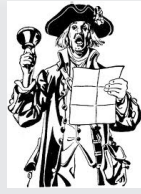


For the Weekly Calendar:



AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Monday – 7:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:00 Evening

Thursday – 7:00 Evening

Saturday – 7:04 Morning (Nobody makes it by 7:00!)

Sunday – 8:30 Morning

NA Meeting - Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Saturday – 7:00 Evening

Rogers Hospital – West Allis

Sunday – 6:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:30 Evening (NA Meeting)

Saturday – 9:00 Morning

Al-Anon Meeting-Rogers Hospital Oconomowoc

Tuesday – 7:00 Evening

Alumni interested in doing Tuesday Evening RAPs with current Herrington Residents or if you're interested in having Pizza with Residents every first Tuesday of March & September, contact Rob at: clean@wi.rr.com for information on how to proceed.



"I have come to believe that hard times are not just meaningless suffering and that something good might turn up at any moment. That's a big change for someone who used to come to in the morning feeling sentenced to another day of life. When I wake up today, there are lots of possibilities. I can hardly wait to see what's going to happen next."

~Alcoholics Anonymous



The Herrington Recovery is published by The Herrington McBride Association – a not-for-profit organization, with the generous help of Roger's Memorial Hospital

Layout and Printing - Village Graphics Printing, Hartland, WI

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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Spring Edition, 2015

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Rob McCreddie

Hello Friends!

I hope that by the time you're reading this that it is much warmer outside than it was on the cold

February evening when I wrote it. Of course this weather never would have kept most of us home when in active addiction and we wanted to get loaded.

2015 has already been a busy year for the Herrington McBride Alumni Association. Board members, their guests and the residents of Herrington Recovery Center rang in the New Year with another successful New Year's Eve event. Mike Ingrilli prepared a fabulous dinner and Jeff Radtke did an outstanding job coordinating the event. This has become an annual event with great food, a pool tournament, karaoke and fellowship with residents and staff at the house.

The 28th Annual Herrington McBride Retreat was a smashing success under the reigns of Jim Dropik. Jim coordinated a remarkable lineup of speakers who shared their experience strength and over the course of the weekend in the beautiful and serene setting of the Redemptorist Retreat Center in Oconomowoc. I can't say enough about what a great job Jim and the staff at the Redemptorist did to make this year's retreat an exceptional affair.

On February 11th a meet and greet was held in the Herrington McBride Room on the third floor of the main Roger's Memorial Hospital building on campus in Oconomowoc. In attendance were Herrington's Medical Director, Dr. Michael Miller, Cindy Suszek, Clinical Services Manager, all of the therapists and staff and more than 20 vetted board members, alumni and friends who remain active in the AA and NA communities. This was an opportunity for members of the Herrington treatment team to meet several of us who are qualified and willing to sponsor residents

in treatment and for us to meet established therapists, new Herrington team members and the new behavioral specialists who took time to explain what they do in treating residents with co-occurring disorders. An ongoing challenge is the shortage of qualified women available to sponsor women residents. The get together was a very productive opportunity for staff, board members and volunteers to get to know one another better, ask questions and discuss how best to support each other. Our common goal is to help residents establish a stable foundation in recovery while in treatment and to utilize both professional and alumni support as they transition out of the primary treatment setting.

RAPS are now being identified as Alumni Speaker Meetings at HRC. There continues to be strong support and interest in speaking for residents and slots are currently filled through July. RAPS provide an opportunity for alums and members of the recovering community to come in and share what their life was like, what happened and what life in recovery is like with current residents at Herrington Recovery Center. If you've got at least one year of solid recovery and are willing to share your experience strength and hope, please feel free to email me at clean@wi.rr.com in order to begin the process of being approved to speak at the house. There are only a handful of spots left in the second half of this year, but there is always a need for stable, recovering members of our community to keep what we have by giving it away.

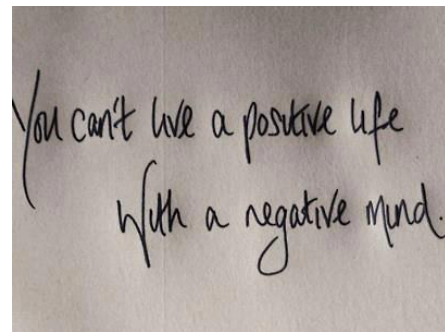
Herrington's Friends and Family Program now meets every week and is creating a need for more AA/NA and Al-Anon/Families Anonymous speakers. If you are available to speak on Saturday mornings and meet the above criteria, please contact me and I will forward your information to Jean Pruscha of the HRC staff for scheduling. Please specify if you are willing to speak for the Friends and Family Program, do a RAP or both.

If you are able, I would like you all to consider making a donation small or large to the HMAA. We

Continued...

are supported through donations from members of the recovering community, family and friends. If you received this newsletter in the mail, you'll find an enclosed envelope that you can use to support our continued work. Our address is also on the back page of the newsletter. The Herrington McBride Alumni Association is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization and any and all contributions are fully tax deductible.

As always, I welcome feedback and suggestions as to how we can improve our alumni association in order to continue our mission and to support residents in treatment and throughout their transitions into the recovering community. Thanks to all for your continued kindness and support!

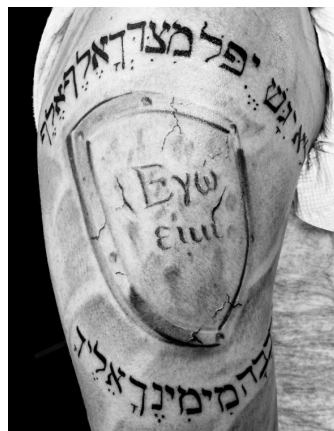


That Last 10%

-Matthew E.

".....the result was nil until we let go absolutely". I didn't fully understand the extent of these words until I hit my bottom. How cunning, baffling and powerful is this disease. I was living in such a fantasy world, a complete state of illusion. I thought I had given my all and "let go absolutely" but God used a set of circumstances where the only choice I had was to let go completely or die.

In August 2014 I had been aggressively working the steps with a sponsor for about a year



About the tattoo: The shield represents God protection, the Greek writing on the inside represents the power of His name, and the Hebrew on the outside is from Psalm 91:7 that talks about surviving in a day of battle.

-Matthew E.

and a half. I did a very thorough step four that took me nine months to complete. I made the columns, recorded my resentments, fears and harms. I made three phone calls every night plus calling my sponsor and giving him an update on how things went for the day. I was going to four meetings a week, being nice and taking 30 minute walks in the morning. I was saying the third and seventh step prayer every morning before I got out of bed. Despite a few minor slips here and there in the course of a year and a half I was the "textbook" AA student. What I have come to realize now is that was all external but yet on the inside there was this part of me....seemingly small part of me that was still clinging, holding onto something.

I met with my sponsor and let him know about a small slip I had had. It was a few months and things had been going well. We talked for a bit and I will never forget what he shared with me next. He let me know that I was giving it 90% but there was this 10% that I would not let go of. He said that unfortunately I can't do anything with you because you won't let go absolutely. He said that sometimes there are those people who have to put on the lab coat, go back into the laboratory and do some more experiments before they realize what they are doing is not working for them. He said, "I hope that is not the case for you". He proceeded to tell me that he felt that he was doing more harm than good by continuing the sponsor/sponsee relationship and that he was going to have to let me go.

This was a huge blow because of the time and energy that I had put into my recovery. It was also devastating because it has always been really difficult to take rejection and abandonment because of family life growing up. I left that night and the resentment began to build and before long I was dipping in and out of bars slowing sinking backwards. My drug of choice is crack cocaine but I hadn't yet given in.

My pastor began to pick up on the fact that things seemed off. The more he pressed, the more I lied and the further I distanced myself from anyone that wanted to help me. It wasn't long after I left the church, which I had been at for eight years that I stepped back into that deep, dark, moral less world of drug addiction and street life. I soon began spending incredible amounts of time and money in "the hood". Towards the end after being up for five days straight and not responding to any of my friends and families pleas, I decided to go back to my apartment in an attempt to not lose my job.

After some convincing I temporarily moved in with my parents and reluctantly surrendered my car

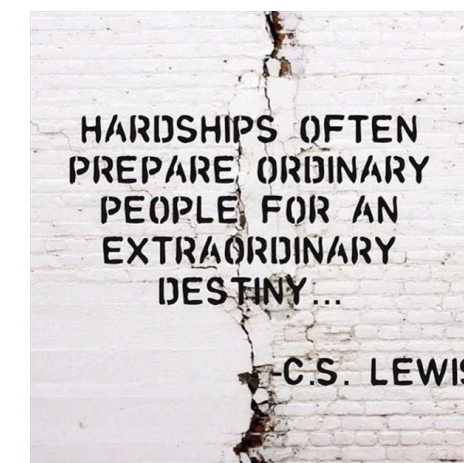


MARK YOUR CALENDERS:

*The HMAA Annual Summer Picnic will be June 20th 2015.
Temporary Agenda of Events for Picnic / Reunion*

- 9:30 Continental Breakfast
- 10:00 Welcome from Mike I., Board Member
- 10:15 Keynote address by Tom S.
- 11:30 Annual Meeting chaired by HMAA President Rob M.
- 12:00 Gourmet Picnic Lunch (Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)
- 1:00 AA & Al-Anon Speakers – TBA
(Games and activities for children on the grounds with a Rec. Therapist)
- 2:30 Annual Scavenger Hunt for present Herrington residents and any interested others
 - As in years past, the scavenger hunt list is kept under lock and key until just before the groups are sent out to collect the items.
 - Bocce ball
 - Trivial Pursuit
 - Stay for fellowship
 - Live music
 - Bring your own grilling items (grill will be provided and grilling will be done by Mike I.)
- 6:30 Scavengers are due back with their "loot" for judging and awarding of prizes (Prizes provided by T-Lon Products Inc.)
- 7:30 New Fireside theme Open AA Meeting hosted by Rob M.
(We welcome not only recovering alums but family and friends of Herrington / McBride. Our new theme will afford us a spiritual culmination to our days' activities. It affirms the goodness of our recovery and allows us to remember those struggles that leave us so grateful for the present.)

ALL EVENTS WILL BE HELD INSIDE THE MPC IF THE WEATHER IS INCLIMENT
Reunion Co-Chairs: Kristin Simons, Jeff Radtke, Mike Ingrilli



and credit cards. During this time we searched for an inpatient facility to address my drug problem. This would be the third residential treatment center that I would have been to. After much searching and an intake interview it was decided that I didn't need residential but an Intense Outpatient Program (IOP). I started the Dual Partial program at Rogers Memorial Hospital-Lincoln Center in West Allis on September 10th. I was there for three days; all the while I was getting high.

That Saturday I saw my opportunity to go get high and I waited until my parents went to a music concert in the late morning and grabbed my keys and credits cards and headed back to the Southside of Milwaukee. I proceeded to get high for a few hours until I ran out of cigarettes.

I had \$700 cash in my pocket and \$350 in crack cocaine. In my head I needed to get cigarettes and then go hit up my dealer and get set! I stopped at a gas station on 19th & National and when I came out a young woman approached me and asked for a cigarette. I asked her if she wanted to get high and I saw an opportunity to make a little extra cash so I could make sure I had enough dope to keep this month-long high going. She got in, we got high and she made a few phone calls from my phone. I told her I would sell her \$100 worth and she told me to drive to the Northside.

I picked up the potential buyer, a big dude, on Hampton & Hopkins. After convincing him I wasn't the police he got in and we drove off a few streets up to 37th & Fairmount. The two of them wanted me to drive into the alley but I had been hanging out on the streets enough to know we could do it right on the side of the road. I pulled over in front of an abandoned house and gave the man in my back seat the crack. He had the money on his lap and began inspecting the drugs. It was taking longer than usual and I kept looking back and then all of the sudden he lifts his shirt and there in his waist is a revolver. He pulls it out and sticks it in my waist and said,

"Give me everything in your pockets." As soon as he did that the woman in the front seat grabbed the keys to my car and my cell phone.

Stuck! I knew I was screwed and so I gave them everything in my pockets cash and drugs. I then reached to put my left hand on my knee and he thought I was going for the door and then he brought the gun up to my temple and said he would kill me if I touched the door. My next thought was,

"You have to get that gun or he is going to kill you." I was very angry and scared at this point. I didn't want to get robbed because I wanted to keep getting high and I

didn't want to lose my life. For a split second he took the gun off my head and I immediately turned and jumped in the backseat on top of him. We wrestled for a few seconds, but it seemed like an eternity, and then the gun came down into my chest and he shot me. The bullet blasted through me and came out my back and went through the roof of my car. It knocked the wind out of me and all I could think to do was get that gun out of his hand.

I wrestled him with all my might but could not get the gun. I couldn't catch my breath and was hyperventilating. I did manage to pin him up against the passenger door and then open it and push him to the ground. At that point I turned and began crawling on my hands and knees across my backseat to the other door to get out. Before I could get out he got up and shot me five more times. I knew I was hit but I didn't know where. All I could feel was intense burning and pain. I managed to open the door and fell flat on the ground and scooted a bit under my car in case he kept shooting. I then saw them running down the block and they ditched between two houses.

I pushed myself up from the ground and was standing in the middle of the street in broad daylight about 2pm with blood rushing from everywhere and I couldn't breathe. It was at this moment I felt reality for the first time in my entire life. There were no more "illusions". I couldn't hide bullet holes and gun shots like I could a drug addiction or alcohol problem. My fantasy world had come shattering to the ground. In spite of being shot and all that had happened I managed to find my keys that she had taken and then dropped and his cell phone and drove myself to the hospital (*whole other story*).

It was during my time at Froedert Trauma and then at the Herrington Recovery Center for 49 days that I was able to let go of that last 10% that I had been holding onto and surrender absolutely to God. March 13th 2015 will be six months sober.

--Matthew (S6T)



After Three Wins, Johnny & the Germans falter to Johnny & The Greeks

By: Johnny the German

Now, when Johnny the German opens his garage door and parks his car he stares at the loser's trophy on the shelf in front of him, and his serenity is, for the moment, again lost to rage. How could he and his German Team lose the Trivial Pursuit Playoff game at the Winter Retreat, after three glorious wins?

The question given to the Greeks was: What treatment for dental cavities was the 10th century Persian named Rhazas the first physician to recommend? And the winning answer was: "Filling them?"

Now, doesn't that just put Wiener in your Schnitzel, and Sauer in your Kraut? "Filling them!" Why not ask a two year old what the cow says?

Let the challenge go forward – Johnny and the Germans will be victorious again at the Summer Alumni Reunion in June. The Romans were eventually victorious over the Greeks and the Germans finally were victorious over the Romans. And what are the Greeks known for anyway? A few crumbling buildings and Gyros!

Potatoes, eggs, and coffee beans

Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot, and ground coffee beans in the third pot.

He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter. The daughter, moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing.

After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl.

He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup. Turning to her he asked, "Daughter, what do you see?"

"Potatoes, eggs, and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer," he said, "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does this mean?" she asked.

He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity– the boiling water.

However, each one reacted differently.

The potato went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak.

The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard.

However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which are you," he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Moral:

In life, things happen around us, things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is what happens within us.

Which one are you?