Herrington McBride
28th Annual Winter Retreat
The Holiday Gift to yourself or someone you love, to begin the New Year celebrating Recovery!
January 2 - 4, 2014
Friday Registration 3:00 - 6:00 pm until Sunday 1:00 Afternoon 1:00 pm
(Attendees must be recovering from their Addictions)
ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20th.
Redemptorist Retreat Center
1800 Timber Trail Lane - Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

“We Will Know a New Peace”
Keynote Speaker: Jake B

Cost is $225.00 which includes all meals & 2 night’s lodging.
A limited Number of scholarships, through “The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund” are available for those who require some financial assistance to total the cost of registration. Those requesting scholarships are asked to contribute what they honestly are able to, if possible, and all those applying to our scholarship committee must do so in writing and send your requests c/o Jim Drookit - 3626 S. Brust Ave, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207. Requests are confidential, and please include your reason and how long you have been on your recovery journey – including the amount you’re able to contribute. We set our rate to just cover costs.

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Please Note: Anyone arriving under the influence of any mood-altering substance will be asked to leave immediately – including the amount you’re able to contribute. We set our rate to just cover costs.

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ATTENTION!!!
There’s a new sheriff in town.
John Aschenbrenner has handed the reins to Jim Drookit for the 28th Annual Herrington McBride Retreat 2015. We look forward to seeing familiar and new faces.

From the Desk of our President
By: Rob McCreadie

Greetings Friends and Neighbors! I hope each of you has all you need and a warm place to stay as another Wisconsin winter descends upon us. Since our last newsletter, another Pizza Night event was held at Herrington with residents, HMAA board members and their guests. These biannual events are sponsored by the hospital and are put on by the board. Thanks to Laurie Schammel and Johnny King for overseeing the most recent get-together in my absence.

On Friday 10/31/14 we held our first annual “Scared Straight Halloween Party” at Herrington Recovery Center. Laurie Schammel and her husband Dave did an amazing job of organizing and preparing for the event! John Aschenbrenner took residents to Goodwill and provided each with $20.00 donated by the HMAA with which to purchase components for a costume. The creativity was remarkable and one resident even dressed as Medical Director Dr. Miller, who stood side by side with the real Dr. Miller when he made an appearance at the party. Board members had dinner with residents, played games, sang karaoke and enjoyed the festivities of the evening.

All in all, another successful board sponsored event that provided an opportunity for Herrington residents to enjoy fun and fellowship in a safe environment, proving 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! In loving service, I’m an addict named Rob.
My Name is Roger, and I’m an alcoholic by Roger Ebert

In August 1979, I took my last drink. It was about four o’clock on a Saturday afternoon, the hot sun streaming through the windows of my little carriage house on Dickens. I put a glass of Scotch and soda down on the living room table, went to bed, and pulled the blankets over my head. I couldn’t take it any more.

On Monday I went to visit wise old Dr. Jakob Schlichter. I had been seeing him for a year, telling him I thought I might be drinking too much. He agreed, and advised me to go to “A.A.”, which is what he called it. Sounded like a place where they taught you to drink and drive. I said I didn’t need to go to any meetings, I would stop drinking on my own. He told me to go on ahead and try, and check back with him every month.

The problem with using will power, for me, was that it lasted only until my will persuaded me I could take another drink. At about this time, I was reading The Fat of Eating, by M. F. K. Fisher, who wrote: “One martini is just right. Two martinis are too many. Three martinis are never enough. ” I’ve also heard, you take the first drink. The second drink takes itself. That was my problem. The second drink takes itself. That was my problem. I found it difficult, once I started, to stop after one or two. If I could, I would continue until I decided I was finished, which was usually some hours later. The next day I paid the price in hangovers.

I’ve known two heavy drinkers who claimed they never had hangovers. I didn’t believe them. Without hangovers, it’s possible that I would still be drinking. Unemployed, unmarried, but still drinking—or, more likely, dead. Most alcoholics continue to drink as long as they can. For many, that means death. Unlike drugs in most cases, alcohol allows you to continue your addiction for what’s left of your life, barring an accident. The lucky ones find their bottom, and surrender.

An A.A. meeting usually begins with a recovering alcoholic telling his “drunkalog,” the story of his drinking days and how he eventually hit bottom. This blog entry will not be my drunkalog. What’s said in the room, stays in the room. You may be wondering, in fact, why I’m violating the A.A. policy of anonymity and outing myself. A.A. is anonymous not because of shame but because of prudence; people who go public with their newly-found sobriety have an alarming tendency to relapse. Case studies: those pathetic celebrities who check into rehab and hold a press conference.

In my case, I haven’t taken a drink for 30 years, and this is God’s truth. Since the first A.A. meeting I attended, I have never wanted to. Since surgery in July of 2006 I have literally not been able to drink at all. Unless I go insane and start pouring booze into my g-tube, I believe I’m reasonably safe. So consider this blog entry what A.A. calls a “12th step,” which means sharing the program with others. There’s a chance somebody will read this and take the steps toward sobriety. Yes, I believe A.A. works. It is free and everywhere and has no hierarchy, and no one in charge. It consists of the people gathered in that room at that time, many perhaps unknown to one another. The rooms are arranged by volunteers. I have attended meetings in church basements, school rooms, a court room, a hospital, a jail, banks, beaches, living rooms, the back rooms of restaurants, and on board the Queen Elizabeth II.

There’s usually coffee. Sometimes someone brings cookies. We sit around, we hear the speaker, and then those who want to comment do. Nobody has to speak. Rules are, you don’t interrupt anyone, and you don’t look for arguments. As we say, “don’t take someone else’s inventory.”

I know from the comments on an earlier blog that there are some who have problems with Alcoholics Anonymous. They don’t like the spiritual side, or they think it’s a “cult,” or they’ll do fine on their own, thank you very much. The last thing I want to do is start an argument about A.A.. Don’t go if you don’t like the spiritual side, or you think it’s a “cult.”

There are 12 drugs of addiction in 2010, and many memorials at his funeral were given to our Association and earmarked for our Annual Retreat— for those individuals who could not afford the entire cost of our Retreat. Those of you attending the retreat and able to make a donation to the fund are able to do so on the registration form (rear cover). Those of you who are not attending the retreat and wishing to make a donation to the less fortunate who wish to attend, can send your donation to Jim Driop, using the address on the registration form. Every penny of your donation goes to a worthy participant.
Roger. I know you have a bowl and a spoon.” His wife came back with the grapefruit. I ate the segments. He watched me, somehow just waiting. On the Monday, I went to see Dr. Schlichter. He nodded as if he had been expecting this, and said, “I want you to talk to a man at Grant Hospital. They have an excellent program.” He picked up his phone and an hour later I was in the man’s office.

He asked me some questions (the usual list), said the important thing was that I thought I had a problem, and asked me if I had packed and was ready to move into their rehab. “In sobriety and New Year’s eyes. There I met people from every walk of life, and we all talked easily with one another because we were all there for the same reason, and that cut through the bullshit.”

One was Humble Howard, who liked to perform a dramatic reading from his driver’s license—name, address, age, color of hair and eyes. He explained: “That’s because I didn’t have an address for five years.”

When I mentioned Humble Howard, you are possibly thinking you wouldn’t be caught dead at a meeting where someone read from his driver’s license. He had a lot more to say, too, and was as funny as a stand-up comedian. I began to realize that I had tended to avoid some people because of my instant conclusions about who they were and what they would have to say. I discovered that everyone, speaking honestly and openly and having important things to tell me. The program was bottom-line democracy.

Yes, I heard some amazing drugstore twists. A Native American who crawled out from under an abandoned car one morning after years on the street, and without premeditation walked up to a cop and asked where he could find an A.A. meeting. And the cop said, “You see those people going in over there? A 1960s hippie whose VW van broke down on a remote road in Alaska. She started walking down a frozen river bed, thought she heard bells ringing, and sat down to freeze. The bells were on her head. That’s where you get to be sober. If you tell that story to the druggie (so help me God, this is what she said) took her hotel home with them, and then to an A.A. meeting. A priest who eavesdropped on his first meeting by hiding in the janitor’s closet of his own church hall. Lots of people who had come to A.A. after rehab. Lots were in deep trouble. No one who had been “sent by the judge,” because in Chicago, A.A. didn’t play that game.”

Sometimes funny things happened. In those days I was on a 10 p.m. newscast on one of the local stations. The anchor was an A.A. member. So was one of the reporters. After we got off work, we went to the 11 p.m. meeting at the Mustard Seed. There were maybe a dozen others. The chairperson asked if anyone was attending their first meeting. A guy said, “I am. I should be in a psych ward. I was just watching the news, and right now I’m hallucinating that three of those people are in this room.”

I’ve been to meetings in Cape Town, Venice, Paris, Cannes, Edinburgh, Honolulu and London, where an Oscar-winning actor read a story he had written about a woman who fell in love with aOUN. “Often came the nights I would measure my length in the road.” I heard many, many stories from “functioning alcoholics.” I guess I was one myself. I worked every day while I was drinking, and my reviews weren’t half bad. I’ve improved since then.

There are no dues. You throw in a buck or two if you can spare it, to pay for the rent and the coffee. On the wall there may be posters with the famous 12 Steps and the Promises, of which I have heard, “To carry its principles to the farthest point possible, to continue to grow in our understanding of the Ten Commandments.”

Johnny the German vs. Johnny the Greek

THE END OF GREEK CIVILIZATION

Let the challenge go forward one final time as we head into the final slaughter. Join us at our Annual Alumni Retreat in early January, as Johnny the German’s Team takes on Johnny the Greek’s Team, after the Greek’s three last pitiful losses. If successful in this fight to the death, Johnny the German will be looking for a Frenchman as he and his team then takes on the French in a new battle to the death. With the Roman’s defeat this is all slow clean-up work across Europe.