

Contact Numbers

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Information:
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National Websites:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
www.aa.org or
www.alcoholicsanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
www.na.org

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
www.ca.org

For Family & Friends:

Al-Anon & Alateen:
www.OregonAl-Anon.org

Adult Children of
Alcoholics (ACA)
www.adultchildren.org

Serenity Lane...

1-800-543-9905
www.serenitylane.org

Stepping Together

Spring/
Summer
2010

Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter

We've been saving lives and helping put families back together since 1973

Living the Dream

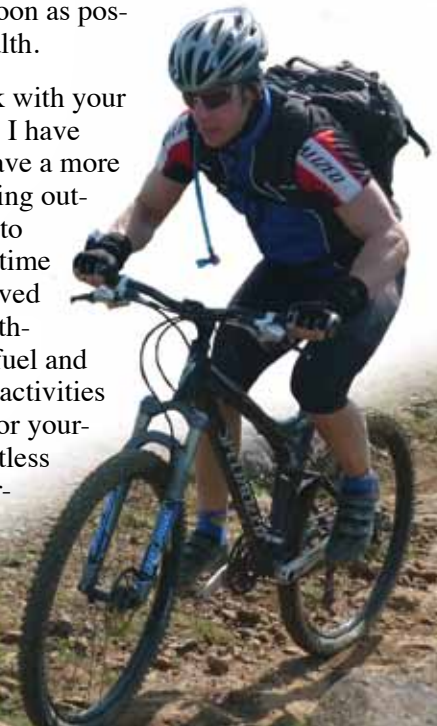
by: Jason Temchin
Employer Services Representative

For me, living the dream is one in which I am living a healthy and balanced life. It is a combination of loving the work I do everyday, eating and enjoying good foods, getting plenty of rest and water and being active physically, mentally and socially. This is particularly important for someone recovering from drugs and alcohol as many of these areas have been neglected over time from the preoccupation of using. I have always had many interests and being physically active has been a central theme throughout my life.

I moved to Portland from the East Coast because of the accessibility to such beautiful surroundings. I can hike Forest Park and share the beauty with my girlfriend or ski and snowshoe the surrounding mountains or ride my bicycle or motorcycle on a fantastic country road with the destination of having lunch with my friends. Movement to me is life's energy. We stop moving and we slowly wither away. Finding your passion in whatever excites you is the goal and that may involve trying something new or reigniting what was lost in active addiction. As with recovery, taking small steps and staying present in the moment is essential. I have learned to listen to both my physical and emotional body. In cycling for example, sometimes I can push myself to my physical and mental limit and other times I'm slow and steady, listening to my breathing, taking in my surroundings and allowing myself to decompress from life's stressors. It is important and essential for me to balance my maximum effort with a more relaxed pace. Your stress reliever might come from taking a walk in the evening or practicing yoga but as with working any strong recovery program, it is important to be consistent even when your energy levels or motivation are down. It does and will get easier in time. I encourage you to start doing something as soon as possible that gets you moving toward better health.

If you have any medical issues, please check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. I have found that in the beginning it is helpful to have a more structured exercise plan whether it's something outside or in the gym. However, it is important to be realistic and flexible with your structure, time and other commitments. I have always believed that doing something is better than doing nothing. Remember to eat well and hydrate for fuel and get plenty of rest. For me doing a variety of activities keeps me interested and motivated. Find it for yourself. Living a life in recovery gives you limitless possibilities to explore and experience different forms of movement.

Good luck!



From your Editor



Dear alumni,

“You can’t think your way into a new way of living...you have to live your way into a new way of thinking.”

At Serenity Lane, words of wisdom flow freely. From your participation in treatment and from my work alongside our team of knowledgeable counselors, there are so many opportunities in the course of the day to have our minds expanded, to have our beliefs challenged and to have our foundations solidified.

Serenity Lane is a miraculous place, whether it’s a sanctuary from the destructive patterns of addiction or a medium to utilize your skills to make a profound impact on the community. There is healing taking place in every corner of this organization, and it is this atmosphere that makes Serenity Lane what it is – a symbol of hope.

The lessons and the spirit of Serenity Lane exist beyond those four walls. They will remain at the forefront of your lives, especially when you surround yourselves with positive support. This sense of unity is flourishing throughout the region, and two remarkable examples are in the work of the newly formed Bend Alumni Association and Eugene’s Blue Chairs alumni group. Through their shared commitment to recovery and their ties to Serenity Lane, these enthusiastic groups has made vast strides in their mission.

In this edition of the alumni newsletter, we honor their contributions and highlight their progress in two extensive features. We hope you are inspired to continue your collaborative journey of recovery, knowing that you follow in the footsteps of so many courageous individuals who have not only survived, but thrived through sobriety.

Listen and learn!

Shely Rahimi

Newsletter Committee:

*Shely Rahimi
Angie Delaplain
Mary Daniels*

Outpatient Happenings

• Serenity Lane-Vancouver

opened its doors on Feb 1, 2010. In the first few hours we were performing an assessment on a potential patient, admitting a patient to residential treatment in Eugene and another into outpatient treatment right there in Vancouver. As of this writing we have a growing outpatient group and thriving recovery support groups.

Just off I-205 & I-500, and close to the Vancouver Mall, the address is:

Serenity Lane-Vancouver
4305 NE Thurston Way, Suite E
Vancouver, Washington 98662
Phone: (360) 213-1216

- Save the Date -

• SL Eugene Alumni Picnic.

• Sunday, August 29, 1 - 4pm

Alton Baker Park, Eugene, Shelter #2

Join us again this year as we chow down with Hole in the Wall Barbeque, games, prizes, & Buttons the Clown to entertain the kids.

• Roseburg Alumni Spring BBQ

On March 31, 2010 the Roseburg Alumni group held their first Annual Spring BBQ and Lecture Series. Guest speaker was John DeSmet, LCSW, a family therapist with a long association with Serenity Lane. 75 people attended: current patients, Serenity Lane staff, alumni and families, and a good time was had by all.

For information on upcoming events, contact Sandi Nelson at Serenity Lane in Roseburg. **541-673-3504**

• Central Oregon SL Alumni Association

is thriving. Their organization and energy is admirable. Listed below are two events you may like to attend:

• Summer Picnic at Ochoco Reservoir

Date: June 19, beginning at Noon

• Picnic in McCallum Park

September 12, beginning at Noon

Contact Don F. at: fields@bendcable.com and find out how you can get involved. Details on page 3.



News the about Central Oregon Alumni

by Don F.

A little over a year ago, we were presented with the idea that convening a group of Serenity Lane alumni might somehow provide a helpful piece in our recovery. Our way to that goal focused on being there for others as they first crawled, and then stepped into their own program of recovery. During that February gathering, the Central Oregon Serenity Lane Alumni Association (COSLAA) moved from being an idea to an ideal worth pursuing.

The past year includes projects as varied as our first annual, late summer barbecue and picnic, held on the banks of the Deschutes as it slips past Sunriver, to the beginning of the Transitional Mentor Program, where alumni members share their availability in support of one another's growth. It's been quite a year, and 2010 has already proven that indeed, the best feels yet to come.

In June, COSLAA will be hosting our first annual welcome to summer barbecue potluck, held lakefront on Ochoco Reservoir. Looking ahead, our calendar includes participating as panelists at various IOP and Recovery Support meetings held throughout the year, co-hosting future Family Recovery workshops, the Holiday Party, and so on; all the while, entertaining the many new ideas that cross our paths toward recovery.

Standing alone we realized that most likely, we would never take it upon ourselves to go to "any length" in support of our own well-being. But linked together in recovery, we can stand, ready to extend a steady hand to those just behind us as they seek out their 12-Step footprints.

Editors note: If you are a central Oregon alumnus, contact Don F. to join in. (See page 2 for details.)

Taking Recovery Online

by Michael L.



Ever been in an animated conversation with a family member or friend and the topic ends with, "We need to Google that?" Ease of access to information has become a hallmark of our society, courtesy of cell phones and WiFi-enabled laptops...and the ubiquitous internet. The internet not only can provide easy access to information, but communication as well.

From our recovery viewpoint, a key detail about the internet is that it is 24/7. Our addictions are 24/7 as well – ever heard the old saying: "When I'm in my AA/NA/CA meeting, my addiction is out in the parking lot doing push-ups, ready to meet me on the way home?"

The internet can be another tool in our recovery toolbox to combat our addiction as soon as we get home - with the proper setup and use.

To that end, a new sobriety-themed website has been created by a Eugene Serenity Lane alumnus. You can find us at www.bluechairs.org. Named after the "blue chairs" in Serenity Lane's outpatient rooms, the website is, like anyone in early sobriety, a work in progress. We are open to constructive feedback.

Already starting its second design phase, www.bluechairs.org's new format is like a very simple Facebook. Users should register and create an online profile. Once registered, users can create their own "sobriety blog," as well as read and comment on each other's posts. Users can even make "favorite" lists of users whose blogs they like to read. Tweeting may be a future option too!

Another use for the website is to list upcoming clean and sober events, as well as ways to engage offline with groups of people in recovery who share similar interests.

Examples might be:

- form bowling teams and schedule competitions
- for our people who like to cook, a place to share recipes and organize potlucks
- motorcycle group rides
- impromptu meetings for chat and coffee.

So visit www.bluechairs.org

Try it out and leave feedback so we can improve! Remember to treat every online session like an AA/NA/CA meeting and do your best to keep it anonymous.

See you online!

From a Bend Alumnus

Hand upon hand in hope

Three years ago I visited the Serenity Lane office in Bend. It was a Thursday. Well before that day I knew I was in trouble with alcohol; but, I also knew that drinking was well within my control. I could stop whenever I wanted. Armed with that knowledge, I continually chose not to quit. During the appointment, I stressed the view that my problem was not so severe; certainly not as desperate as some others I had seen. All I really needed was a tune-up; a simple adjustment here and there. A quick fix and I would be back on the road; my punctured pride and flattened ego repaired. So with some sleight of hand thinking, and a quickly concocted scheme, I steered clear of residential, instead deftly parking myself in outpatient.

What a welcome reprieve! Finally, I had stumbled upon my niche. I studied. I engaged. I thrived. And, for that time stayed sober. In ten short weeks I graduated with the honors I had bestowed upon myself and was “rocked out” amid well wishes, laughter and a couple of tears. Walking across the SL parking lot I knew I had arrived; I’d licked it! Not only had I rid myself of alcohol, I had proven to everyone that I was not an alcoholic; proudly holding onto my reinvigorated belief that now cured, I could resume life as a normal drinker whenever I chose. But for now I vowed, no more booze for me!

For awhile I held firm, not allowing myself to drink for a period of time escaping my memory. I would guess no more than six weeks. But then, whenever, with all of the obvious warnings unheeded by me, I “chose” to drink socially; but this time at least, responsibly. The result of such thinking was relapse into a state of drunkenness defying description. Brief periods of AM lucidity quickly eroded into longer spells of day long

black outs, mercifully followed by passed out nights substituting as sleep.

Twelve long, lost months later, in response to a God given moment of clarity, I awoke and once again sought the refuge of Serenity Lane. Towing a badly bruised heart and a psyche frayed and shredded from incessantly toiling in emotional disarray, I arrived broken, and hopelessly lost. So careless. Fragile. Numb. But one thing had changed. When I entered the SL office this time, the question I asked was no longer why; but simply when? The following Monday morning I drove to Eugene. Near the end of my trip and in need of a swig, I stopped in Springfield where I unknowingly purchased my last liquor, drinking almost the entire pint as I belted my way down the Beltline toward hope.

My twenty-eight days concluded too quickly; and quite emotionally for some of us. But it felt good to feel and I emerged with a plan; so after a quick glance for cover, I symbolically discarded the remainder of my pint, stored safely during my stay under the front seat of the car, into Serenity Lane’s dumpster and drove my way home being sober.

No need to celebrate our successes, but to enhance our recovery as we stand together, hand upon hand in hope.

Submitted by a member of the Central Oregon Serenity Lane Alumni Association.

If you like **Facebook**, you’ll probably love **“In the Rooms.”** This social networking site is similar to Facebook, but is focused on recovery and related issues. Registration is free and fast, and remains as anonymous as you want it to be.

Go to: **www.intherooms.com**

Thanks Lisa H. for bringing it to our attention.

Addiction & Grace

The brain never completely forgets what it has learned. Because of the deep and pervasive physical power of strong attachments, their potential exists forever in us, even after we have effectively broken the habit of acting upon them. We may joke about never forgetting how to ride a bicycle, saying, “Don’t worry; it will come back to you.” But the permanence of addiction memory is not funny. It stands ready to come back to us with only the slightest encouragement. The brain learns how to “do” its attachments far better than it learns to ride a bicycle or drive a car, and it remembers them more powerfully. Years after a major addiction has been conquered, the smallest association, the tiniest taste, can fire up old cellular patterns once again.

One aspect of addiction, then, is permanent. Thus we never completely overcome our attachments. Because staying away from addictive behavior is an ongoing business, people in AA call themselves “recovering alcoholics” rather than “recovered alcoholics.” We may control our behavior in response to our addictions, and we may, with grace, be delivered from bondage to them. Then, as time passes, their pull becomes less intense. But throughout our lives, their potential for reactivation continues to exist within us. The brain does not forget. From the standpoint of psychology, this means we can never become so well adjusted that we can stop being vigilant. From a neurological viewpoint, it means the cell of our best-intentioned systems can never eradicate the countless other systems that have been addicted. And from a spiritual perspective, it means that no matter how much grace God has blessed us with, we forever remain dependent upon its continuing flow. ■

*From Addiction & Grace, Love & Spirituality
in the Healing of Addictions*

by Gerald G. May, M.D.



Alcohol-Free Minty Limeade Refresher

Ingredients

3 T	Powdered Sugar
1/4 C	Fresh Squeezed Lime Juice
1 Can	Club Soda
2	Sprigs of Fresh Mint
4	Lime Slices

Mixing Instructions

Mix powdered sugar and lime juice in bottom of glass until it forms a syrup.

Add 1 sprig of mint leaves and mash lightly into mixture.

Add 3 lime slices and top off glass with club soda.

Garnish glass with remaining lime slice and mint.

Serve immediately.



Advice from Dr. Schwerzler



Relapse and Narcotic Pain Medications

If you need pain medication, and you're an addict in recovery, how can you get relief for your pain, yet not get addicted again? It is amazing how many patients we see who have relapsed because they had to take opiates for legitimate medical pain. Although these patients had taken the narcotics as prescribed, they found themselves physically dependent and quickly needing the medicines just to avoid withdrawal. Eventually their use developed to the point of causing problems and needing detox and more treatment. Here at Serenity Lane we frequently help patients get through these situations.

So what can recovering people do if they need narcotics? There are a number of key things patients can do when they have to take addictive medicines:

1. Plan ahead – if you know you will need surgery or need narcotics then enlist help from people who can help you. This includes your physician, your spouse or family member, or someone from your support network. We suggest you have an AA member who has agreed to monitor medicines for you if you ever need to take them. If it is an emergency situation like an accident or kidney stone, then enlist help as soon as possible.
2. Have your doctor use non-addictive medicines whenever possible – it is amazing how much Ibuprofen helps pain when people are not looking for a narcotic effect. There are now many other non-addictive medicines to help with pain.
3. Use non-drug techniques to help with pain as much as possible – ice, splints, rest, epidural steroids, acupuncture, etc.

4. If you do need narcotics, use the lowest dose for the shortest time.

5. Be honest and open – with your doctor, your family and support people. Tell them how much pain you are in and how many pain medications you are actually taking.

6. Have a family member or a friend hold the medicines so you have to ask someone to get them – not to be cruel, just to have another check and balance.

7. Follow up with our office or your doctor within 1 -2 days after surgery. The specific goal for this follow up visit is to evaluate how much pain there really is and how many narcotics really need to be taken.

8. Continue close follow-up visits, usually once or twice weekly, until the narcotics are no longer needed.

In our experience, when patients have followed these guidelines they have never gotten re-addicted unless the pain condition went on a very long time. And in these situations they can be detoxed again fairly easily.

Remember, we are available any time to help with these situations. We do it all the time, and we are delighted when people reach out to us for help.

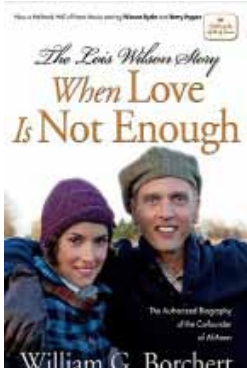
Serenity Lane Medical Staff can be contacted at:
541-687-1110 or toll free 1-800-543-9905

Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it towards others.

And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world.

~ Etty Hillesum, An Interrupted Life

WHEN *LOVE* IS NOT ENOUGH



WINONA RYDER STARS IN HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED DRAMATIC HALLMARK MOVIE ABOUT AL-ANON

A new Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, "When Love Is Not Enough," aired on CBS on April 25. It tells the dramatic and courageous love story of Lois and Bill Wilson and their battle with the disease of alcoholism which led to the founding of Al-Anon and AA.

The movie stars two-time Academy Award nominee Winona Ryder as Lois Wilson, the co-founder of Al-Anon and Golden Globe Award winner Barry Pepper as Bill Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The distinguished award-winning director was John Kent Harrison. More than six years in the making, the movie is based on the critically-acclaimed book, "The Lois Wilson Story: When Love Is Not Enough," written by veteran author William G. Borchert who was a close personal friend of Lois Wilson's for more than 15 years. He co-wrote the screenplay with Camille Thomasson. Mr. Borchert also wrote the Emmy Award winning film, "My Name Is Bill W." which starred James Woods, James Garner and JoBeth Williams.

"When Love Is Not Enough" dramatically depicts the effects of alcoholism on the family and the solution through Al-Anon's Twelve Step program. It highlights how Lois's deep love for her husband kept them together through the scourge of his alcoholic drinking and finally led them into the sunlight of recovery.

Mr. Borchert had Lois Wilson's permission and blessing to write "My Name Is Bill W." and worked closely with her on the development of the script. After her passing, he knew her own inspirational story had to be told together with her founding of the worldwide movement of the Al-Anon Family Groups. So he wrote her story based on the many hours of taped interviews he made with her and Hazelden Publishing Company published the book. Hallmark acquired the film rights and now the Al-Anon story will be told all over the world through this marvelous new movie.

Look for the film in your local video store, online or through NetFlix.



Pain is the ●●●●●●●● greatest gift

"Pain is the greatest gift – given to the alcoholic." Craig Ferguson, late-night TV host, actor and recovering alcoholic, speaks openly about his addiction and the steps he took to get help. Check out:

Ferguson speaks from the Heart - on YouTube. Craig does a 12 minute dialog that is really inspiring ... and very funny!

Address Changes/Deletions

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Shely Rahimi,
Serenity Lane Alumni Office
10920 SW Barbur Blvd.
Portland, OR 97219

or email to: alumni@serenitylane.org
or call Shely at 503-244-4500 ext 8103

We're going all digital soon. We encourage you to send us your email address, so you don't miss out on future issues.

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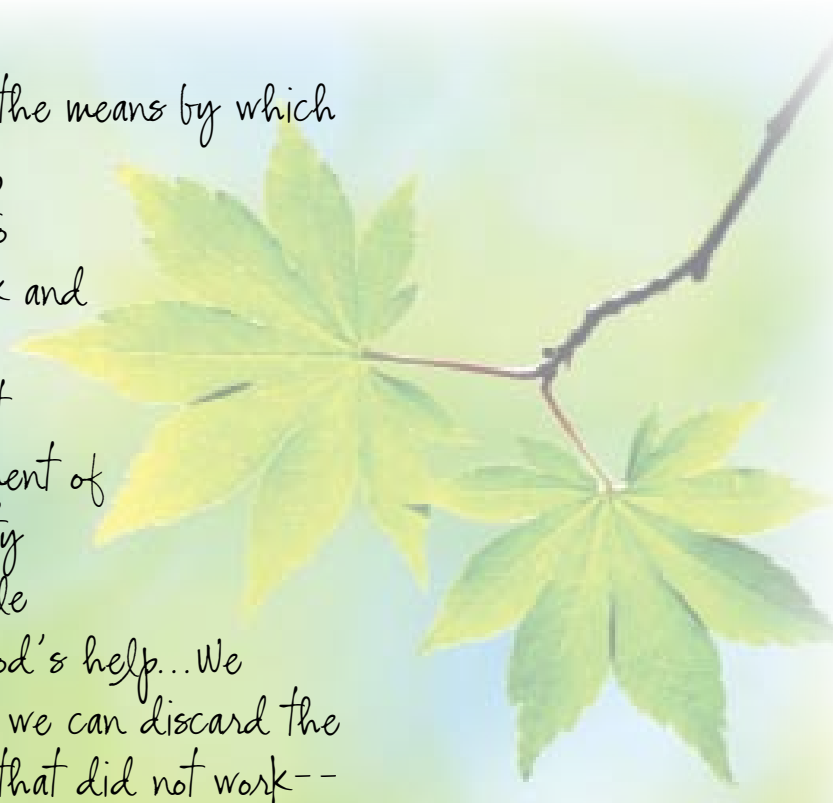
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DATED MATERIAL

Inside:

- Living the Dream
- Central Oregon
- Blue Chairs
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- Minty Limeade Refresher
- Advice from Dr. Schwerzler
- When Love is Not Enough
- Pain is the Greatest Gift



Self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action, and grace to bear upon the dark and negative side of our natures. With it comes the development of the kind of humility that makes it possible for us to receive God's help... We find that bit by bit we can discard the old life--the one that did not work-- for a new life that can and does work . . .

~ Bill W., As Bill Sees It, thanks to Carol Adrienne

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