passed quickly. I have enjoyed learning my duties and getting along with co-workers. I find it challenging, interesting, and rewarding. It has been with a deep sense of gratitude that I look back on the steps of sobriety that have led me here.

Additionally, I have also developed a real appreciation for the opportunity to be helpful and working with the current patients from the perspective of this department and being able to intersect with the Alumni that leave here by following up with 30 day phone calls, as well as seeing and listening to you share as you return over time to the Alumni meetings. I want to thank those who help others at the Alumni meetings around the state and in the various fellowships. It is wonderful to see you demonstrate your progress and share your adventures as a testimony to those who come after, while you walk with purpose, your lives change and you find success in recovery.

The reunion went very well and was extremely successful and again, as in years past, a testament to the grace and goodness that can occur for anyone willing to get honest, follow simple directions, and take action. I want to especially thank the Alumni whose presence and efforts made the La Hacienda 35th Annual Reunion a success.

I am now looking forward to the local AA convention, the 32nd Annual Hill Country Round-Up, August 24-26 at the Inn of the Hills in Kerrville. I will be attending and helping in the La Hacienda hospitality suite and hope to visit with those of you who will be there. It will then be onto Recovery in the Park in September.

I would like to close by saying, continue to trust God, clean house, and help others. Come by on Sunday in Hunt to the 11a.m. Alumni meeting when you can and remember to share your experience, strength, and hope with the people in the chairs that you once used, who may not be convinced that recovery is possible, except as they may understand that from your example.

Come on up to House,

Louis Romano, LCDC

800/749-6160, ext515; lromano@lahacienda.com

Jenni S. “One Family: Learning from Alcoholics and Addicts”

Light from a bonfire broke through the dark of night. Thunder loomed in the distance as a young man approached a microphone standing in an open Texas field where hundreds of people gathered. He warned us that fire ants had been spotted in the field and that we should watch out for these aggressive, little creatures.

The threat of rain and bug bites did not bother us. We were there celebrating La Hacienda Treatment Center’s Annual Alumni Reunion --- to hear stories of triumph over addiction --- and nothing was going to stop us. One by one, brave souls from all over the world walked to the microphone and shared inspirational words. Echoed in the night were words like: gratitude, faith, serenity, happiness, higher power, and God.

The connection between the people on the field --- both those recovered from addictions and those still struggling --- took my breath away. And I was taken aback by the way that I was drawn into the group. Even though my “drug of choice” was food and I had never battled a chemical addiction, I was fully accepted as a member of the family.

Recovered from anorexia and bulimia, I left the event with true hope that one day people touched by eating disorders would experience this same sense of worldwide --- yet intimate --- community.

During my years of intensive treatment for my eating disorder, I am grateful that I was able to connect in some ways with others who were also recovering from food and body image issues. Years ago, I had felt a deep bond with people in a weekly eating disorder therapy group. But I no longer go to this weekly therapy group for eating disorders. Sometimes I had also felt close with people in a 12-step group that I occasionally attended. I now know that my only occasional feeling of connectedness had something to do with my only occasional attendance. I have learned from my friends in the addic-

tion community that building a family takes persistence, hard work, and time.

In my hometown, someone struggling with an addiction can find a twelve-step meeting at almost any hour of the day, every day of the week. Unfortunately, in the same town, there are only two twelve-step meetings per week for people struggling with eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Due to lack of awareness, most people in the community do not even know that these meetings exist. Ironically, my town is luckier than most. In America, most states do not even have one such meeting for people battling anorexia and bulimia. When someone with an eating disorder feels hopeless and lost, he or she most often sits in isolation --- lacking an immediate way to connect with other people in recovery for support and fellowship.

Many of us are ashamed to connect with others. We feel disgusting for having an eating disorder. In my early recovery, I did not want to tell anyone about my problem. One by one, I let people in and told them I was battling an eating disorder. Support from family members and friends felt good. To my surprise, no one looked down on me for having an eating disorder but instead admired me for facing my demons head on. When I finally connected with other women who had eating disorders, I gained strength in realizing that I was not alone. As I write this article, I am sitting in one of the largest airports in the world wearing a t-shirt that has one word printed across the front in bold, black letters: “Recovered.” I am happy if people notice my t-shirt today, and I don’t mind if they ask me about it.

Many of us are afraid. We have been told that connecting with other people in recovery from eating disorders is dangerous. We will learn tips and tricks. We will get worse if we talk with one another. The truth is that we will actually get better if we focus on the solution instead of the problem. We

will get better if recovered individuals maintain a strong presence within the community. And we will get better if we organize and attend twelve-step meetings, which are available to everyone free of charge --- for a lifetime. Of course, these meetings need to focus on balance rather than abstinence. One cannot abstain from food like an alcoholic gives up drinking. Eating disorder recovery is about finding balance with food and in life.

I challenge those of us who are recovered to reach out to those who still need help. We can gather the strength to share our stories one-on-one with a fellow sufferer, encourage people to seek help from health care professionals who specialize in eating disorders, or even start 12-step meetings in our communities. We can join together and make a difference.

We can follow the footsteps of the alcoholics and drug addicts. I never thought I would encourage people to follow the footsteps of a drug addict, but I stand behind these words with all of my heart. With dedication, patience, and hard work, we will create a worldwide community of love and support for eating disorders.

Someday we, too, will hang out in an open field, fight fire ants, and share our stories of recovery as a family. We might even invite some of our friends in the addiction community to the celebration.

After all, we are all one family.

Jenni Schaefer is a singer/songwriter, speaker, and the author of *Life Without Ed: How One Woman Declared Independence from Her Eating Disorder and How You Can Too* (McGraw-Hill). She is a consultant and spokesperson with Center for Change in Orem, Utah. For more information, visit www.jennischaefer.com or email jenni@jennischaefer.com.

Cruising Sober through the Western Caribbean!

La Hacienda Alumni is going to have its 1st Annual Alumni Cruise on Carnival Cruise's beautiful Ecstasy ship and *there are only 10 ocean view cabins left* for just \$346.81 for the week! The fun and excitement will begin when the ship leaves from Galveston on October 15, 2007 and will visit Progreso, Yucatan and Cozumel, Mexico over the next 5 unforgettable days. The ship will return to Galveston October 20th. Enjoy world class dining, entertainment, spectacular shows, and exotic destinations. While at sea there will be recovery workshops available for those who are interested, fellowship, and lots of adventure. Chris Raymer will hold a workshop on the 12 steps and Michael Cox, Family Program Director, will talk about Relationships in Recovery plus much more. For information on schedules, activities and what the trip is about email or call Kristen, ksmith@lahacienda.com or 713-977-5202.

The final payment is due by August 6th. Cancelling after August 6th there is a \$200 penalty, cancellations after October 7th will not be refunded. Please contact Susie with Adventure Travel for more information about the ship, payments, and rooms either by email, Susie@adventuretravels.us or by phone 830-895-4449. You can also check the ship website at http://www.carnival.com/Ship_Detail.aspx?shipCode=EC.

You do not need a passport to enter Mexico from a cruise ship however, Adventure Travel recommends that you have one. http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html

"Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you." Page 152 Alcoholics Anonymous

Hill Country Round Up Conference

32nd Annual Hill Country Roundup, "Came to Believe", is August 24—26, 2007 at the Inn of the Hills in Kerrville. Pre-register before August 15, 2007 and save \$5.00! After August 15 registration is \$20.00. Once again La Hacienda will have a hospitality suite open to all attendees with good food, cold drinks and the alumni staff will be there too! For hotel reservations call 800-292-5690, they must be made before August 10th to receive the Roundup Rate. Click on the link below for more information.

www.aa12.org/HillCountryFLIER.pdf

Upcoming Events

July 6, 7	Chilliwack Round Up AA Chris	Chilliwack, BC (near Vancouver)
July 10	Houston Alumni Workshop Chris	Houston, TX
July 16	Dallas Alumni Chris	Dallas, TX
August 2	Midland Alumni Group Alicia	Midland, TX
August 3, 4	CA Chris	Brighton, England
August 14	Stepping Stones CA Chris	Austin, TX
August 17, 18, 19	White Rock Conference AA Alicia	Vancouver, BC
August 24, 25, 26	Hill Country Round Up Hospitality Room	Kerrville, TX
Aug 31—Sept 2	Colorado State AA Conference Chris (Saturday night)	Grand Junction, CO
September 28, 29	3rd Annual Recovery in the Park	Kerrville, TX
September 22	AA Chris	Monroe, MI
October 6	Workshop Chris	Charlottesville, VA
October 15—20	First Annual Alumni Sober Cruise Chris R. and Michael Cox speak	MEXICO
October 27	AA Conference Chris (Saturday morning)	Aurora, IL
October 27	Midway CA Conference Chris (Saturday night)	Chicago, IL
November 2, 3, 4	FOTSB AA Chris	Boston, MA
November 3	Legacy Group AA Anniversary Alicia	Plano, TX
November 9	AA Chris	Yakima, WA
November 17	AA Conference Chris	Stratford, CT
December	Alumni Christmas Parties — TBA	



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Simply the Best

Balance

AA has accomplished so many things in my life today.

It has given me my sanity and an all-around sense of balance.

Now willing to listen and take suggestions, I have found that the process of discovering who I really am

begins with knowing who I really don't want to be.

And although the disease of alcoholism inside of me

is like gravity just waiting to pull me down, AA and the Twelve Steps are like the power that causes

an airplane to become airborne.

It only works when the pilot is doing the right things to make it work.

c.2001 AAWS, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp. 456-7

With permission, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Websites of Interest

- <http://ppgaadallas.org>
- <http://www.aaintegrity.com>
- <http://houston.lahacienda.com>
- <http://dallas.lahacienda.com>
- <http://sanantonio.lahacienda.com>
- <http://www.lahacienda.com>
- <http://www.twelvesteps.com>

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Prayer is not asking for what you think you want, but asking to be changed in ways you can't imagine.

-Kathleen Norris