



A View From Serenity Hill

AUGUST 2008

La Hacienda Alumni Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chris R.	2
Alicia N.	3
Louis	4
Courtney B.	4
Judy T. and Cruise Info	5
Upcoming Events	6
Pay it Forward	7
Contact Info and Websites	8

Upcoming Hill Country Events

33rd annual Hill Country Roundup *More will be Revealed.....*

The Hill Country Roundup is back again! This is an awesome conference right at our own back door! It will be at Inn of the Hills in Kerrville and will feature speakers from Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. As always La Hacienda will have a special hospitality suite for our alumni serving up tasty hot dogs and cold drinks! Make your reservations now to SAVE \$\$! Visit the link below for schedule, registration and more information!

<http://www.lahacienda.com/alumni/roundup2008.pdf>

4th annual Recovery in the Park

Ray Wylie Hubbard is back to rock in Louise Hays Park this year! The 4th annual Recovery in the Park will be held September 27, 2008 at Louise Hays Park in Kerrville, Texas from 7:00 to 9:30 pm. This year will once again feature Ray Wylie, of course, and new to this stage is Liz and Lincoln. The event will be held from 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Please visit the Recovery in the Park link below for more information!



Ray Wylie Hubbard

www.recoveryinthepark.com

Chris R.

Well....things have been interesting this summer! Some of you might remember we shuffled some job duties here at the hospital. I took the position of Recovery Services Director and Alicia took over the Alumni Dept. I don't know about her but this has been STRANGE but good. I had been in that store for 15 years!

My office is down below the pool by the rock steps... (#34) ...a little different from being in the store. I actually have 3 chairs! I still lecture and travel but now I have more time with the current and past patients. I like that a lot! Please stop by if you're on campus. I'm always here on Sunday if I'm in town. Yep, my phone # is still the same, extension 510.

I have a quick story. I did a talk at the Austin Salvation Army last month. Nice place. I always thought they were dumps! Anyway, I ran across an alumni in there. He was sitting WAY OFF in back...trying to hide.... afraid I was going to JUDGE him (Me? Mr. RELAPSE!?). I finally got him to come over and give me a tearful hug. It breaks my heart watching folks go thru this sobering up stuff over and over. His story was like a thou-

sand I have heard before.....so much like my own. He was sober a few years, doing well, when he decided he'd "done enough time in AA". He became an associate member of AA....He would come by once a week and "associate" with a few friends in the rooms. He stopped doing the work, he stopped being accountable and was no longer available to help others. The three parts of AA no longer meant anything to him (Recovery, Unity, Service). He coasted a year or so until one day....well, you know. Life threw him some bad stuff and he felt justified in taking a few sleeping pills and then taking a few drinks. He lost it all...again.

Paul M. wrote a great article for the Grapevine in 1981. If you can't find it on line, I can send it to you. It's called "A Time Tested Program of Recovery". Here's a few lines that could have saved this guy a lot of heartache.

"One of the problems of getting fouled up with a substantial amount of sobriety is that a person finds it almost impossible to understand that his answers still lie in working

the 12 steps. I didn't drink during this time, but ultimately would have without the freedom that came from using the steps. This is the point where pills become attractive; we're willing to do almost anything to get rid of the psychic pain within us."

Both the Big Book and the 12 and 12 point out with powerful clarity that the AA program is not just for staying sober. Sobriety is the beginning, not the end. The AA program is a transforming prescription for a life of growing health, usefulness, and joy. By working and reworking all the 12 steps on a continuing, lifetime commitment, we experience the Promises spelled out on pages 83 and 84 in the Big Book.

Folks, whatever you're going thru, the steps will fix or at the very least, will help. I've never seen it fail.

I am already making plans to visit the Alumni meetings around the state...hope to see a bunch of you in person. If you're not receiving any of our mail, let me know and I'll put you back on the list!
CMR

Our problems are opportunities to discover God's solutions.

-Unknown

Alicia N.....

Hello Alumni,

Well, the hot summer is coming to an end and I hope that all of you found some time to have some fun. I really wish that grown ups could be off for summer, you know what I mean? Sleeping in, swimming and playing, cartoons all day – it would be great. Oh well, I guess for now I will just accept the fact that it isn't going to happen and just keep living vicariously through E than – who is doing wonderful by the way. He is starting second grade next year and finished out his 1st grade year with all A's and an E (excellent) in conduct...whose child is this??? So proud of him – and so grateful to God for the gift that he is.

As I was reflecting on what to write for this article, it hit me that for the last 6 ½ years I have been writing the same thing for each article, just worded a little different. Basically, I always write about growth through pain, pain causing me to seek God, and of course, going towards the darkness and then coming back to the Light. Maybe one day I will just start flowing with how spiritual I have stayed and how strong I remained throughout my life...BUT until then, I will continue to tell the truth. The truth is this program is about growth and I am so grateful that after a few years sober, I am still willing to grow.

I got to a place a few months ago where there were a few resentments that were rolling around in my spirit and I knew I needed to do some work. I sat down with a sponsee who has 1 month sober and was writing inventory with her, ya know, to help encourage her along. Well, by the time we were done, we were both mortified by what truth we had seen about ourselves in this writing. I told her, "At least you only have a month sober – you have an excuse...I have 9 ½ years – what is my excuse?" We laughed about it and shared a pretty cool experience together. I know that what that writing showed me was who I was blocked from God, and that I still desperately need God no matter how long I have been sober. It is used as a great motivator to seek this Power and I am so grateful for it.

There are a lot of changes and wonderful things going on in my life today. If I will just keep doing my part it seems really obvious that God keeps doing His, plus a whole lot more. I pray that this letter finds you all in a place of willingness no matter how long you have been sober. Newcomer or sober a bit, my experience shows me that there is always more to be revealed if I will just stay willing to seek.

I hope you all have had a blessed summer. Coming up, we have the Hill Country Round-Up in Kerrville at the end of August (La Ha will have a hospitality room and Chris will be cooking those great hot dogs), then Recovery in the Park in September, the Sober Cruise in October (Myself, E than, and Courtney will be cruising this year), and then all the parties in the Holiday season, and we hope to see some of you out there. Until then, take care and keep in touch: 800/749-6160, ext 512

Peace and Love – Alicia New

Louis R.....

To our Alumni and Their Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you all doing well this summer. I would further hope that you continue to recover and resolve your ongoing challenges in recovery by this spiritual program of action – either for the first time or again as we “continue to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.” (BB pg. 84) I have found these steps do not make real sense until I follow the directions, take the action, and have an experience with the results.

These steps and principles continue to provide a solid and stable framework for my life and my sobriety - to the precise extent that I am willing to utilize this suggested program of recovery by actually taking action regarding “clear-cut directions...showing how we recovered”. (BB pg. 29) Without my willingness, participation, and honest effort, not much benefit is derived, nor is much true balance or contentment achieved for the long haul. This is a process over time and it is necessary to maintain commitment through action.

It is important to consider that the admission of no power regarding difficulties in life on life's terms, and the honest recognition of where I am with these difficulties, creates a current willingness to turn to infinite God, rather than finite self. This then allows application of the directions of the step work, for the leading of God's guidance and will for me, and access to His power in my life. This process is simple and open to all, but not easy, which is why no one is doing this perfectly. The question is...am I “willing to grow along spiritual lines” (BB p.60) to address my current untreated alcoholism (my condition just not drinking)? This is a vital consideration to make on an ongoing basis.” We are not cured of alcoholism, what we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition” (BBp.85).

I look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at the Hill Country Round-Up in August or Recovery in the Park in September here in Kerrville. Take care, be aware, and God Bless.

Come on up to the House,

Louis Romano, LCDC

Courtney B.....

Wow, newsletter time already, time flies when you're having fun! Speaking of fun, the annual La Ha cruise is coming up. I don't know about you guys, but I'm due for a vacation. Not to mention one in paradise, three paradises actually, and all in one trip! Alicia will be speaking and the two of us are planning all sorts of fun for everyone who is coming. I had the opportunity to go on last year's cruise to Mexico and had a blast. I know this one will be even better and I just can't wait.

As summer comes to an end and going back to school is just around the corner, I'm able to pause and take a look at my life and what amazing things God has done. It's so easy for us, me included, to get wrapped up in life. I get wrapped up in school, work, financial responsibilities, my family, etc. In times of transition such as these, I enjoy stopping and giving my Higher Power gratitude. It's important to me that He receives all the credit. What amazing gifts I have been blessed with. Gifts like sobriety, an unbreakable connection with my Higher Power, restored relationships with my family, real friends, an amazing job, financial responsibility, and so much more. My perception begins to change and I'm able to go into the next stage of this life thing with a positive and grateful attitude. I don't have to stress because I'm not in charge!

I do hope that everyone has had a great summer. I hope you have been able to enjoy your family and your

loved ones, that you got a chance to play in the sun, and that you remember to take God with you into this next stage your journey. Buckle up – cause it's quite a ride!

Peace,
Courtney Bernhard

Judy T.....

Wooooooh, it is hot out here in the Hill Country! But that's OK. We're so lucky to have Ali and Lance on our staff to get these folks out to the river for a float in the kayaks and canoes. Go camp La Ha!! The grounds crew, Richard and Ismael, bless their hearts, have got this place looking like Eden! What a back breaking, hot job. We are grateful for them. Remember in August we have the Hill Country Roundup and in September Recovery in the Park. Both are great times to come visit and reconnect with us. I have some new CD's Chris has recorded on sale in the store and, just in case you haven't seen them, a "pocket" Big Book with a camo cover! So think about your hunting buddies and maybe any loved ones in the military who would like to have one of these. Don't slack off on your service work. That job never goes on vacation!

Peace out....Judy

2nd Annual Alumni Cruise

We are setting sail again on a 7-day Western Caribbean Cruise aboard Carnival's cruise ship Conquest. The cruise will depart from Galveston on October 12, make port in Montego Bay, Cayman Islands and Cozumel and return to Galveston on October 19th.

Inside cabins	\$679.33 per person plus \$70.00 prepaid gratuity = \$749.33
Ocean View Cabin	\$759.33 per person plus \$70.00 prepaid gratuity = \$829.33
Balcony Cabins	\$929.33 per person plus \$70.00 prepaid gratuity = \$999.33

Cancellation by Sept. 12	\$200 penalty
Cancellation by Oct. 5	50% penalty
Cancellation Oct. 6 or later	No refund

The deadline has come and gone but call Susie at Adventure Travel now at 830-895-4449. There are a few cabins still available!



Upcoming Events

August 9	AA Dinner	Woodstock, IL
	Chris	
Sept. 3 - 7		France
	Chris	
Sept. 13	AA District Workshop	San Antonio, TX
	Louis	
Sept. 20	Rally for Recovery	Modesto, CA
Sept. 27	Recovery in the Park	Kerrville, TX
Oct. 9	Event in Atlanta	Atlanta, GA
	Chris	
Oct. 12 - 19	2nd Annual Alumni Cruise	Western Caribbean
Oct. 23 - 26	AA Conference	Stockholm, Sweden
November 7	Spirit of Houston	Houston, TX
	Chris	
Nov. 15		Scottsdale, AZ
	Chris	
Nov. 21 - 22	McHenry Soberfest AA	Lake Geneva, WI
Dec 8	DFW Alumni Christmas Party	Dallas, TX
	Chris	
Dec. 16	Houston Alumni Christmas Party	Houston, TX
Dec. 18		London, Ontario
	Chris	

This schedule was last updated in August 2008, please follow the link below to the most recent "Alumni Speaks" schedule.
<http://www.lahacienda.com/alumni-speaks.asp>

Pay it Forward.....

"Pay it Forward" is a fund that is exclusively for the purpose of creating safe, positive environments for newly recovering alcoholics and addicts to practice recovery. These are individuals who, upon leaving treatment, would otherwise be returning to the streets, an abusive relationship, or some other negative recovery environment.

The purpose of PAY IT FORWARD is to glorify God by assisting fellow alcoholics and addicts with the financial means necessary to recover from their disease and re-establish their lives in the productive community. Monies donated to and distributed by this fund will assist individuals leaving treatment who have demonstrated a commitment to recovery, but who, without our assistance, would be returning

to circumstances and/or environments detrimental to the process, i.e. homelessness, abusive or active alcoholic spouses, etc. Our initial intention is to help these people locate a safe, positive environment in which to practice recovery. As we have found these facilities to be lacking in San Antonio, we have partnered with The Oxford House (a national organization who opens, maintains and administers sober living facilities, with seven locations in San Antonio) to open additional houses. In 2007 Pay it Forward was blessed with the opportunity to help Oxford open house number 8 in San Antonio. This was a house for women and Pay it Forward assisted by supplying most of the furniture for the house. This was a small step in supplying a desperate short-fall in sober

living for women in SA. Oxford has plans to open several more homes over the next 2 years and it is our intention to help them do so; after which, we will re-evaluate where the greatest needs in this area lay. We have also targeted a local group in SA called SAMMS Ministries for our long range support. SAMMS maintains a "transitional" living facility for not only the alcoholic or addict in recovery, but also for that person's whole family. They provide recovery tools, vocational training, etc. We think it to be a most worthy cause, but we do not yet have the resources to support both.

- Brad D.

www.payitforwardsa.org



P.O. Box 1
145 La Hacienda Way
800-749-6160
830-238-4222

Call the Alumni Department

Chris, ext. 510
Alicia, ext. 512
Judy, ext. 513
Louis, Ext. 515
Courtney, Ext. 511

Chris' Website Suggestions!

www.aaintegrity.com I've talked to these guys...dead on info.....great articles

www.xaspeakers.org

www.recoveredalcoholic.blogspot.com
Danny S is a hoot...He's kindawell, he's VERY direct and I know a lot of you appreciate that! (ya don't have to agree with EVERYTHING you read!)

www.bigbookthumper.org Both sites run by my buddies in Iceland. Good info and a great downloadable site. Send 'em a small donation and start listening! We need them to stay in business!

www.ppgaadallas.org One of the oldest and best "no middle of the road" sites out there.

www.lahacienda.com

Road to Sanity

I never felt that I had a choice in altering my life. My decisions had been based on fear, pride, or ego. As a result, those decisions led me down a path of self-destruction. Today I try to allow my God to guide me on the road to sanity. I am responsible for my action — or inaction — whatever the consequences may be.

