

# *A View from Serenity Hill*



La Hacienda's Alumni Newsletter

February 2011

## *Looking Forward*

When I first set foot on La Hacienda's grounds in August 1979, I was impressed by the feel of the campus; it felt more like a family hunting lodge than a treatment center. During the seven years I was a member of the clinical team, La Hacienda was bought and sold six times by various hospital corporations. It quickly became apparent that contribution to the corporate bottom line was far more important than returning money to the facility to maintain the physical plant. When I left in 1986, my hope was that someday La Hacienda would be purchased by individuals who were committed to both quality of treatment and the physical restoration of this bit of Texas Hill Country history. Upon my return in 2002, I found my hopes realized; La Hacienda was now owned by five such individuals! I was impressed to find that the treatment philosophy was still based on the 12-Steps around which a wonderful program had been created. I was equally stunned by the realization that the owners had reinvested millions of dollars into restoring the physical plant and grounds to their former glory and had added some much needed new buildings to the landscape: a new Business Office, a new Family Building, a new Arts and Crafts Center, an Intern Center, the gym expanded to twice its original size, and countless other remodeling and renovation projects too numerous to mention. In this edition of the Alumni Newsletter, I am proud to announce our biggest project yet (drum roll please): a new Special Care Unit. The new SCU will be a two-story combination of medical offices and an 18-bed Special Care Unit of approximately 7000 square feet. In addition, the old SCU space that includes the pharmacy will be remodeled. You will be happy to know that when the project is finished patients will no longer have to wait in line in the parking lot in the freezing cold or sweltering heat to get daily medications. Instead, climate-controlled waiting areas have been designed inside of the building. The final plans will be put out for bid soon and we hope to break ground in April. We look forward with eager anticipation to this project and extend a big thank you to the generosity of our owners!

Art VanDivier  
Executive Director

## *Save the Date*

### **1st annual Alumni Golf Tournament**

**June 4, 2011 - 8:30 am**

**Kerrville Schreiner Golf Course**

\$50 registration fee

Scramble Format

Great prizes for winners!

***Only 100 slots available***

Breakfast, lunch & goodie bags provided

*Evening Gratitude Meeting,*

*Bonfire and Cookout following at*

*La Hacienda's River Property*

**Info: 800-749-6160 Ext. 550/520**

✧ ✧ ✧

### **AAggieland Convention**

August 5-11, 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!

By the time you get this, 2010 will be a memory and 2011 a reality. I'm still blown away by the warm welcome I have received from all of you since my return to La Hacienda. Change can be tough but you have handled it with grace and dignity. From the moment I arrived, I have been on the go. I have achieved my goal of visiting all of the alumni groups, most of you twice. It was sure good to see old friends and meet new ones.

I was thrilled to see so many of you at the Hill Country Round Up. We had a constant flow of visitors to La Ha's Hospitality Suite. Hundreds of hot dogs and hugs were had by all. Special thanks to Julie Harvey, Stephanie A. and Chris W. I couldn't have done it without you!

The 38<sup>th</sup> annual La Ha Reunion went off without a hitch. This was my 5th reunion in 6 years. We had a good turnout and received many compliments. Angie P., Tom P., and Jacey L. carried a wonderful message. On Friday night, Leeannasaurus Rex had the crowd groovin'. If you have not yet had the experience, I encourage you to come to the next one September 23-25. For those who haven't attended in a few years, come recharge in the fellowship of the Spirit. I would like to express my appreciation to the following for their help in making this Reunion happen: Chris W. and the gang of volunteers; Leonard and his crew for their great food; marketing reps for serving food and drinks; case managers for their open house; and the Governing Body for their continued support. Based on all of your feedback, we are looking at a few changes for the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Reunion. More details to come on that at a later date.

Keep your antenna up for our first annual Alumni Golf Tournament on June 4th. Stay tuned for more details. Don't forget to check our website and Facebook page to see what else is coming up in La Ha Land.

Peace, Love,  
Joe

### New Alumni Group Meeting

**Waco, Texas**

Wednesday evenings

7:30 pm

Info: Kenny K. - 254-662-3439

*Special thanks to Kenny and Frank for their service!*

## According to Joe

### Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 25

*"There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and have been rocketed to a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed."*

*The question we have to ask ourselves is: "Am I truly seeking God?" That question can best be answered by looking at my actions on a daily basis. Do I go to meetings? Do I have a home group? Do I have a sponsor? Have I taken or experienced the Twelve Steps? Am I living in 10, 11 and 12? Do I take the action in 10? Am I doing a nightly review and praying and meditating every morning? Am I working with others and doing service work? If the answer to these questions is "No" and I am a real alcoholic or addict, how could I be in good spiritual condition? According to the Big Book, fit spiritual condition is the only thing that gives us a defense against that first drink or drug. Having the right job, house, relationship, vehicle, etc., etc., etc. is not what keeps me sane and sober. A relationship with God does. I don't stay recovered today on what I did yesterday! I can't delude myself. My daily actions are the key to answering the question, "Am I truly seeking God?"*

*"But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you are getting another drink. Your Heavenly Father will never let you down."*

*-- from "Doctor Bob's Nightmare"  
in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 181*



## Brain Food for the Recovering Soul

Faith in something greater than ourselves enables us to do what we have said we'll do, to press forward when we are tired or hurt or afraid, to keep going when the challenge seems overwhelming and the course is entirely uncertain." — Gordon B. Hinckley

### Medical Rounds

#### Tobacco Dependency

by Daniel Boone, MD

Tobacco dependency occurs in 21% of the population in North America. The vast majority, close to 95%, is by smoking; the rest use smokeless tobacco products. The addicting component of tobacco is nicotine but there are several thousand other chemicals in tobacco smoke or juice that are quite harmful to the body.

When a cigarette is made, a third of the tobacco is cut leaf tobacco. Another third is the processed stalks and other plant parts that are combined and then pressed into sheets that are then sprayed with nicotine and some other chemicals and then cut to resemble leaf tobacco. The final third is leaf tobacco that is impregnated with freon and freeze dried to expand the volume. Tobacco smoke produces anywhere from 600 to 4,000 additional chemicals. What keeps you coming back to tobacco is nicotine.

In the addicted community, which is only 10-15% of the population, 80% of addicts use tobacco. Sadly, relapse rates are higher in smokers versus non smokers and the brain regeneration that occurs in recovery is markedly hampered by tobacco use.

So what do you need to do if you are a smoker? The obvious answer is to JUST STOP! As you know from other addictive processes, however, it is not easy. The success rates for "cold turkey" tobacco cessation are around 3 percent. Fortunately, there are medications that have been designed to help you get off tobacco. The oldest is simple nicotine replacement. The key for replacement therapy is to substitute nicotine mg for tobacco mg. For example, one cigarette contains 1 mg of nicotine. So if you smoke 20 cigarettes per day--one pack--then you need a minimum of 20 mg of nicotine replacement per day. That means a 21 mg patch, or 5 pieces of 4 mg nicotine gum, or 20 sprays with a nicotine inhaler, etc. The idea is to gradually reduce your nicotine use every few weeks until you taper off. The success rates with nicotine replacement are right around 20 percent. You can increase that to close to 30% with a one week pre-treatment course of Zyban or Wellbutrin--a drug that raises dopamine in the brain and is frequently used for depression.

To get higher smoking cessation results you would have to take a course of Chantix (varenicline). Chantix is a nicotine receptor blocker, but is also a partial agonist on the nicotine receptors in the brain. It fools your body into thinking you have taken nicotine while blocking the high from the nicotine. It takes a minimum of 7 days to fully block the receptors. Usually by the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> day, all the receptors are blocked and cigarettes and tobacco start to taste and smell bad and you gradually reduce and stop your tobacco intake. The major problem with Chantix is the potential side effects. It MUST be taken with a full stomach, but can still cause nausea and headaches. If taken too close to bedtime it can interfere with sleep and cause unpleasant dreams. Chantix can cause mood swings which can lead to worsening depression, psychoses, and suicidal thoughts. This must be considered carefully when you contemplate smoking or tobacco cessation.

So if you want to finally "kick the habit" of tobacco, talk to your doctor about these options. Pick a quit date at least 7 days before you start your smoking cessation efforts. Start focusing on that date, talking about it, dreaming about it. Then, as the commercials say, "Just do it"!

### Focus Group

#### In Consideration of Step One

by Charlotte Safir, LCDC

**"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable."**

Of all the steps, this is the one that sets the stage for recovery to happen. Consequently, resistance, rebellion and delusion as well as the unwillingness to be rigorously honest are some of the components that keep us from recovery, from being willing to surrender to the reality of this step.

Step One is the foundation of Recovery. It is the platform on which an entirely new life can be built. Whenever we do not stay current in our experience with this step, for it is not about knowledge, that is where we will relapse into drinking and using. Through the refreshing review about no control, no choice and no power, it is possible to experience this vital step at a deeper and deeper level.

When we lose our truth in the first step, we fall prey to the idea that we can drink or use successfully. It is not uncommon that over time the rebuilding of the ego, self knowledge and pride has the power to convince us that one of something will not hurt.

On first application of the steps, we might readily admit to powerlessness and unmanageability; however as time passes and we mistakenly think that because outside circumstances have calmed and therefore life is manageable again, complacency forms as evidenced not only by the lack of interest in completing the steps but reworking the steps. The "I know" mentality of the ego creates a barrier to looking at where we are currently with no control, no choice, and no power.

The benefits of reworking this step, in conjunction with all of the steps, are part of "continuing to grow in understanding and effectiveness". Through the excavating process of this step, we gain more peace, acceptance and deepen the relationship to the Power that keeps us sober while gaining a healthy respect for the disease of alcoholism and addiction. When active in the disease, we stayed current, if not through daily use, we were never far from what we used. In recovery, the same holds true, we must be willing to stay current in our experience and understanding of the step that is the catalyst for making recovery possible.

**Where are you with Step One today?**

# 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 Get a Copy of my Medical Records?

On any one of our campuses, our highly trained staff can assist you with completing our HIPAA/42 CFR Part II Compliant Authorization to obtain your medical records.

From your home or office, you can complete an Authorization by accessing our website and downloading our Authorization Form. Please follow the steps below to obtain a copy of our Authorization Form.

1. Go to [www.lahacienda.com](http://www.lahacienda.com)
2. On the left hand side of the home page, you will see the “Resources”; click on “Resources”.
3. When “Resources” opens you will see multiple colored tabs.  
Click on the tab marked “Downloads” on the middle of the right side of the page.
4. Click on the last option “Authorization to Release Information [Download](#)  (Size: 20KB)”.

### Please be sure to fully complete the following information:

DOB: (Patient’s Date of Birth)

SS#: (Patient’s Social Security Number)

PRINTED Name of patient: (Legible Full Name of Patient)

NAME of program which is to make disclosure: (La Hacienda)

COMPLETE NAME & ADDRESS of person or organization to which disclosure is to be made: **WHO do you want us to send the information to and what is their CORRECT full address, phone, and/or fax number?**  
**SPECIFY** the **EXACT** information to be released: **WHAT reports/tests do you want us to send to the recipient?**

For the Purpose of: **REASON** information is needed, i.e. legal, continuing care, insurance, etc.

Authorization Expiration: **DATE** the form no farther out than one year of signature; or Condition of

Expiration: **EVENT** at which point you want the Authorization to expire, i.e. document released.

**All blanks on the Authorization form must be completed with patient’s signature and date of signature. A witness for the signature is suggested, but not required.**

Completed forms should be mailed to: **La Hacienda, P.O. Box 1, Hunt, TX 78024 – OR –**  
faxed to **(830) 238-6119**. Due to confidentiality rules, we cannot accept the completed form by e-mail.

## From Leonard’s Kitchen to Yours

### Peanut Crusted Chicken with Mustard Sauce

4 boneless chicken breasts (5-6 oz. each)  
1 cup peanuts  
2 eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
1/2 cup flour  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Olive oil for pan

Heat oven to 375 degrees. In a food processor pulse the peanuts just until finely crushed (be careful not to grind them into a paste). Transfer the crushed nuts to a plate. In a bowl, mix eggs and milk. Put the flour on a plate. Line up the flour, egg mixture, and nuts in that order.

Between two sheets of plastic wrap, lightly pound the chicken breasts to even them out. Lightly season the chicken with salt and pepper. Dredge a chicken breast in the flour making sure it’s coated evenly. Shake off excess. Then dredge it in the egg mixture. Then dip the chicken into the crushed peanuts patting to coat. Grill in olive oil in a skillet about two to three minutes on each side until golden brown. Place the chicken in a pan and bake in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes more. Remove from oven and serve with mustard sauce.

#### Mustard Sauce

1/4 cup flour  
1 tablespoon margarine  
1 1/2 cups heavy cream  
1/4 cup Dijon mustard  
1/4 cup prepared yellow mustard

Cook flour and margarine. Add cream and then both mustards. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## In the Spotlight

### La Hacienda Steps into the Social Media World!

If you are an alumni from Houston, you have probably met Kristen Black. For the past five years, she has been promoting La Hacienda in the Houston area and providing outreach services to our alumni there. Recently, however, Kristen accepted a new challenge: keeping La Hacienda active in the social media world.



You can link up with La Hacienda now on Facebook and Twitter and stay up to date and connected through our new blog. Stay tuned for “Morning Cup of Joe” with our own Joe Hartwell, “The Doc Spot” with our great medical team, campus happenings and other great recovery information for alumni, families and those seeking help for alcoholism or drug addiction.

If you have questions, comments, suggestions or just want to congratulate Kristen on her new opportunity, you can email her at [kblack@lahacienda.com](mailto:kblack@lahacienda.com).

## Connect with Your Spiritual Compass

by Charlotte Safir, LCDC

When drinking and using, I had lost connection to my Spiritual Compass. I went down scary, dark roads. I spent time with some very dangerous people. At the time I did not realize it. I thought I was being adventurous when, in fact, I was being cavalier, unconscious, careless with my life. I was sleep walking through my life, unaware of the damage I was inflicting on myself and those around me. Any inkling of conscience I might have had was quietly drowned out with more mood-altering chemicals.

As active alcoholics and addicts, we lose our inner sight, the ability to navigate through our lives in ways that are self enhancing. We are rudderless. Unable to read warning signs or distinguish high risk situations, we misread the internal cues or ignore them completely, if we sense them at all. Most of the time, our overblown ego will tell us “our case is different”.

Thankfully in recovery, I have been brought into the awareness of this Spiritual Compass, which directs me to the Great Reality Within. As I continue to grow spiritually through effort and commitment to the process that got me sober to begin with, I have come to rely more and more on this internal blessing. I live in awed consciousness of the Power that has created us all and has, as part of our design, instilled this Spiritual Compass: guiding, directing, pointing, revealing the path set before us. The risks I take today are in the nature of telling the truth, living in communion with this Power despite what I may think or feel, living in the unknown as a state of being. I rest in the assurance I am not different from others but intrinsically connected to everything as I am to this Power.

In the Big Book, there are phrases like “a life more wonderful than I could have ever imagined”, “our best years of existence lie ahead”, “a design for living that works in the tough going”, “our darkest past becomes our greatest asset”, “spiritual principles will solve ALL my problems”. These pronouncements have lifted off the page and become true as I live a life in Recovery. I want to shout from this page, “Don’t wait another moment! Dive deeply into the work of the Circle and Triangle so that you too may connect to what is already present within you -- *your own Spiritual Compass!*”

## Take Time

### Books:

#### **12 Stupid Things That Mess Up Recovery: Avoiding Relapse Through Self-Awareness and Right Action**

by Allen Berger Ph.D.

*You're finally clean and sober. It's exciting, BUT you can become overly confident and fail to recognize signs of relapse. Sabotaging beliefs include using the program to try to become perfect or thinking life should be easy. This book gives tools to work through those "stupid" beliefs in daily life; a fresh take at the ongoing challenge of "how to stay sober".*

### Recovery Websites:

[www.stepstudy.org](http://www.stepstudy.org); [www.spiritualawakeningsAA.org](http://www.spiritualawakeningsAA.org)  
[www.recoveredalcoholic.blogspot.com](http://www.recoveredalcoholic.blogspot.com)

La Hacienda's Store has loads of information on sponsorship and recovery. For more information or to order, call 830-238-4222 ext. 513 or send an email to [jtubbs@lahacienda.com](mailto:jtubbs@lahacienda.com).

## What's in (The) Store

Questions & Answers on Sponsorship - AA Pamphlet

Back to Basics - The Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings by Wally P.

Carry This Message - A Guide for Big Book Sponsorship by Joe McQ

I am Responsible: The Hand of AA - Selected Stories from the AA Grapevine

Taking the Steps by the Book by Chuck C.

The Fellowship & The Program by Anne W.

The Soul of Sponsorship: The Friendship of Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J. and Bill Wilson in Letters  
by Robert Fitzgerald, S.J.

The Steps We Took by Joe McQ

Twelve-Step Guide to Using the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book by Herb K.

# 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 200 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	<b>NOTE:</b> If you are an alumni in The Woodlands area, our meeting there has been cancelled. We invite you to attend our Houston meeting on Tuesdays. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
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	

## FAMILY MEETINGS

AUSTIN	BEAUMONT	BRYAN/ COLLEGE STATION	DALLAS/ FORT WORTH	HOUSTON
Monday 8:00 pm La Hacienda's Solutions 2100 Kramer Ln Suite 200 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	THE WOODLANDS		
Thursday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 604-B Junction Hwy Kerrville, TX 830-238-4222	Monday 7:00 pm La Hacienda Community Outreach 8600 Wurzbach Rd Suite 702 San Antonio, TX 210-692-0001	Tuesday 6:30 pm 1733 Woodstead Ct. Suite 101 The Woodlands, TX 281-296-5727		

Due to confidentiality laws, we can no longer sign you up to receive email from La Hacienda. If you want to be on our email list, you must sign yourself up. Go to [www.lahacienda.com](http://www.lahacienda.com). The sign up form is at the bottom of the page.

Sign up for Our  Email Newsletter

Privacy by SafeSubscribe<sup>SM</sup>

In time we hope to have all alumni who wish to receive information from La Hacienda signed up so we can get information out faster and more efficiently.