



# A View From Serenity Hill

MAY 2008

La Hacienda Alumni Newsletter

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## 2nd Annual Alumni Cruise



### October 12-19, 2008

We are setting sail again on a 7-day Western Caribbean Cruise aboard Carnival's cruise ship Conquest. We opted for the 7-day cruise because it goes to different places than the 5-day cruise. 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. The arrangements are being coordinated through Adventure Travel in Kerrville. We plan to hold workshops and have speakers while at sea.

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## Chris R.

Yep, we survived another Reunion. La Ha's 36<sup>th</sup> and my 15<sup>th</sup>. It was the best yet, I think. It was the first time in ages I wasn't glued to the Weather Channel sweating the rain! I saw a few pink faces but thankfully it didn't get TOO hot. Rob P., Chris S, and Earl H. did a great job speaking. Ya'll did the rest. I am already worried about next year...we kind of set the bar HIGH! To those of you that missed it....well, you missed it! If you didn't get the speaker CDs call Judy at ex. 513 and place your order.

Now that Reunion is "put to bed", I want to get back to our Alumni Meetings. Ya'll are kind of the life blood of this place and we want to continue to stay connected. I was in Amarillo

and Houston talking last month and will be in Austin in June. For any of the other groups that want to schedule a workshop or talk, let us know. I know I'm going to have time now ..... because my job is going to change. YEA! This is a good thing.....a little scary but good. La Ha promoted me to Director of Recovery Services this week! This will mean I get to spend less time doing paper work and more time with ya'll...in person. That's cool! I will still be available by phone and email but I will also be free to travel. Yep, I'm still going to be doing the morning lectures with the Alumni guys. Alicia's going to take my spot as Alumni Director so be nice!

I'm really excited about the fu-

ture . I have watched a lot of miracles happen here the last 14 years. I have an amazing life! This job change will allow me to participate in some different areas that I've always been interested in. I am SO grateful to La Hacienda for trusting me with new responsibilities. Anyway, I will keep you posted on what happens. There is never a dull moment at La Ha!

I was talking to a guy at Reunion that was struggling a bit with his Program....he had gotten kind of "flat". I knew right what he was talking about! It has happened to everyone I know... sooner or later. I pointed him to a few websites that are among my all time favorites. Thought I'd share them with you too.

Check out [PAGE 7](#)— cmr

## Alicia N.....

Hello Alumni,

Well, as you probably guessed, we are all a bit tired after the Reunion, but WOW was it worth it. So many people said that this was the best Reunion they had ever been to and I have to agree. Seeing so many of you sober and free always blows me away, but for some reason this year it really touched my spirit. Thank you to all of you who made the trek back to this special place.

You know, as I was listening to so many of you share at the Sunday morning Alumni meeting, tears just began to flow...tears of joy and AWE!! I remember some of you sitting in my office while you were a patient and watching you cry, overwhelmed with fear of the unknown - of sobriety - of reality - of feelings - of pain...tons of fears! And here you are months later, years later, sharing the hope and joy in your life. As the tears started to flow I began thanking God for allowing me to be a part of all of this - a link in the chain to freedom. So many of you had such a Light in your spirit that you didn't even have to tell me how you had been doing, I could see it in your eyes. What a blessing that weekend was to so many, including me...thanks again for making it possible.

I was in a meeting last night and it was on the 10<sup>th</sup> step – daily inventory (BB pg.84) and some words really jumped out at me...“new mistakes...grow in understanding and effectiveness...continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentments, and fear...when these crop up...etc”. This all really makes me look at where am I currently – how am I doing at this moment with being loving and tolerant of those around me? These things are going to try to crop up and get me and I need to be awake enough to recognize them. Once they are found, I need to take the action needed to get them out of the way so I am not blocked from God...you all know all of this stuff, I just wanted to remind you of the daily action – it is so important that I keep growing, keep going towards the Light, and when I do take some steps backwards (and boy do I!), all I need to do is clean it up and try to do better the next time. Obviously a lot of you are doing this already because I saw that Light in you this past weekend. For those of you stuck in the darkness – COME ON...start to fight to get free.

Bless you all for all that you do out there in the trenches...we need more of you! Change is always good out here...always weird, but good...so, with that being said Chris has been promoted to Director of Recovery Services, meaning he will be traveling to come see a lot of you and get his message of hope out there even more. That means they have moved me into his slot...holy mackerel, God moves quick. I am very excited (and scared, nervous, freaked out) and hope that I can do even more to help you all. Oh, also the next sober cruise is coming up in October and Ethan and I are going this time – we cant wait and I hope you will come sail with us. If you need anything, please feel free to give me a call – ext 512.

Peace and Love - Alicia

“If you want things to be different, perhaps the answer is to become different yourself.” —Norman Vincent Peale

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## Louis R.....

To our Alumni and their Families,

I have attended 11 Reunions since being employed at La Hacienda and 2 others before that and I believe the 2008 Reunion this past weekend was the best one overall, that I can recall.

The weather, the grounds, the patients, the staff, the volunteers, the speakers and most important – the people for whom the celebration was intended – our Alumni and their families were excellent. All of you looked and sounded so good, it was great to see and enjoy your presence back on campus. My only regret was to not have had more time to visit with you. The whole weekend flowed smoothly and that credit is to everyone that God planned to be here. I felt proud and honored to see the progress as the result of your efforts to take that walk back here and demonstrate that with the grace of God, treatment and sobriety are possible. It was a powerful and inspiring message of hope to the patients presently here who do not have experience with that but were able to observe it. Thanks to all again for your life.

It is also my privilege and honor to wish Chris Raymer well in his new endeavors for La Hacienda in the position of Director of Recovery Services and welcome Alicia as the head of Alumni Services. Both Chris and Alicia have

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spent much time and effort dedicated to the sobriety and well-being of so many people and I am sure this change in positions will create much more opportunity for many yet to come in recovery. I look forward to the continued pleasure of working with them both.

I encourage our Alumni to attend the Outreach meetings, even after you have settled into your home groups, to extend a helping hand to those newly discharged from here that need encouragement and support in those early days post-discharge from La Hacienda and help them to find 12 step recovery meetings and sponsorship.

I wish everyone a wonderful summer, encourage you to sign up for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sober Sea Cruise, October 12-19, in the Caribbean and take care of yourselves and those around you until we meet again.

Come on up to the House,  
Louis Romano, LCDC

## Right Action

**One of the most important things AA has given me, in addition to freedom from booze, is the ability to take “right action.” It says the promises will always materialize if I work for them. Fantasizing about them, debating them, preaching about them and faking them just won’t work. I’ll remain a miserable, rationalizing dry drunk. By taking action and working the Twelve Steps in all my affairs, I’ll have a life beyond my wildest dreams.**

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## Courtney

Hey Guys! Wow, what an awesome deal Reunion was. I want to thank everyone that came out to be a part of such an amazing celebration. It doesn’t get better than that. The Big Book describes it to a tee when it tells us that “it works, it really does.” It is such an honor and even almost overwhelming when I think of the position I’ve been placed in. Not only do I get to experience God in my personal life and recovery, but to watch this power work in the lives of so many others, in such tremendous ways, and on almost a daily basis is truly a blessing. Thank you; you have all enriched my life in more ways than I can express. I can’t wait until next year!

On a personal note, this semester has come to an end...yeahhhhhh! After a rather difficult week of finals I’m ready for summer: afternoons at the river with my dog, Noa; days on the lake; and weekend trips to the coast. Nobody said sobriety had to be boring!

This year’s sober cruise is creeping up on us and I encourage you guys to check it out. Last year’s was a blast and I look forward to this one in the Caribbean. Never in a million years did I think I’d be headed to *paradise* on a *sober* cruise.

It looks like some changes are taking place out here in the Alumni depart-

ment and I am truly excited. I want to congratulate both Chris and Alicia on their new positions. Some pretty cool things seem to be taking place recently. From an individual standpoint to a universal awakening, good things are happening. As the weak get weaker and more desperate the light is getting brighter. I am so grateful to be on a lit path that is safe and protected. Aren’t you? I hope this newsletter finds everyone well. You guys please don’t hesitate to give us a call and let us know miracles are taking place for you!  
Peace,  
Courtney

## Judy T.....

Hello from Camp La Ha! Wouldn't that be great if we had summer camp? All you happy campers would be signed up wouldn't you?

Can you remember the first few days? It's anything but fun and games but then the fog cleared and before you knew it, it was time to go. My point is, remember that first few days when you see a brother in the room or on the street hurting, irritable, wanting answers. Step up! Share a piece of the past with them. Give a glimmer of hope. No, not everyone has the chance to go to a safe and structured rehabilitation facility. Count your blessings right now. But you do know you have been given the tools to help others. Don't let your good fortune of being here and the chance of a new life be wasted. Step up! You guys please have a safe and happy summer, love your families, be the Camel. Start each day on your knees, end every day on your knees. God Bless!  
Peace out.

## 2nd Annual Alumni Cruise...

We have reserved 60 ocean view cabins, 10 inside cabins and 10 balcony cabins. Each cabin will hold 2 people, and in some cases, 3 or 4.

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

1st Deposit	\$250.00 per person due ASAP
Final Payment	Balance by July 11

Cancellation by July 28	Deposit fully refundable
Cancellation by Sept. 12	\$200 penalty
Cancellation by Oct. 5	50% penalty
Cancellation Oct. 6 or later	No refund



Call Adventure Travel at 830-895-4449 to reserve a cabin!

# Upcoming Events

May 10	San Jose AA Chris	San Jose, CA
May 30, 31	Toronto Canada CA Conference Chris	Toronto, Canada
June 6 - 8	Calgary Gratitude Round Up AA Chris	Calgary, Canada
June 11	Austin Alumni @ Solutions Chris	Austin, Texas
June 26	Salvation Army Chris	Austin, Texas
June 28	Tell It Like It Is Group AA Chris	Covington, LA
July...	Sometime in July Chris will take his first vacation ever!	
July 18, 19	AA Conference Alicia	Indianapolis, IN
August 1 - 3	AAGgieland Convention Alicia	College Station, TX
August 9	AA Dinner Chris	Woodstock, IL
Sept. 3 - 7		France
Sept. 20	Rally for Recovery	Modesto, CA
Sept. 27	Recovery in the Park	Kerrville, TX
Oct. 12 - 19	2nd Annual Alumni Cruise	Western Caribbean
Oct. 23 - 26	AA Conference	Stockholm, Sweden
November 7		Scottsdale, AZ
Nov. 21 - 22	McHenry Soberfest AA	Lake Geneva, WI



La Hacienda  
PO Box 1  
Hunt, Texas 78024  
1-800-749-6160

### 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](http://www.aaintegrity.com) I've talked to these guys...dead on info.....great articles

[www.xaspeakers.org](http://www.xaspeakers.org)

[www.recoveredalcoholic.blogspot.com](http://www.recoveredalcoholic.blogspot.com)  
Danny S is a hoot...He's kinda .....well, 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](http://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](http://www.ppgaadallas.org) One of the oldest and best "no middle of the road" sites out there.



## Spirituality

Spirituality is an awakening --  
or is it all the loose ends woven together into a mellow fabric? . . .  
It's patience in the face of stupidity.  
It's feeling that you want to knock somebody's head off --  
and walking away instead. . .  
It's wearing dungarees that feel like a tuxedo.  
It's wanting to go home, yet being there. . .  
It's the awareness that survival is a savage fight between you and yourself.  
It's a magnetic pull toward those who are down and out.  
It's knowing that even the bad times are good. . .  
The singular thing that is spirituality cannot be given to a fellowman  
by word of mouth.  
If every man is to have it, then every man must earn it,  
in his own way, by his own hand, stamped by the seal of himself,  
in his own individual right.

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Spirituality is the essence of being. It can shape reality.