

Families in Recovery



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2009 Potluck Schedule

Join us for delicious food and company! Bring a dish...your choice. Held at 7:30 on the Friday nights listed below, in the 4H building (#501) at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe.

- July 18 BBQ Sultan
- September 18
- October 2
- November 6
- December 11

Potluck

NEXT POTLUCK
is the **PICNIC**,
Saturday July
18th 12:00 at Reese
Park, Sultan

Marti volunteered to bring the *Birthday Cake* to the Picnic

Dear Friend,

Picnic!

This Saturday, 12:00
Reese Park, Sultan

[Map and directions at the end of the Newsletter](#)

Come join in the good old-fashioned fun of a potluck picnic. FIR will supply Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, buns condiments and lots of fun activities.

Things to bring:

- Yourself
- Your Family
- Your friends
- A side dish (your choice!)
- Bag of ice, if you can
- Chairs

Optional things to bring:

- Softball bats, balls, gloves
- horseshoes
- A portable table

We will start at 12:00. Come a little early to help set-up, or stay a little after to help break-down. We will be out of the park by 5:00.

For more on the picnic, read the President's message, and the Board Meeting Minutes.

 [Forward to a Friend](#)

President's Message

June Pot luck and auction Report.

When I write the presidents message for our news letter I like to report on successful and positive topics. In my opinion our June potluck and auction was less than a success. Our April and May newsletters mentioned that the June auction was our primary source of funding for the July picnic.

June Potluck Recap
Congratulations
to June Birthday
Celebrants!

Unfortunately, none of you were at the Potluck!

Winners

Everyone was a winner at the last potluck! There was no raffle, as we held our annual auction. There were some great buys!

Patients **Caitlan** and **Dave** each won a leatherbound Big Book in the patient drawing.

Contacts

Board Of Directors

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lightrays12@yahoo.com

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Director

Attendance was extremely low and of course low attendance means a shortage of food. A couple of folks recognizing the shortage made a rapid trip to a Deli and returned with a great quantity of fried chicken, so all did get to eat. I do apologize to patients for what probably seemed to be mass confusion. But please keep coming back and help us to make our get monthly potlucks a success.

The silent auction tables had some very nice items seemed like there was something for every one. I observed that all the bids on the silent auction were low to moderate, so the high bidders got some very nice items for a very good price. When auctioneer "fast talking" Cal started the oral auction his chant kept us bidders escalating the price of merchandise, but still everything sold at bargain prices. Our monthly Board Meeting and Picnic Planning committee was held the following Saturday with nine in attendance. It was decided that with our limited funds we would supply hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, coffee, cups etc. for the picnic.

We have volunteers to supply condiments and plastic silverware. We also have volunteers to set up adult and kids games. We will have the kids fishing booth and coins in the straw (bring loose change to throw in the straw) also volley ball.

We have the ball field so bring softball equipment, bats gloves balls there are also horse shoe pits, if you can bring horse shoes. Also if any one knows where we could obtain a golf cart for a couple of hours please contact me. We are not funding raffle prizes other than the 50/50 so if you would like to donate a raffle item it would be appreciated. At this time I do not know if we will need to use generators for coffee pots but we will need extension cords. Please bring a bag or two of ice. Last item - does any one know the location of the FIR picnic tables? If you wish to assist us in making the picnic a success or if you have questions please call me or one of the board members listed in this news letter.

Jerry S. 360-794-4367 jstack1@verizon.net

Board Meeting Minutes

Next F.I.R. Board meeting is July 18th 6:00 at the VGH Recovery Center. Please Come!

June Board Meeting Minutes
 June 13, 2009

President Jerry called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Present:

Jerry S., Mary S., John L., Diane E., Cheryl C., Wally C., Cam, Elaine, Greg & Annette, Marti & Bob, Tricia.

MINUTES: for the May meeting were not available.

KITCHEN REPORT: All is going OK. July picnic is the next event, details discussed below.

RAFFLE REPORT: The auction went pretty good. It brought

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Committees

Hospital Representative

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Kitchen

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Quick Links

[Families In Recovery Website](#)
[Everett Area AA](#)
[Everett Area NA](#)
[Everett Area AlAnon](#)
[VGH Recovery Center](#)
[Nar-anon](#)

Treasurer's Report

View the Treasurer's Report at our website, at <http://www.FIR-Monroe.org/id11.html> .

in \$689.50, and an additional \$120.00 was received in donations.

TREASURERS REPORT: The activity report was presented showing disbursements and receipts. We have \$856.51 in the account prior to disbursement requests received today. The auction did well, so we have sufficient funding for the picnic. Upon a motion by Diane and a second by Wally, the report was unanimously accepted.

NEWSLETTER REPORT: There were 11 new email addresses added and 7 mails. Thirty hard copies were sent, 20 hard copies left at the Treatment Center and 79 emails. We are dropping new patient hard copy mailings after 3 issues, unless the \$17 subscription is paid. A notice of subscription due is sent with the final mailing and no grace period is given. The option of a free email copy is always available. Articles are desperately needed.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: **July 18th Picnic** will be at Reese Park in Sultan. We have the park reserved from 9:00 to 5:00. The "official" start time is 12:00. The following people have volunteered to help:

- Marti and Bob will bring plastic service for 500. \$50 gift cert from Fred Meyer, also the eggs for the egg toss.
- Cheryl and Wally will shop for and store the hamburger patties for 200 (1/4# ea) and hot dogs for 200, and cheese, also 5 cases soda.
- Jerry and Mary will provide sliced onions and condiments
- Hospital (Jerry will ask) for a donation of sliced tomatoes, baked beans, and lettuce
- John L. will provide the straw bale for the kids coin toss
- Dianne will bring fish booth, poles and prizes. volleyball net
- Tricia will help set-up and Clean-up, volleyball
- Cam will fill water balloons
- Elaine volunteered to run the raffle

Kids games (need person to organize and supervise)

- o Fish booth (Diane)
- o Coin search in straw

Annette and Cam will organize adult games, and cross generational games

- o Egg toss
- o Horse shoes
- o Softball
- o Volleyball
- o Tug of war
- o Dressing relay
- o Golf pitch & or putt
- o Gunnysack race
- o Water balloon toss

Unresolved issues:

Tables (park has only one)

BBQs (who will bring?)

Ice

Respectfully submitted,
Annette

Remember, you can also access our website at <http://www.FIR-Monroe.org> for information, or to sign up for an email subscription.

Write to us!!!

Tell us what you feel. Send us ideas for articles, or write one. Tell a good story. The email address is familiesinrecovery@verizon.net.

Recovery

End of My Rope

A parolee says serving time in prison saved his life.

You wouldn't guess by looking at me—a quiet sort of person—that my story would be dramatic. My 11 years of sobriety weren't gained by going to meetings after work or weekends. I could've had 33 years in the program, had I stuck with it when I first started going to meetings. In 1976, I started going to AA and I rang up four years of sobriety. Life improved and I quit attending meetings. I had the attitude that AA was like medicine. When you get better, you don't need it any more. When I began drinking again, it didn't take long before I was throwing up early just so I could drink all night. I was also using a lot of speed. I was single, in my twenties, a hardcore biker, and no one could tell me what to do.

I moved out of the city and bought a farm in the country. Life soon went sour. I was fired from my job of 10 years because of drinking, was pulled over twice for driving under the influence, and got divorced. I was in serious difficulty now, and in desperation I started going to AA meetings again. I got a sponsor but I was still drinking heavily and I hid my drinking from my sponsor. I even did a six-month stint as chairperson for my AA group, but I was very depressed and angry and I wouldn't confide anything to my sponsor.

I was doing irrational things when I was drunk. I was mad at my car one day, so I set the garage on fire. It got rid of the offending car, but it wasn't insured so I didn't gain anything. The homeowners' insurance paid enough to get another car, which wasn't any better than the first one. On another night, I was angry with my ex-wife so I took all the furniture that we had bought together out of the house and burned it. All I had left in the house was my bed and a table. I sold my motorcycle to pay bills—this was as big of an emotional blow as my divorce. I called my sponsor one night but all I got was his answering machine. I was drunk and can't remember what I said. I couldn't see any way out of my difficulties so I decided to hang myself out in the barn. It's very difficult to do a complicated thing like that while drinking. I couldn't throw the rope over the beam because it was so high up. I got a ladder and broke the light bulb with it. I found another bulb, but had trouble getting up to the light fixture in the peak. When I finally had light again and got the rope over the beam, my sponsor walked into the barn.

"What are you doing?" he asked. I said I was going to hang myself. "Can I watch?" he said. That ended it for me. he convinced me to go to bed and the next day I checked into a treatment center.

I sold the farm and moved into an apartment after I got out of treatment. I discovered new things about myself that I never knew. My tastes and personality sober were totally different from the hard-drinking biker guy I made myself out to be. I discovered classical music and a love of flowers. I also shopped antique stores for overstuffed furniture and art deco items. I joined a Pentecostal church and worked on the spiritual side of my program. I didn't want to live without a motorcycle, so I bought an old fixer-upper and got it running.

You'd think that the story would have a happy ending here. Unfortunately, being sober doesn't

make a person smart, at least it didn't work that way with me. A woman with whom I had worked a long time ago, when she was still in high school, reintroduced herself to me at an open AA meeting where she had taken a friend to try getting the friend sober. She was in a new-age religion that believed in messages and visions, and said that several years prior, she'd gotten a message saying she was supposed to be with me because I was her soul mate. She was an attractive girl and I was flattered that she would think of me in that way.

It was a mistake to get into a serious relationship based on someone's vision. Everything went fine for several years, but after we got married, the relationship fell apart. She moved into a spare bedroom and we lived like roommates. I was emotionally devastated to find out that she didn't love me, or even like me. She had never liked any of the things I thought we had in common. And here was when I found out the hard way that I had been neglecting my program. My sponsor had relapsed and I hadn't replaced him with anyone, because the pastor and the elders of my church had done a "laying on of hands" healing on me. I was told that my alcoholism was now gone and I was healed by God; I stopped attending meetings.

One of the church elders was a friend and he suggested we have a couple beers and talk about my relationship problems. One beer was all it took and I was drinking daily again within a few weeks. Then, when I had the pastor come over to my house to ask him why I couldn't stop drinking, he said I was sinning deliberately. God had healed me, so if I was drinking like an alcoholic, it was on purpose. I was hurt and angry and I quit going to church. About a month later, the pastor was fired from the church when it was discovered that he was having an affair with the wife of the elder I drank with.

I don't know how long I could've held on to what was left of my life. I was drinking again and I was living with a woman who thought God punished her by telling her to marry me. This is when the bottom fell out of my world.

There was a fire in a vacant apartment beneath mine. The police thought it was arson; all the tenants had an alibi but me. I had gotten drunk early in the day and I couldn't remember anything after 4 p.m. I was terribly depressed and had been having suicidal thoughts. While being questioned by the police, I said that it was possible I'd started the fire. I was remembering the times in the past when I burned the car and the furniture.

I WAS charged with arson and sentenced to 15 years in prison. I thought I had just been sentenced to hell. I've never thought of myself as a criminal, just a guy with a drinking problem. I spent six years in maximum-security prisons, two years in medium-security, and then went to a minimum facility with work-release privileges. You might think this was a terrible experience, but it depends on how you look at it. Prison was rough. I got caught up in a prison riot and got teargassed. I saw an inmate die from an asthma attack while the guards ignored him. Another inmate committed suicide. I saw gangs attack people on the recreation fields. I had to fight off a cellmate who wanted me to be his "bitch." All these things were hard to cope with, but prison was actually a success for me.

I think of it as God's divine intervention in my life. If I hadn't gone to prison, I might've killed myself or someone else through my drinking. I'm certain that I couldn't have survived as a practicing alcoholic much longer. In prison, I attended a nine-month-long, 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week treatment program. When you do group therapy with 15 other inmates and you're in denial, they'll tear you apart. I needed a hardcore rehab program to break through a lifetime of denial and stinking thinking. This was during my fourth year of incarceration. Six months before my release, I started a four-month-long relapse prevention program.

After nine years I was granted parole. I'll be paying restitution for the rest of my life, but I'm free! I'm free from prison and I'm free from the compulsion to drink. I believe that God knew this was the only way to get me off the streets long enough for the AA program to take root inside me.

I no longer believe I can be cured of alcoholism, and I no longer hold back from speaking about things that I once thought were no one's business but my own, or that I might have previously been too embarrassed to talk about. I believe that half the mistakes I've made in my life wouldn't have happened if I'd talked to a sponsor regularly. I now have a sponsor, I go to meetings and I do service; I volunteered to be the Corrections representative and also the Bridging the Gap coordinator for my local AA group.

I have 11 years of sobriety, and I live a life now that is different from anything I've ever known.

Geo M.

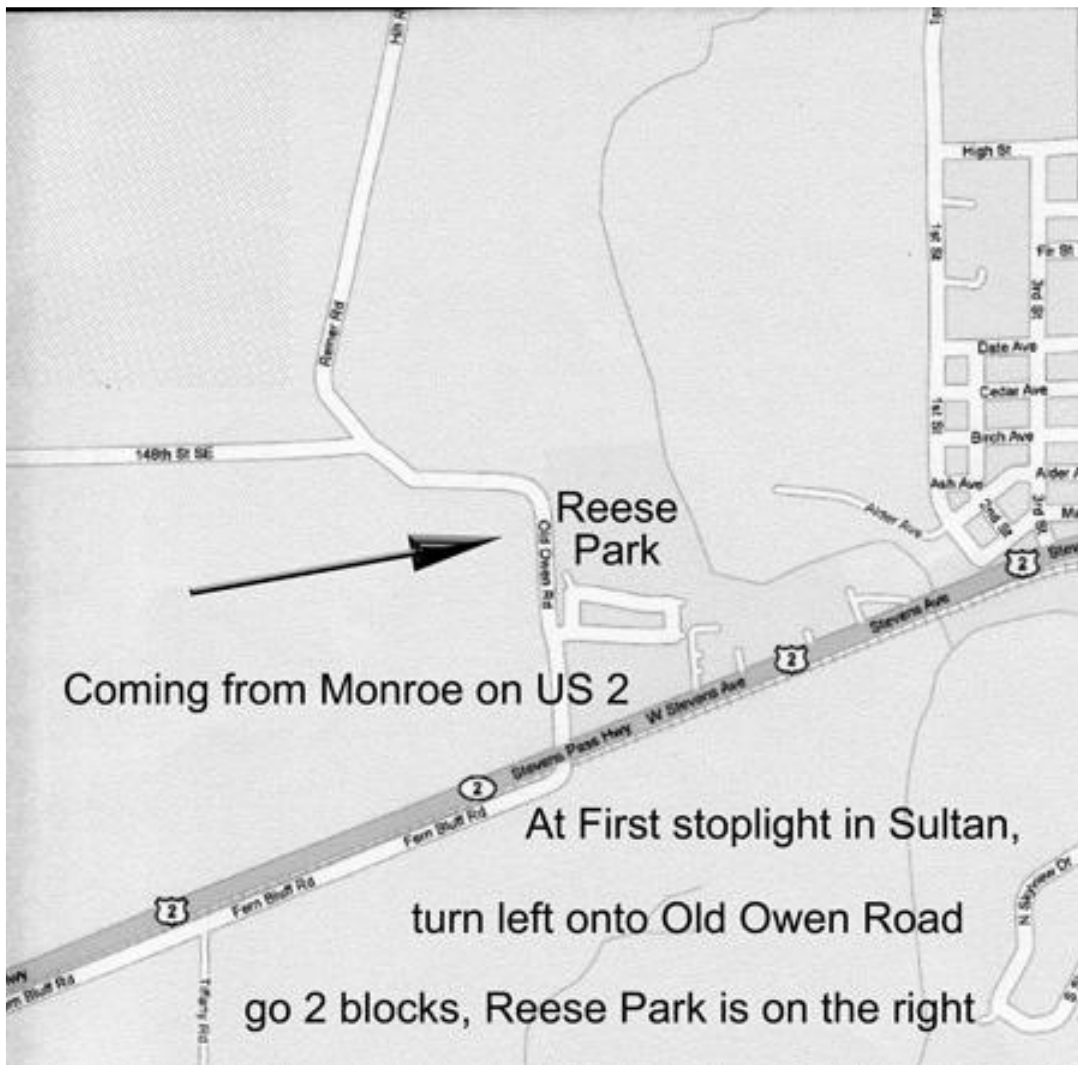
Fort Atkinson, Wisc.

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From Our Readers

Letters from our readership are encouraged! We will publish those that may have interest for our members. Email your comments to familiesinrecovery@verizon.net.

Picnic location Map Reese Park, Sultan



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