

# Families in Recovery



September 2009

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## In This Issue

[2009 Potluck Schedule](#)

[Potluck News](#)

[Contacts](#)

[Treasurer's Report](#)

[President's Message](#)

[Board Meeting Minutes](#)

[Opportunity!](#)

[Activities \(OSAT\)](#)

[Recovery](#)

[From Our Readers](#)

[Potluck Map](#)

## 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.

- September 18
- October 2
- November 6
- December 11

**Potluck**

**NEXT POTLUCK**

Dear Friend,

## IN THIS ISSUE

Like, or want to Hike? Mountain Bike? Camp?  
SCUBA dive? Climb Mountains?

[Check out OSAT!](#)

## POTLUCK!

This Friday (9-18), 7:30  
Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe  
(Bldg. 501, 4-H Display Hall)

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

Come join in the good old-fashioned fun of a potluck. As always, FIR will supply beverages, paper service and serving utensils.

Things to bring:

- Yourself
- Your Family
- Your friends
- Food to share (your choice!)

We start at 7:30. Come a little early to help set-up, or stay a little after to help clean up.

[Forward to a Friend](#)

## President's Message

Summer is over. Our July Picnic at Reece Park in Sultan was quite successful. All that attended seemed to thoroughly enjoy the activities and of course the great Bar B Q'd hamburgers, hot dogs and Polish Sausage prepared by our master of the grill John L.

Attendance was not as great as we would have liked. Absence of our old timers was very visible. I wish to give a belated thank you to Jessica and the Center staff for all the

## September

**18th** 7:30 at the  
Fairgrounds in Monroe.

### John L.

volunteered to bring  
the *Birthday Cake*  
to the Picnic

### August BBQ Recap

Congratulations  
to August Birthday  
Celebrants!

*Dave M. 21 years*

*Wally C. 11 years*

### Winners

Everyone was a winner  
at the last  
potluck! The 50/50  
awarded \$53 to  
someone lucky.

### Contacts

#### Board Of Directors

##### President

Jerry S. 360-794-4367  
[jerry.stackpole@gmail.com](mailto:jerry.stackpole@gmail.com))

##### V.P.

John L. 206-909-4334  
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##### Secretary

Jo B. 425-879-0412  
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##### Treasurer

Greg S. 360-568-3207  
[jgstarup@tgi.net](mailto:jgstarup@tgi.net)

##### Director

Diane E. 360-397-9010  
[peterdianne@clearwire.net](mailto:peterdianne@clearwire.net)

##### Director

Wade B. 425-879-0412  
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##### Director

Wally C. 425-775-7012  
[crows4u@msn.com](mailto:crows4u@msn.com)

work that they did in setting up and getting things prepared for the day. A special thanks to the same folks for disposing of the garbage and trash.

More recently we again had the August Bar B Q pot luck dinner. For some time it was doubtful if we would have one as a facility was not available last year, we (the board) assumed that we would not have a facility for this year, but again the folks from the center came through for us and arranged to host the activity in the yard of the former treatment center. Those of us who attended had an enjoyable evening. Again the center staff came to the rescue and transported tables and chairs from the center to the yard. Absence of old timers was very evident- only 10 folks that had attended in previous years were present. This could have been partly due to the time element. As I stated previously we were uncertain if we would have a facility. I am asking all old and new members of Families In Recovery what can be done to invigorate our organization. I challenge all to write an article for our news letter about their recovery and what influence Families In Recovery had/ has on your achieving and maintaining sobriety. One last comment, we could sure use some help at the rap secessions. We have been giving the rap with not more than three people and often only one. The next Rap will be 6.00 PM Sept. 16. Pot luck will be back at the fairgrounds Sept 18th.

Please do not take this letter in a negative way. I am trying to express my thoughts and ask your help as to what can be done to improve the group.

Jerry S. 360-794-4367 [jstack1@verizon.net](mailto:jstack1@verizon.net)

### Board Meeting Minutes

Next F.I.R. Board meeting is September 19th  
6:00 at the VGH Recovery Center. Please  
Come!

FAMILIES IN RECOVERY MINUTES August 15, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 by President Jerry.  
Members in attendance: Cheryl, Dianne, Gwen, Jerry, Jo,  
John, Mary, Wade, Wally

MINUTES: The August 4th minutes were handed out and  
accepted. Dianne motioned and Jerry seconded.

KITCHEN REPORT: The was a surplus of ice cream toppings.  
Only two small containers were eaten of the ice cream at the  
August picnic. Items needed are lemonade, regular coffee  
and table cloths.

#### Director

Annette S. 360-568-3207  
[amshannon@tgi.net](mailto:amshannon@tgi.net)

#### Committees

##### Hospital Representative

Dave A. 360-794-1405

##### Kitchen

Diane E. 360-397-9010  
[peterdianne@clearwire.net](mailto:peterdianne@clearwire.net)

##### Newsletter

Greg S. 360-568-3207  
[jgstarup@tgi.net](mailto:jgstarup@tgi.net)

##### Potluck Raffle

John L. 206-909-4334  
[lightrays12@yahoo.com](mailto:lightrays12@yahoo.com)

#### 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> .

TRANSPORTATION REPORT: Recovery center bussed over patients.

RAFFLE REPORT: Only the 50/50 was done. \$53 was profit.

TREASURERS REPORT: Not present.

NEWSLETTER REPORT: Not present.

OLD BUSINESS: There was a little meat left over from the picnic but not much.

NEW BUSINESS: Email the bills to Greg. Greg will bring the checks to Jerry's house and they will be signed. Motioned by Dianne and seconded by Wade.

The September 18th potluck will be back on the fairgrounds. RAP will be on Wednesday the 16th. Jerry again asked for volunteers to come to RAP at 6pm to talk to the inpatients about Families in Recovery. 50/50 will be done at the September potluck. Wade and Jo will pick up a \$25 itunes card and walkie talkies for raffle. Motioned by Dianne, Seconded by Wade.

John L. volunteered to bring the birthday cake for the September potluck.

A special thanks to David Anderson for the use of the picnic spot for the August picnic!!!

The meeting was adjourned at 7pm motioned by Wally and 2nd by John.

Submitted by Jo

*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](mailto:familiesinrecovery@verizon.net).

#### Service Opportunity!

As is customary, the people serving the FIR organization relinquish their positions each December. Those that will be retiring are grateful for the opportunity to have served you, and know that others deserve to also reap the spiritual benefits of service. In addition to positions listed below, there are four directors that serve.

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Newsletter Editor

Please consider one of these positions now. The Treasurer's and Newsletter positions will benefit from some mentoring prior to taking over in January.

## Activities

### Sobriety, One Step At a Time



Photo courtesy of OSAT.

***OSAT members celebrate and encourage sobriety through outdoor trips such as this hike near Mt. Baker.***

For 16 years, recovering alcoholics and their friends in OSAT have walked each day One Step At a Time. "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Keep climbing mountains and don't slip," recited members at a recent OSAT meeting in Mercer Island.

While the intonation is similar to the serenity prayer, this is not an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Any member of the Mercer Island based nonprofit is quick to address the difference.

OSAT is a nonprofit organization dedicated to recovery-oriented outdoor events. The group's mission states they support recovery in the spirit of conservation, preservation and ecology. Formed in 1991 by Jim Hinkhouse, OSAT is now an organized group of over 200 members. Sixteen years ago, Hinkhouse started taking his AA groups on hikes to Tiger Mountain every week as a physical representation of taking sobriety one day, and one step at a time.

"There's a much tighter bond to people [than in AA]," said Chris N., chairman of the Board of Trusted Servants (BOTS)- whose last name was withheld, as is common in AA. "When you're climbing with someone, you trust your life to them."

They're not exclusive though. Many of the members of OSAT became involved by meeting someone at an AA meeting who belonged to both OSAT and AA. They've also recently discussed opening the group to non-recovery people interested in the outdoors. Neither being a member of AA nor being in recovery are requisites of membership.

Atop Tiger Mountain recovering alcoholics and their friends gather to encourage sobriety. Dave F. heard about OSAT at an AA meeting and went hiking on Tiger Mountain wearing a T-shirt and jeans. "But I'm a glutton for punishment, so I went back," said Dave F.

BOTS are elected by members to serve two-year terms. They manage the organization's administrative duties. Chris N., now in his second term, joined OSAT 12 years ago after meeting a woman at an AA meeting who showed him pictures from an OSAT hike. He also met his wife of nine years at an AA meeting on Tiger Mountain in the Issaquah Alps. A backpacker prior to joining OSAT, Chris N. summited Mount Rainier his first summer in OSAT, in 1995.

"It was indescribably cool," said Chris N. Later, he returned the favor by organizing a trip to hike several Mexican volcanoes in 1999.

Service and giving back are common themes in OSAT. Nancy T. feels OSAT is a recovery group that revolves around support. Her first hike on Tiger Mountain, where she met the founder, Jim Hinkhouse, kept Nancy T. returning. Now she's a rope leader and a sherpa on the Rainier expedition. Sherpas are OSAT members who pack other hikers' gear to help lighten the load.

"It's like a tribe," said Nancy T. "You want to see them be successful in recovery, but you also want them to climb the mountain. "There are sherpas on the Rainier expedition as a spirit of support to help others succeed and have a good time."

Another common theme is the experience of a higher power and serenity while outdoors. Nancy T. saw OSAT's combination of recovery, outdoors and spirituality and was drawn to it nine years ago. She grew up in Chicago with few mountains around. When she arrived in the Northwest, she remembered thinking of mountains as scary. On her first hike on Tiger Mountain she met Hinkhouse, and remembers laughter, teasing and compassion. "There had to be a positive release of energy," said Nancy T.

While stacked with fun, adventure and camaraderie, OSAT remains a support group for alcoholics, and that can still be difficult. "People don't come to AA because they're feeling good," said Nancy T. "Usually they come in pain. But it's touching to see people gain confidence and change, usually for the better."

Dave F. added that the pain can become something better.

"Taking people out of their comfort zones makes them more open to new things," said Dave F.

OSAT began much like the stories above. Hinkhouse was a 10-years-sober alcoholic, a member of AA and became involved in mountaineering. Raised in Oregon with a view of Mount Baker and Mount Hood, Hinkhouse moved to Seattle in the 1980s and began mountaineering. He began meeting other mountaineers in recovery and had the idea to have an AA meeting on Rainier. So he started a group that met weekly to train on Tiger Mountain.

"He wanted to bring mountaineering to recovery," said Rik Anderson, a longtime friend of Hinkhouse.

After starting the group, Anderson says Hinkhouse began to understand the magnitude of his creation.

"That's where Jimmy's [Hinkhouse] struggles started, when he realized it became a weekly thing and the separation between OSAT and AA needed to happen," said Anderson.

By 1995, Hinkhouse retired and created an established nonprofit organization. However, it was also the year of his unexpected death on an expedition to Alaska's Denali National Park. During the expedition, a storm trapped Hinkhouse and two other OSAT members at Windy Corner on Mount McKinley. They died from hypothermia. Hinkhouse's legacy, however, continues in the existence and growth of OSAT.

OSAT shows no signs of slowing down. The group expanded to include biking, camping, climbing, ice skating, skiing, snowshoeing, and running. The most popular event is OSAT's annual glacier climbing course. Participants condition by climbing Mount Si.

The group also sponsors events such as the Gratitude Dinner, a Christmas party, car camping trips and a ski trip. Now, many members plan side expeditions in Hinkhouse and Newman fashion.

"It's just taken off ever since the club's been around," said Chris N.

Even though OSAT expanded beyond exclusively hiking, it remains at the heart of the organization. "[Climbing] was a huge attraction for me," said Chris N. "I'm sharing my recovery with [other climbers], which you don't get anywhere else."

From a group of less than 30 people in 1995, OSAT now has more than 200 members.

"Some people just won't go away," joked Dave B. "It's an interesting thing that it's still around."

Another way they remember Hinkhouse is an annual celebration of OSAT's formation. Members hike Tiger Mountain the first Thursday of daylight savings time every year to honor OSAT's birthday. Dave F. and others pack cooking stoves and cookware so he can make a gourmet meal. On previous trips, Dave has cooked halibut, steak and chicken Alfredo.

As a 12-step recovery program, the seriousness of recovery remains. But still, OSAT's enthusiasm, support, compassion and love of the outdoors shines through.

"In sobriety, there's so much more to life than just recovery," said Chris N. "In OSAT, I found that."

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

OSAT Info:

206-686-2927

[www.osat.org](http://www.osat.org) Visit the OSAT website for membership information.

## Recovery

### An Inconvenient Meeting

*A group of AA men finds openness and acceptance*

Several years ago, my sponsor, Michael, told me about a meeting he and another friend of ours had started and "asked" me if I would like to be a part of it. The meeting was at the home of Steve S., an AA whom I'd seen at a few meetings, and was being held at noon every Wednesday. Steve was relatively young-in his early 40s-and had been sober for just about a year when he learned he had a progressive neuromuscular disorder, the first stages of which confined him to a wheelchair.

I would like to say that I enthusiastically jumped at the chance to carry the message to someone who was nearly homebound. However, few things could be further from the truth. My first thoughts were of myself and what an inconvenience it would be for me. Thoughts like: I work from home and Steve's place isn't really very close. It's right in the middle of the workday. Think of the money I'll lose by being away. Couldn't someone else do it? ran through my mind. Thankfully I had learned a little bit about restraint of tongue and pen in my time in AA and chose not to give voice to those thoughts (although I scribbled many of them in my journal). Like so many other things my sponsor has suggested, I begrudgingly agreed to be there when I could.

I didn't even consider until much later how difficult it must be to be confined to a wheelchair, facing a future that-from a purely physical standpoint at least-was as grim as one could imagine, or how lonely it must be to be stuck at home with only a caretaker for company. And this was all during Steve's early sobriety, too.

There was no way of knowing at the time how that meeting would grow and evolve over the next six years-and change all of us for the better. I think it would be accurate to say that the cumulative effect of those Wednesday meetings has been the most profound and enlightening of my 22 years in AA, and possibly my entire life.

Steve-or Siggy, as he liked to be called-had a naturally outgoing personality and made friends as easily as anyone I've ever met.

He always greeted us with his huge, trademark smile, and it was easy to see he was delighted to have us over. It didn't take long for that feeling to become mutual.

We dubbed the meeting the "Siggy One Group" and referred to it as "the best damn meeting this side of the Mississippi." It was a men's meeting-or, as we liked to joke, "No gurls allowed"-and could go from being vulgarly irreverent to shockingly sublime in the blink of an eye. A depth of sharing and an openness and transparency developed among that group of guys that I've not experienced in

any other group setting. One meeting in particular is memorable. A member of our group shared, in tears, about learning that his wife had been diagnosed with cancer and that their dog had gotten sick and died. The level of acceptance and love in that room was healing and inspiring for us all. Because of space limitations, it was a small group-there were usually between three and six attendees. Once, this past summer, it was just Steve and me. He was bedridden then and unable to talk, so I read from the Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" and then sat in the silence between readings, presumably to allow his spirit to communicate with mine. I've had very few of what I would call 'spiritual experiences" during my time in AA, however, that day sure seemed like one. It was also this past summer that Jeff, who was Steve's sponsor, shared with us a truly inspiring story. Apparently when Steve first learned of his illness and was given an idea of what to expect, he told Jeff that he was going to do whatever it took to stay clean and sober throughout the ordeal. In my view, if any recovered alcoholic ever had a legitimate reason for drinking again, it was Steve. Last August, while confined to his bed and unable to speak, he celebrated eight years of sobriety. During the last few months, Steve's health deteriorated ever more rapidly. Save for the occasional smiles, which were priceless to us by then, he was unable to communicate at all. It was extremely difficult to watch a friend suffer like that. Then one Monday I got the call from Michael saying that Stephen had passed away peacefully that morning. Even though we knew it was inevitable, and I was happy that Steve was relieved of his suffering, I was stunned beyond words. Over the next few days, I offered up many prayers for Stephen, his family and all of the members of the Siggys One Group. And on Wednesday, at around noon, I found myself nearly overwhelmed with the emotions of having said goodbye to a dear friend and the tremendous appreciation for the gift of the fellowship of the spirit.

As I recall how much I struggled with the idea of attending that meeting in the early days, and weigh the effort (a couple of hours a week) with what was gained (immeasurable), it becomes once again obvious that I don't know what's best for me. I'd be happy to tell you what I want, but I don't know what I need. My life is no more manageable by me today than it was when I first got sober in AA. Yet if I can remember to ask for God's grace to help me get out of my own way, and give up the business of managing my own life, I'll have a shot at experiencing the joy of good living that our literature talks about. That's an invaluable lesson, thanks to Steve and the rest of the guys at the Siggys One meeting.

Joe S.

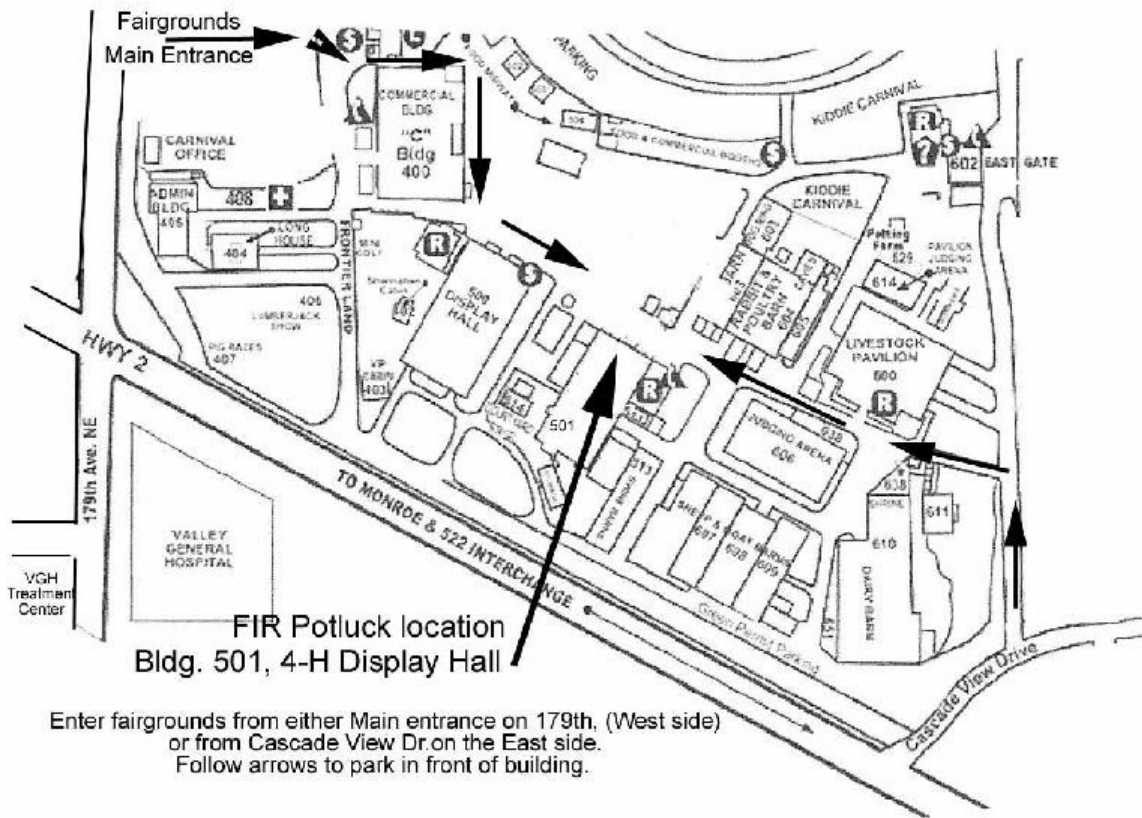
Shawnee, KS.

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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](mailto:familiesinrecovery@verizon.net).

## Potluck location Map



**FIR Potluck location  
Bldg. 501, 4-H Display Hall**

Enter fairgrounds from either Main entrance on 179th, (West side)  
or from Cascade View Dr. on the East side.  
Follow arrows to park in front of building.