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Serenity Lane offices:

Albany: 541-928-9681
Bend: 541-383-0844
Coos Bay: 541-267-5081
Eugene: 541-687-1110
New Hope: 541-485-1577
Portland: 503-244-4500
Roseburg: 541-673-3504
Salem: 503-588-2804

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
www.slalumni.org

Stepping Together

January
February
March
April
2007

Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter

Volume 7, Number 1

Saving Lives and Helping put families back together since 1973

Be BOLD

by: Dayna Collins



Entering recovery takes courage, humility, and the willingness to admit we are powerless. I made that decision about seven years ago. Since then, my life has been an exhilarating ride, much like a roller coaster: at times soaring high, at other times free falling and feeling grateful for the seat belt and the metal bar holding me in.

After several years of recovery, I sensed a need for something more. It was during this time of searching that I discovered Julia Cameron's book, *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. Julia's book is a 12-chapter, 12-week process. The language of the book mirrors traditional 12-step language, which is no accident as Julia has been in addiction recovery for over 20 years. The tools offered by Julia inspire creative confidence and her book addresses such topics as fear, self-sabotage, guilt, shame, jealousy, limiting beliefs, perfectionism, and addictions. She suggests using daily writing, weekly self-care dates, writing affirmations, and to "treat yourself as a precious object." Her book includes creative exercises to help you explore your dreams, wishes, habits, and blocks, all with the intention of expanding and deepening your recovery.

I joined an Artist's Way Creative Cluster support group and it jump-started and revitalized my recovery. My mantra became "Be Bold." I used to be concerned about what others thought of me, and those thoughts held me back from being authentic and genuine. Through this process, I've learned people aren't even thinking about me! Once I had that realization, I gave myself permission and freedom to have fun . . . and be bold. I started with little changes: painting a room a vibrant, unexpected color, hanging lots of wind chimes on the front porch that tinkle in a cacophony of sound when the wind blows, wearing an arm full of inexpensive beaded and bangled bracelets, having multiple pairs of colored reading glasses to match my mood, and allowing myself to be silly.

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From your Editor



Greetings Alumni,

Serenity Lane has been embarking on several new projects in recent months, as we collectively strive to reach higher plateaus in the quality of our services. In this spirit of progress, we are discussing ways to make the Alumni program more beneficial to our current and former patients. Through this effort, we hope to maintain a connection with our Alumni well beyond the scope of treatment, as well as provide a forum for ongoing communication that will strengthen the bonds formed between our Alumni.

As a result, we have decided to expand each issue of our newsletter to double its original size in order to include more valuable articles and resources for those in recovery. We called upon Serenity Lane staff members to come together to offer advice and information in their respective areas of expertise, and the response was overwhelming. We received contributions from counselors, medical professionals and administrators, who were all enthusiastic to share their ideas.

In this issue, you will find medical advice from one of our skilled physicians, a testimonial from a former patient who now serves as manager of our Albany outpatient office, information about the role of families in the recovery process from our family counselor and much more. We would also like to utilize this newsletter to give our Alumni the opportunity to share their experience, strength and hope with each other. If you would like to submit an article for publication, please contact the Alumni office. As always, we would love to hear from you with comments or suggestions.

This is an exciting time in our history, and we are glad you can be a part of it.

Happy reading!
Shely Rahimi
Alumni Coordinator

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Newsletter Committee:

Angie Delaplain.
Mary Daniels,
Neil McNaughton
& Shely Rahimi.

Continued from front page



If you are looking for the next step in your recovery, if it has become stale or boring, consider being a little more playful with your life, step out of what feels safe, and **BE BOLD**. Seek others who will support and sustain you as you grow bolder. With a little courage and support, your life can become richer, deeper, and more fulfilling.



Dayna Collins is a counselor in the Salem Outpatient office . . . Dayna facilitates

Artist's Way Creative Clusters and uses art in her recovery and as a means of expression. If you want to learn more about what Dayna has done in her creative recovery or more about The Artist's Way, check out her website:

www.courtstreetretreat.com.

Outpatient Happenings

Albany- Congratulations to counselor David White, who recently married. Carol Leming will now serve as the evening Intensive Outpatient counselor. A new Albany alumni group started in February and will meet on the first and the third Thursday of each month.

New Hope Program- Located in Eugene, New Hope provides quality treatment to adults with limited financial resources. New Hope accepts Oregon Health Plan patients and also has a minimal number of scholarships. DUII services have been offered at this location for approximately 8 years.

Portland Outpatient- A second office opened in East Portland, providing outpatient and recovery support services. The office is located at 12780 SE Stark. A new alumni meeting will be held at this location. For more information, call Karen Willock at 503-244-4500.

Roseburg- Christy Admire was hired as DUII Coordinator. The counseling team has added a relapse prevention group and a women's recovery support group. The Roseburg outpatient office will move into a new building around June 1.
(See photos on next page)

The Sedative Trap

Part 1

by: **Dr. Rick Caesar, SL Physician**

Almost everyone new to recovery has at least some difficulty falling asleep. For years, sometimes decades, we have used alcohol and/or other sedatives to allow us to 'pass out' rather than fall asleep naturally. Or we may have used opiates or stimulants for other purposes, both of which radically upset our natural biorhythms and interrupt the sleep-wake cycle. In recovery, we move away from the idea that there is a pill or other substance 'out there' that we need to ingest to make sleep possible.

Falling asleep is an activity different from most others: the harder we 'try' the less successful we usually are. If we take a pill that works, the pill usually becomes the substitute for good sleep habits, and we begin to feel (psychologically) unable to sleep without it. The entire process can be fraught with anxiety, frustration and the subject of a good deal of misinformation.

Experience with thousands of patients at Serenity Lane, and many thousands more studied in scientific literature, tell us that non-chemical measures are by far the most helpful in bringing on sleep, especially 'high quality' sleep. We recommend:

- daily or near-daily exercise
- avoidance of caffeine (no one complaining of insomnia and contemplating taking a sleeping pill should even consider caffeine!)

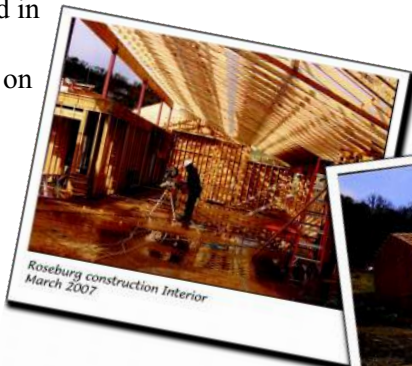


- A "down-time" of 30-60 minutes before bed to 'quiet the mind' (No arguments, heated discussions, disturbing news programs etc.)
- Using the bed for 'sleep and sex only'. (No reading, eating, lounging. Time awake in bed generates more time awake in bed.)
- Avoid napping. (This may be difficult at first, but it is critical to interrupt the insomnia—compensatory nap—insomnia cycle).
- Optimize room temperature. Cooler is usually better. Clean, comfortable sheets, pillows and blankets are important.

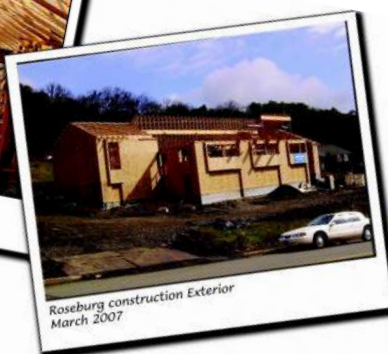
In Part 2, we will more specifically address the medications used for sleep, which ones are safe and acceptable in recovery, and which ones to avoid—even if they're prescribed by a well-meaning but not fully-informed doctor!

New Roseburg Facility

Construction is under way for our new outpatient facility located at 2575 NW Kline St. in Roseburg. With a beautiful view overlooking Garden Valley, the facility has approximately 5,500 sq. ft. all on one level. Anticipated move in date is June 1, 2007. Staff and patients anxiously await their new digs.



Roseburg construction Interior
March 2007



Roseburg construction Exterior
March 2007

Fiscal Responsibility IS Part of Recovery

by Mary Daniels & Cami Pray

As a newly recovering adult, there are rights and responsibilities that come into focus now that may have been pushed aside or outright ignored during our drinking and using days. Part of these responsibilities is owning up to our financial wreckage. Most of us come to recovery with a host of unpaid bills; debts that we've chosen to ignore or have run away from completely. By getting our house in order we realize that now we have money in our pocket that had previously been spent on alcohol or drugs, and it's up to us to budget our money accordingly.

Cami Pray, Serenity Lane outpatient counselor, talks openly about this issue with her groups. "Here's an opportunity (a gift really) to build self esteem by being proactive about your finances," says Cami. "There's plenty of opportunity to feel good about your money now that you are using it to rebuild your life instead of tearing it down. In group I talk about rituals around avoidance during our using years. Being irresponsible goes hand in hand with using, so we check in regularly about how stress over money and procrastination about paying our bills can actually trigger a relapse. After all, money is a big part of life, and taking responsibility and being proactive about it can have huge benefits to our recovery," explains Cami. If there are concerns about a patient's Serenity Lane bill, Cami provides them with the business office phone number and encourages contact soon and often.



If you have a hard time figuring out where the money goes, try this. For one month, write down every penny you spend, then review it. Analyze where you can save and set about preparing a monthly budget based on what you've learned. One way to keep on top of payments is to buy a small monthly calendar and mark down each bill on the day it is due. Refer to this reminder at the beginning of each month, and check off each payment when it's made. These small steps can greatly increase organization and relieve stress. You will be amazed at how good you will feel.

Thanks Cami for pointing out this important component of quality recovery. Changing your attitude about your money is powerful and real progress.

We'll have more tips on money management in the next issue.

odds & ends

Want to have more energy and feel better?

Are you grateful for what you have in life? Do you recognize what you have? Many people don't, so how do you go about being more mindful of the good things in your life? According to some experts, keeping a "gratitude journal" in which you list the good things you are grateful for in your life, might be a good way to start. In a study of those who kept gratitude journals, Robert Emmons, a professor of psychology at the University of California, found that those who wrote down what they were grateful for were more optimistic and felt better on the whole than those who wrote what was bothering them or just wrote neutral observations about their lives. So, buy a journal, sit down and ponder the good things you have going for you and write them down.

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Defense Mechanisms:

Who Do They Really Defend?

by: Neil McNaughton, MSW

Can you imagine a man slowly going blind attempting to drive the Indy 500? Impossible you say! "He will kill himself," says another. Yet this man will not be dissuaded. He will not give up the quest because to him it is a compelling need. When advised by others, he defends himself by denying there has been a decrease in either his driving skills or his ability to react to complex changes. When advised about his history of near fatal collisions and property damage due to accidents, he explains how others did not drive responsibly or refuses to take accountability.

Here we see the value of defense mechanisms. They are for him! They are automatic and unconscious. They take the edge off of reality. In this case, they help this individual maintain his self-image even though it is grossly distorted and life threatening. He can't be successful because he does not see problems and obstacles clearly, which leads to failed solutions and an eroding self concept. Denial, rationalization and projections are unconsciously employed to defend his distorted sense of well being. While others may see nothing but folly, he will fight to the death to maintain his warped view of reality. While we all use these mechanisms periodically, such rigid over-reliance on them can be dangerous.

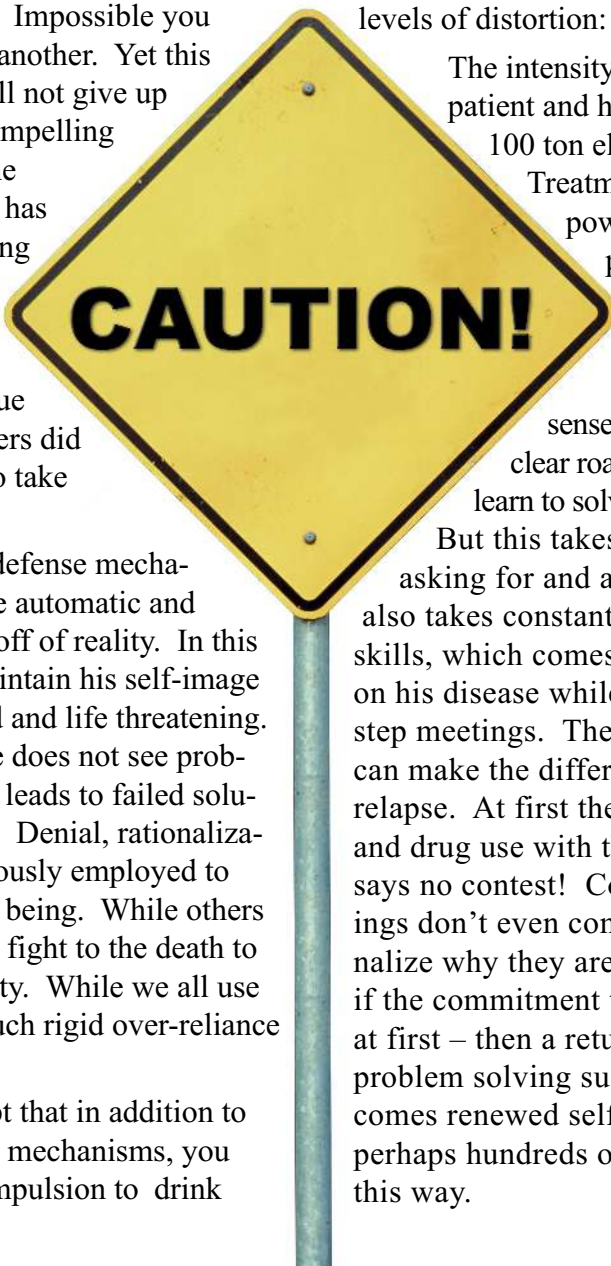
Addiction is similar except that in addition to the rigid over-reliance on defense mechanisms, you have to add an overwhelming compulsion to drink

or use the drug(s) of choice. Now you have two levels of distortion: psychological and drug-induced.

The intensity of the relationship between the patient and his drug is like the attraction of a 100 ton electro-magnet and a safety pin.

Treatment attempts to interrupt this powerful attraction (sobriety), in the patient, while at the same time helping him see the distortions of the defenses.

By using the counselor's sense of reality testing and following a clear road map, the patient can eventually learn to solve problems again successfully. But this takes humility, the humility of asking for and accepting help from others. It also takes constant attention to reality testing skills, which comes from comparing perspectives on his disease while attending groups and twelve step meetings. The utilization of this feedback can make the difference between sobriety and/or relapse. At first the addict compares his alcohol and drug use with these substitute activities and says no contest! Counseling and AA or NA meetings don't even come close (a good time to rationalize why they are not important). But they work if the commitment to change is there. Small steps at first – then a return to normalization and greater problem solving success in the future. With that comes renewed self-confidence. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands have done it just this way.



IN MEMORIAM

January 18th, was a sad day for Serenity Lane with the passing of Gary Schley. Gary had been our Maintenance Engineer for over 25 years and he knew every nook &

cranny of the facility like the back of his hand. Peter Asmuth, our CEO, described Gary as a "quiet and dedicated man." He truly loved Serenity Lane. In fact, he requested that he be buried wearing his ID badge. Rest in Peace Gary. You will be deeply missed.

The Challenge of Early Recovery for Family



by: *Glenna Burgess, Family Counselor*

Addiction is a long term process, usually taking years to develop, and is characterized by negative changes to behavior, thought patterns and life-style. Denial, dishonesty, being unpredictable and irresponsible, neglect of self and family, are all behavior characteristics developed by an addict as he/she becomes preoccupied with use. As the addiction progresses, the family is also developing unhealthy behaviors in response to the negative behaviors of the addict.

As a means of survival, the family will predictably develop ways to cope or to “normalize” this increasingly chaotic situation with the addict. Care-taking, rescuing and protecting become the family’s response to the negative changes in the addict. These behaviors are defined as co-dependent, and they become the ingrained behavior pattern for the family throughout the course of the addiction. As the addict enters and moves through treatment, and begins facing the challenges of early recovery, both addict and family may continue to hold on to the old negative behaviors that operated during the addiction.

Recovery is also a process. In early recovery, the addict will most likely continue to display some of the old behaviors that were part of the addiction. The family’s biggest concern in early recovery is relapse, and they tend to interpret these old addict behaviors as a sign that the addict has relapsed. As a result, they become hyper-vigilant about policing the addict for signs that he/she has relapsed. The family is inclined to shift the co-dependent, care-taking behaviors they utilized to ‘police’ the addiction to now ‘policing’ the addict’s recovery.

The challenge for family in early recovery is often getting the help they need for accurately interpreting relapse signs, detaching from the addict’s program and learning how to redirect their care-taking behaviors to developing a solid recovery program for themselves. It is important that family gain an understanding of the effects of the addiction on both addict and family, and the subsequent needs of the family’s participation in the recovery process.



Internship Program

Like many of our counselors, George Callanan began his relationship with Serenity Lane as a patient, and from his experience with our program was inspired to play a role in our mission of saving lives and putting families back together. Through the **6 Internship Program**, he was able to give back to the recovery community by learning the skills to become a counselor. Serenity Lane’s Internship Program has been providing free training in addiction counseling for over twenty years.

Participants receive top quality classroom instruction and hands-on experience for one full year, preparing students to apply for certification as an entry level counselor. If you are interested in Serenity Lane’s Internship Program, please call **541-687-1110** and request an internship application packet. To qualify, you must have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. If you are in recovery, you must have two years of sobriety attested to by a letter from your sponsor. Come join us for the most fulfilling, life-changing work you will ever do!

• *See next page for more about George Callanan.....*

●●●●●●●● Patient Survey a Success

by: John O'Guinn, Internal Program Auditor

In September 2006, Serenity Lane mailed questionnaires to nearly five hundred alumni, asking them about life after treatment. Over 30% of you responded with information, suggestions and comments that we are using to improve our program effectiveness:

- **Sobriety:** More than **90%** of the alumni who responded to the survey reported that they are currently clean and sober.
- **AA and NA attendance:** **62%** of the respondents told us that they are working the Steps and have a sponsor. In fact, other studies in the alcohol and drug treatment field indicate that most successful sobriety occurs when program graduates reinforce their sobriety by staying involved with support groups.

- **Family:** **84%** of the alumni who responded told us that they are happy with their relationship with their family or significant other.
- **Referral:** Over **90%** of the survey respondents indicated that they would choose to be admitted or would refer a loved one to Serenity Lane.

Information like this is crucial for us to effect changes in our programs. Thanks to all of you for reaffirming our mission statement – to provide a healing environment in which chemically dependent individuals and their families discover an enhanced quality of life through long-term recovery from addictions.

Lastly, **Congratulations to Amy L.** as the winner of our survey drawing for a coastal getaway to Florence!

One Man's Journey Into Wellness ●●●●●●●●

When I walked through the doors of Serenity Lane in May of 1996, I regarded it as the worst moment of my life. I was a broken man. I had alienated almost everyone in my life. I was financially and spiritually bankrupt. I had lost hope. I didn't think Serenity Lane would really help me, but I had run out of options.

I don't remember a lot of specifics about my time in residential treatment, certain faces and moments at best. The one clear memory I have is sitting in my process group and watching my counselor, Jim Creasey, work. I admired his skill, compassion, insight and the direction he gave us. I remember thinking I would give anything to be him.

When I returned to the "real world" I had hope and a sense of direction, although, honestly, I was very fearful. I found within myself and through the support of Serenity Lane and AA the strength to stay sober and rebuild my life. Due to the miracle of recovery, within three years Jim had

retired, and I was offered a residential counseling position. His position! I had his office, his chair, his group. Truly, anything is possible when we allow it and are willing to do the work.

This is not to say my life is trouble free. I still have problems in my life. But, "where would I like to go on vacation" is a much more pleasant kind of problem than "how am I going to pay the electric bill!"

"I have never regretted a moment of my association with Serenity Lane."

I have never regretted a moment of my association with Serenity Lane. First as a patient, then as an intern, a counselor and now as a manager. I feel blessed that I may carry on the tradition of those who went before me in treating the disease of addiction and helping to put families back together.

George Callanan

Program Manager
Serenity Lane - Albany Outpatient Services



Serenity Lane/Stepping Together
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Eugene, OR 97401

**RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED**

DATED MATERIAL

Inside:

- **Be Bold**
- **Family Program**
- **Sedatives**
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- **Defense Mechanisms**
- **Survey Report**

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**Climate is what you expect,
weather is what you get.**

..... *Devin Greaney*

**No winter lasts forever; no spring skips
its turn. April is a promise that May will
soon return.**

..... *Hal Borland*



Join In

Help Out

Be Grateful

Stay Connected

We couldn't have said it better!

**“The best thing about the future is that it
comes one day at a time.”**

.....*Abraham Lincoln*



**“Rich as he is, not even the Emperor can
buy back one single day.”**

.....*Lao Tse*