



Happy Holidays from Serenity Hill

DECEMBER 2008

La Hacienda Alumni Newsletter

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Chris R.

"The hall is a place to wait in, a place from which to try the various doors, not a place to live in. For that purpose the worst of the rooms, (whichever that may be) is, I think, preferable." C.S. Lewis

"When God closes one door, He will open another...but it's hell in the hall way.. (Don S.)

Tis' the season.....seems so many of us put our lives on hold till "after the Holidays". I'm right in the middle of all the La Ha Alumni Christmas travel, what a hoot to get to see so many of you. I'd do this for free....don't tell anyone! So many folks I have visited with have allowed the Holidays to interfere with EVERYTHING, especially their Programs. I think this is the reason we see so many relapses around this time of year. The stress alone can be a distraction. The world's crazy and fear around money and jobs is touching lots of us. After coming back from one of the parties I felt myself getting caught up in all that. I can't do it! The disciplines of steps 10, 11, and 12 can't be set aside. They are not an

"option". They allow us to walk through all the crazy stuff life throws at us...especially this time of year! The disease doesn't take a break at Christmas and neither should we. Get quiet and take a quick 10th step. Is there anything you're not being honest about? Things you need to take care of? Do you need to get honest about that last "little relapse?" Get quiet and meditate. God is going to tell you what to do. NOW GO DO IT! Don't let your

head tell you to wait. I know it's so hard, especially with such a GOOD excuse as the Holidays....but we have to do the next right thing NOW! I suggest you find a meeting and look for someone REALLY busted up. I promise, you will enjoy life more be-

cause of it. Remember...."you will be able to help when others can't."

Keep headed in the right direction...get out of the hall!

Merry Christmas . Call me if you need me. I'm still at extension 510 xo cmr



Alicia N.....

Hello Alumni...

Christmas is around the corner and hopefully that statement brings you joy and not panic. I hope your holiday season is going well so far. ...ours is going great except for trying to untangle and put up Christmas lights last night...I wonder why there isn't an easier way? Oh well, it will come together. I let Ethan know that Santa had called and was concerned that he had not written his Christmas list yet...after much coaxing, he finally picked up a pen and began the great list. After about 30 minutes of tenacious writing, he asked me "Mom, how do you spell Rottweiler?"...geez, that was not what I expected. Good thing I get to edit the list before it goes to Santa J!!!

Another year coming to an end always brings about some reflection. If I could come up with a theme for this year it would probably be "Dependence on God." More than ever I have come to realize that my total reliance must be on God...not on any humans...not on what humans think about me...not on whether or not other humans approve of me and my actions...not on whether I am performing well enough, according to humans...NONE OF THAT!! All on God, that is the only place it can be. I have made a few changes here and there this last year that have strengthened my dependence on God. I stepped out on faith that there was a new level of growth just around the corner and what do you know, it was true. As scary as those faith jumps can be, they are sure worth it.

I am still an absolute goof ball who messes up at this spiritual principles stuff daily, however I am a goofball who is more dependent on God than ever and utterly grateful for it. I pray that you and your families have a laughter-filled and blessed Christmas. Freedom from this disease is such a gift and something to be celebrated!! Hope to see you at some of the Alumni Christmas parties...until then...

Peace and Love ~ Alicia New

Director of Alumni Services

800/749-6160, ext 512

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.

-Helen Keller

Louis R.....

To Our Alumni and their Families,

I am grateful to have the opportunity to write this article and wish you all the best at the close of this year that has gone by so quickly. I am grateful to reflect on the changes in my life as a result of sobriety. This has been unfolding over time and sobriety would not be possible without surrender to a Power greater than myself and the willingness to change for the better. I also realize, looking back, how little I have known where I was going and that these changes could not have been predicted.

To recover means an ongoing willingness to recognize and address necessary changes in sobriety. This takes many forms but certainly that growth and understanding has to include, but is not limited to the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial, legal, vocation, scholastic and romantic areas of my life. I have had to change or be limited in sobriety. To be limited means consequences for failing to take heed and not be willing to grow along spiritual lines. I certainly have seen the wisdom inherent in the guidance and direction of the 12 steps. Sobriety has always been about recovering from the losses of the past and turning them into assets in the present. In other words, coming to grips with my alcoholism is an ongoing process which is always about the future.

I encourage anyone to take the action of the Steps, apply the principles of the Traditions and be of service in this unfolding story of life in sobriety. There is excellent guidance and direction in chapters 7-11 in the Big Book and also in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as well as the AA Service Manual. These give further instructions and insight into spiritual principles to help us solve our problems as they relate to alcoholism. These principles have helped me develop a reliance on God and surely has changed my life for the better.

I hope the Holidays and beyond that, every day, find you and yours living a happy, healthy, and holy life and if not, remember, there is hope in the simple 12 Step Program of Recovery. Let us know how you are doing and if there is anything we can do to help. Thank you and God bless.

Come on up to the House,
Louis Romano, LCDC
800/749-6160, ext.515

We never question whether something is fair when it's good.
But when something bad happens, the first thing we say is,
"This isn't fair."

--Rabbi Roy Walter



Courtney

Hello there! Well, with Christmas around the corner, I am reminded of years past. There were so many holiday seasons when I was in my disease that everything in me wanted to show up for my family. I had every intention of being the daughter and especially the sister that I was “supposed” to be, but when the day arrived, I couldn’t pull it off. Now, 4 ½ years later, when I look back it seems as if it was a different life. I was blessed to have my younger brother here for Thanksgiving this year. He came out here to the hill on Friday and heard me speak to the patients. What an awesome experience for the both of us! I couldn’t have predicted this wonderful life that God has laid out for me if I had tried. My family stuck around and helped my Grandmother and I move out to the country. I remember when I relocated to the hill country I thought I had to adjust to a different, more laid back lifestyle. Now I find myself having to make a 40 minute drive into town just to go grocery shopping! All the same, it’s absolutely beautiful and at night it’s as though you can see every star in the sky. It reminds me of the part in the BB on page 46, “...we found ourselves thinking, when enchanted by the starlit night, “Who then, made all this?” The feeling of awe as God’s presence surrounds me is undeniable... and I am grateful. Not to mention Noa Bear (our chocolate lab) is totally in heaven.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Alumni Christmas parties this year and wish you and your families a truly blessed and joyful holiday season.

Peace be with you, Courtney.

Housecleaning

We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning *we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.*

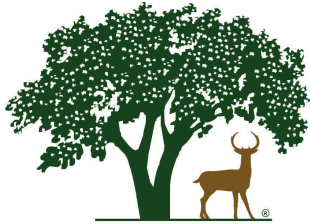
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Upcoming Events

Dec. 8	DFW Alumni Christmas Party	Dallas, TX
	Chris	
Dec. 11	College Station Alumni Christmas Party	College Station, TX
	Chris	
Dec. 16	Houston Alumni Christmas	Houston, TX
	Chris	
Dec. 18	London	London, Ontario
	Chris	
Jan. 9-10	SETA AA Conference	Houston, TX
	Chris	
Jan. 14	Alumni Talk Solutions	Austin, TX
	Chris	
Jan. 19	AA Talk	Salt Lake City, UT
	Chris	
Jan. 29	AA Talk	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
	Chris	
Feb. 6-7	CA Workshop	Bristol, England
	Chris	
Feb. 13-14	AA Conference	El Paso, TX
Feb. 20-21	Sate AA Conference	Louisville, KY
	Chris	
Feb. 27	AA Talk	Marble Falls, TX
	Chris	
March 2	AA Talk	Atlanta, GA
	Chris	
March 21	Owls Nest Recovery	Florence, SC
	Chris	
March 27-28	ANA Talk/Workshop at The Wilson House	East Dorset, VT
	Chris	

Click here for a recent schedule <http://www.lahacienda.com/alumni-speaks.asp>



La Hacienda

La Hacienda
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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.



Seeking Serenity

The program may not always be easy to practice, but I had to acknowledge that my serenity had come to me after working the Steps.

As I work the Steps in everything I do, practicing these principles in all my affairs, now I find that I am awake to God, to others, and to myself.

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Thought to Ponder . . .

**Serenity isn't freedom from the storm;
it is peace within the storm. .**

