

For the Weekly Calendar:



AA Meetings - Rogers Hospital - Oconomowoc

Monday - 7:00 Evening

Wednesday - 7:00 Evening

Thursday - 6:00 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.



Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

Rob McCreadie – President

Phil Grabski – Vice President

Secretary – Mary Lee Grady

Treasurer – Johnny King

Jennifer Evancy

Jamie Walker

Scott Elston

Michael Ingrilli

Jeff Radtke

Kristin Simons

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Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist

Bob Olson – Past President

Advisors:

William Aspley

James Dropik

Matthias Scheuth – Director of the Rogers Foundation

David B. Bohl, MA - Director of Addiction Services



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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Spring Edition, 2016

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Rob McCreadie

I hope you are all enjoying 2016 so far!

We have already held a couple of Herrington McBride Alumni Association events this year and both were great successes. The first function was the Herrington McBride New Year's Eve party at Herrington Recovery Center. 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, as always, prepared a sumptuous 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 29th Annual Herrington McBride Retreat was another incredible success under the reigns of Jim Dropik. Jim coordinated a remarkable lineup of speakers who shared their experience strength and hope 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 another exceptional affair. Although I was a member Johnny the Greek's second place Trivial Pursuit team, I can attest to the fact that a great time was had by all who played! The camaraderie was infectious and as always hilarity ensued!

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association board of directors and Herrington Recovery Center staff has expanded Pizza Night to take place four times per year instead of two. This is an opportunity for Herrington residents to meet with board members over pizza, discuss recovery related issues and develop ties that will

support residents in their transition into the recovering community following discharge. The Pizza Night on March 1st was well attended by residents, Herrington staff and HMAA board members.

I must practice a tenth step and admit that I committed a faux pas in our last newsletter when I intimated that our board member Laurie was apparently married to some guy named Dave, instead of her actual husband Steve... my apologies to all!

This year's Herrington McBride Alumni Reunion Picnic is scheduled for Saturday June 18th. Festivities begin in the morning and last all day until the campfire meeting in the evening. This has long been one of my favorite events of each year as it is an opportunity to spend time with so many recovery miracles!

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association is supported through donations from members of the recovering community, family and friends. Please consider supporting us in our mission as "The Association provides each of us as individuals and as a collective community the opportunity to be in contact with each other and provide a supportive environment for recovery." 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.

I always 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!

HMAA Welcomes David Bohl!

David B. Bohl, MA
Director of Addiction Services
Rogers Memorial Hospital



David Bohl brings considerable management experience and knowledge of evidence-based addiction treatment and 12-Step recovery principles to his role as the Director of Addiction Services at Rogers Memorial Hospital. In this newly created position, Bohl is responsible for operational oversight and clinical direction of delivery of addiction services to patients and families, including serving as the program manager for the Herrington Recovery Center.

Before transitioning to the addiction treatment field, Bohl worked extensively in the corporate financial sector as a partner and executive in securities trading and equity firms, as well as a certified personal and professional development consultant. He earned his master of addiction counseling from Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School of Addiction Studies in Center City, MN. Prior to joining Rogers, Bohl held various positions of increasing responsibility, rising from an addictions counselor to become the executive director of a Chicago area addiction treatment center.

He is passionate about supporting patients on their road to recovery. "For me, the most rewarding aspect of my work is being part of a team that partners with our patients to help them first come to terms with addiction and then discover and engage in new, more effective strategies — helping them sustain their recovery, begin embracing daily life in consistently healthy ways and flourish in their lives."

Behavioral Health: Dr. Michael Miller Director

Herrington Recovery Center – Rogers Memorial Hospital



Dr. Michael Miller has been practicing addiction medicine for more than 30 years.

He now serves as medical director of the Herrington Recovery Center at Rogers Memorial Hospital in Oconomowoc, and devotes his time and expertise to providing exceptional comprehensive

behavioral health care for people suffering from addiction.

The Herrington Recovery Center is named after Dr. Roland Herrington, a former teacher of Miller's. It is a residential treatment program for patients with addiction that has been in operation for decades, Miller said.

"Dr. Herrington was well-known for treating health care professionals suffering from addiction problems," Miller said. "We've revised the program today to meet the needs of people living with a dual diagnosis."

Programming today is centered on addiction recovery, but also focuses on mood disorders like anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder and social anxiety.

"Generally, our patients are with us for much longer than a traditional residential treatment facility. Less intensive services haven't met our patients' needs in the past," he said.

Miller formerly chaired the Wisconsin Medical Society Commission on Addictive Diseases, and he is currently the vice speaker of WMS House of Delegates. Miller served with Herrington on the managing committee of the statewide physician health program for more than a decade.

He is also a clinical adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, and regularly uses his expertise to influence behavioral health care in Wisconsin.

According to Miller, the Herrington Recovery Center gets referrals from all over the country and seeks to meet the needs of all of its patients.

Miller started practicing in psychiatry, but completed a fellowship in Minneapolis in 1982 that led him in the direction of addiction treatment.

"Addiction is a very treatable disease; it's not any sort of hopeless condition," he said. "I got some unique exposure to this in medical school, and I've seen people recover — and how grateful they are when they do. How grateful they are when they are able to function in their families and in their communities again."



Bob Olson, Mike Ingrilli and John Hopkins celebrate Dr. Miller's Heath Care Heroes award.

Against alcohol I was able to put her first, but at this point my life was again out of control. I could go on for 50 pages about what life was like, but if you've hung in this long I'm sure you will appreciate my brevity here.

The thrill of getting the pills and the pleasant high was too much for me. I started making terrible decisions on how to get them. At this point, I was the regional manager at my company with 6 senior sales reps reporting to me while I managed over \$14 million dollars. During one particularly stressful time preparing for a board meeting I made a decision that would ultimately lead me to recovery. You see, the addicted part of my brain rationalized that it would be a good idea to take medication from my co-worker...at his house. My sense of self-preservation tells me to skip over some of the details here, but suffice it to say, I was arrested, lost my job and almost lost my family. During the weeks that following I found out just how far down I could go. I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep...I could barely breathe. At this point some of you smarter people are probably thinking, where was your God to help you out of this one. The answer to that one is quite simple. God was just where I had left him – out of reach. Had I been attentive to God I would have been saved all this terrible heartache and anxiety. He was reaching out to me but I wasn't listening. God had quietly laid a nice foundation for my fall from grace though. To point out just a few, we had recently sold the car we owed money and paid cash for an older one and we had re-homed a dog that was causing us stress. There was no real motivation for any of this.

When my world came tumbling down we were brought right to the breaking point. Emotionally, financially and physically I was broken. Finally in my heart I knew I was ready to quit. I knew that I was ready to quit not just pills and alcohol, but I knew something far greater. I knew I was ready to live a sober life. During my rehab I gained an insight that will forever help me to this day. Even 1% can lead to a 100% relapse. What I mean is this; if I am to remain sober I have to do it 100%. That means being honest, the kind of honest that is uncomfortable. For example, if I take cold medicine I will try to abuse it. End of story. That stuff doesn't live at my house any more. Diet pills have tons of caffeine in them. I don't ever need them for anything. If someone starts talking about pain medication in front of me, I need to tell them immediately that I am addict and to change the conversation. There is no shame where my recovery is concerned. I look at my recovery now like a great steel train that I built with pride. Its walls are thick and I keep its engine hot with coal. It will not be taken off the tracks. It will stay on its course because I will not sit idly by any longer. How do I know this...I ended up almost back where I started because I shot him.

One thing that I didn't know about my disease was that it would try to wiggle its way out of me in any way it could. In this case, it took advantage of my inner thrill seeker. You see, just days before the final hearing on my case involving the stolen pills I saw him. He was threatening our neighborhood

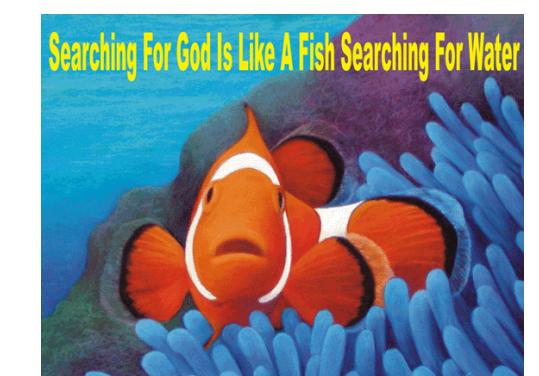
again. He had no fear of walking down our sidewalks in daylight and would only scamper off out of reach if we yelled at him. While I didn't have a dog, this wounded coyote would clearly try to attack a small dog or child if he felt threatened. So, when the opportunity presented itself to me, I shot him. I attacked on impulse. Consequences aside, I acted, and then I knew. I knew that with my attention on 100% sobriety my disease would try to get me in any way it could. Today, I keep mindful not to shoot the coyote. I cannot afford to let that happen again. When my disease does come at me again I will be prepared.

To my disease: If you come at me, me, my group and my God will pull you out of me and throw you in the fire of my recovery that burns hot and strong.

-Adam W.



When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.
(From "Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 86)





Don't Shoot Him

Whatever you do, don't shoot him. I can tell you from experience. I was standing in my garage thinking about what I had just done. I had just shot him. I was certain I had hit him, probably in the spine; his legs weren't moving but his head certainly was. It was lulling around back and forth. To make matters worse, I could see that my neighbor the police officer was standing in the shadows of his garage looking at me, then... over there.

Before I get any further into this story, I think I must tell you a different one. This story is older but leads up to this current predicament...and it is a predicament because I was due in court in less than a week.

So, here goes. When I was still a boy I only got stiches one time. My parents always thought this was odd because of any of the other boys, I was the one most likely to get stiches. If there were two trees to climb, I would climb the taller one. If there were a hill to sled down, I could be counted on to find the steepest, fastest part of the hill. If there were a chance to go fast, I wanted to find a way to go a little faster. As I grew older I needed to find different and better ways to keep the adrenaline going. I'm sure you don't know anything about that, do you.

There came a day in my search for another high, another rush I thought it would be interesting to see what my parents found so interesting in alcohol. There was nothing premeditated about it. I thought it was harmless enough, so, I pulled down a bottle. Whiskey seemed like a good choice with its honey color fragrant aroma. Slowly, I splashed a little into a shot glass. Down the hatch it went. You would think that at 13 or 14 or however old I was that the burning taste of whiskey would be enough to make me gag and never pick the stuff up again. But, let's be honest, you know as well as I do that if I were able to only have one I wouldn't be writing an article for *this* particular newsletter. Needless to say, I poured a second one just to make sure I had done a thorough job of it. To tell the truth, I don't have much of a recollection of my experience after that. I don't recall with any particular clarity whether I enjoyed the small buzz from a couple ounces of Tennessee's finest or not. I do recall telling my older brother what I had done. I recall his confused and disappointed reaction, but this wasn't the start of my drinking. This was simply another example of the way I was wired.

Let's finish my point here then. I am wired to do everything in excess.

You would think that being part of the Varsity team for both football and wrestling as well as maintaining a 4.0 GPA, as a Sophomore, would keep me busy enough to enjoy life without any other drugs. If you were to look down on my life from 30,000 feet, it would seem that I had everything. Again, I say to you, if that were the case for me I would be writing an article for a different newsletter. In my case, this wasn't enough. My searching for "more" finally led me to pot. At 16 I started smoking pot and never looked back. I remember when I was high how I thought I knew so much more about "life" and its depths than people who didn't use. I was enlightened. Ha, what a bunch of crap.

As I mentioned before, there was alcohol at my house and it wasn't exactly frowned upon to drink. By now I was 17 and really the Athletic Code was the only thing that kept my partying in check. I was the Captain of both the wrestling and football team (true to form in looking for excess, I played defense. None of that offensive sissy-ball crap. I was middle line-backer and enjoyed sticking my helmet under your chin). Once high school athletics were over I really wasn't concerned about drinking. All my friends did it and we could usually find a house to drink at that either parents were gone or parents allowed us to drink. This is Wisconsin after all.

After I graduated high school I moved on to a higher level of drinking and using. I attended a UW University and began drinking at a semi-professional level. I have been in the program long enough to know that even at the University level of drinking I was nowhere near "Professional". My first semester at University I met Sarah. Sarah seemed the perfect fit for me. She was athletic, smart, pretty and confident. She would go on and on about "God" at times, but that was a small defect compared to her assets. Trust me. Over the next 3 years I grew to love Sarah almost as much as I loved drinking and smoking pot. Almost. Time after time she would say things like "you could be so much more if you didn't drink all the time" or "there's such a better man in there". Remember, I was enlightened. She didn't know what she was talking about. If she would just smoke a little more pot and drink with me all the time, she could see how much fun she was missing out on.

I wish my story could just keep going this way. Drink, smoke and have fun. We all wish our stories could just keep going this way, but they don't. So let's start heading there. The beginning of my senior year stared like all the other years of my life. Drink, smoke and have fun. But, by the end of my senior year my whole life was in ruin I found myself sitting on the side of the highway crying tears of true repentance and acceptance. You see, November of that year my roommate went missing on his birthday. Though we searched and searched for him, he couldn't be found. It wasn't until the ice melted the following spring that we found his body in the lake near our campus. Somehow he had walked off from the bars that night and drowned in a lake miles from our house. On the way back from his funeral that spring we all stopped at a

bar to mourn our beloved friend. I can still remember it to this day. I also recall Sarah asking me, strangely, if I would split a drink with her. Of course I wanted about 5 drinks so I told her no. That night we continued our somber drinking and I vaguely remember Sarah not being around. The next day the other shoe would drop. Sarah confronted me and told me that we needed to talk. We went back to her apartment and sat in her little bedroom on the futon and she started to unload things on me. I remember feeling worried about what was to come. This was it. "Either quit drinking or I'm gone". Imagine my surprise when she told me she had been cheating on me. I couldn't believe it. I had treated her like a princess. I had given her everything she could have ever asked for... hadn't I? It was too much. My roommate was only hours in the ground and now my love was admitting that she didn't love me like I had thought. For a lack of better vocabulary I was devastated. There was such a deeply profound hole in my heart that no amount of alcohol could fill it, and I tried. I tried to fill it with angry drinking, sorrowful drinking and every way I could think of. Nothing would mend this broken heart. After time I went back to see if there were a way to repair things with Sarah. To my surprise she said that there was nothing to mend. She had finally come back to God through everything we had gone through, and that if I really wanted to fill the emptiness of my heart, it would not be through her and I reconciling, it would be through God and I reconciling.

I was furious. Here she was the one who should be ashamed and she was telling me all I needed was a little Jesus in my life. What a hypocrite. Furthermore, she told me I had to repent for the things I had done if I wanted to start really living again. She said it like I was the one who cheated or did the wrongs in our relationship. I was enlightened for crying out loud! And there it was. I was enlightened, wasn't I. These thoughts were going through my mind as I drove off from her place, all the times she said I could be so much more. I could be such a better person. I really could be someone if I would only get out of my own way. But I knew better, didn't I. I was enlightened, wasn't I? I knew how best to run my life...right...God. God, are you there? God, do I know what I'm doing? God, I don't know what I'm doing. God, will you really fill this whole in my heart? Crack. God, I have a heart of stone and it's cold and empty. Will you come to me and help me? Crack. God, I feel you out there and even this small sense of you is too much. I have done so much to keep you away. I'm sorry. How could I have ever pushed you so far away? Break. There I was. Broken hearted on the side of the road, realizing for the first time how much God loved me and wanted the best for. For the first time in my life I was filled with something that no amount of chasing could give me. This was the high that no drink or drug could provide. If you have experienced this then you know how amazing it is, and if you haven't experienced it, I pray some day you do. When you finally receive the Holy Spirit there is no greater emotion than this.

At this point Disney would drop the "Happily Ever After" curtain, Sarah and I would get back together and life would be perfect. Unfortunately, addiction and alcoholism doesn't give up so easily and to be honest, life just doesn't work out that way. Sarah and I were not meant to be, and even though I had new outlook on life, change comes slowly, if at all. Like many new believers I brought God into my house, but I kept a few closets closed and locked. Drinking and drugs were off limits to God. They weren't my real problem anyway, right.

A few years after graduating I met a beautiful girl while I was volunteering with the youth group at my church. Her father was a pastor there and she was home on break from her final year of college. As a PK (pastor's kid) she was expected to help out at church as well, so we immediately bonded over the chaos that is middle school youth group. We started dating on Valentine's Day, I think it was a sympathy date on her part, and were engaged by the end of April. I'll take a bow at that one. Remember, I live for the thrill of life! By January the next year we were married and starting a life together. My drinking was in control at this point but starting to slip. It started slowly. I would buy a spare bottle of whiskey to refill the one on the bar so it wouldn't be weird that half the bottle was gone in one evening. Later I started pre-drinking so when I would get with friends I wouldn't need to drink as much when I was with them. Finally, I would have black-outs when it was totally out of place to do it. I mean, black-outs are ok if there done at appropriate times, right. This finally came to a head when my wife was pregnant with our first son. There was one slip that finally led me to tell my wife that I needed to quit drinking. At that point, things got really bad because now I had to hide my drinking. That worked really well for me, for like 3 days. When you're passed-out it's hard to hide the fact that you're drunk. This went on for a few months until I finally found the courage to enter AA. By the grace of God I found a sponsor and was able to stop drinking for almost 4 years. I wish I could say that I was in recovery at this point, but I can't. You see, I had stopped drinking, but that was it. Simply not drinking is not enough to stay sober. As it always does, my alcohol and addiction found a new way to present itself, knee surgery. During recovery I found Vicodin. It's pretty easy to quit drinking when you have a pocket full of pills to keep you happy. What's more, the sneaking around to get them was pretty thrilling. I was like the James Bond of pill thievery, until I got caught. My grandma was the first to catch me. For months I would go to her apartment under the pretense of having lunch or dinner with her and take a few of her pills. Finally she noticed that her pills were missing and confronted me about it. I lied, she didn't believe me and so started the dance. She would hide her pills and I would eventually find them. Repeat, repeat, repeat. The pull of those pills was so strong that I soon had to revert to other measures to get more. Soon my entire family knew of my new problem. The difference with this one was that I knew I could never quit. After seeing how alcohol had ruined my relationship in the past, I knew I would never let that happen with my wife.