



**Annual Herrington/McBride Alumni Reunion
Celebrating Recovery**

Celebrating Fulfillment in The Promises of Our Recovery

June 28, 2003

Rogers Memorial Hospital
Herrington Recovery Center
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin



- 9:45 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Welcome
- 10:15 a.m. "Celebrating Fulfillment in the Promises of Our Recovery"
—Attorney, David Traver
- 11:30 a.m. Annual meeting of HMAA -- Election of Board Members
- 12:00 p.m. Picnic Fare
- 2:00 p.m. Carl's Hunt—Scavenger Hunt
- 6:00 p.m. Awarding of Scavenger Hunt Prizes
- 7:00 p.m. Moonlight AA Campfire Meeting—open to family and friends
"Gabbert's Fire" Opening talk by Mickey Gabbert centered on
"The Promises and how they reveal themselves"

Bring "skeeter" repellent and a blanket or a chair if desired.

- Who's Invited:** All McBride & Herrington alums and their families
- Guests:** Current Herrington Residents & Family
- Cost:** Free
- Registration:** Call 1-800-767-4411 Ext. 240 by June 21st

Event will be held in the Multi-Purpose Center adjacent to Herrington Recovery Center if weather is inclement.

If you are in need of overnight accommodations, check the local information section at www.rogershospital.org for a listing of hotels in the area or call 1-800-767-4411 ext. 285.

**Call folks you were with in recovery and encourage them
to attend this celebration.**

The Moving Finger

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association

Spring 2003

Your generosity is needed and appreciated

By John Hopkins, HMAA President

The Herrington/McBride Alumni Association (HMAA) depends upon its members for its very existence. Your involvement and generosity is needed.

Why have an Alumni Association? The purpose of the organization is to promote mutual acquaintance among its members, to support and promote both in action and financially alcohol and chemical dependency treatment programs and advance the cause of community and public education in these areas.

We have been successful thus far in reaching our goals. However, to continue to do so in a changing economy we must rely heavily on contributions from our members. We have been fortunate in the past to have some regular contributors but we need new contributors.

Why not think back to how things were in your life before you underwent a successful treatment program? One way to show your thanks for your sobriety and clean time is to contribute to HMAA so that the organization can continue to help others in the future.

No matter how good the intention of the members of HMAA the organization will not continue forever without the finances to keep its programs going. I ask that you consider carefully what you can do for us financially in the coming year.

HMAA gets its new members from those people completing a successful program at Rogers Memorial Hospital. However, HMAA is on its own and must fund its financial need from its members.

Use the envelope that is included with each issue of THE MOVING FINGER to send a donation or it can be sent to:

HMAA
P.O. Box 13581
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213-0581

Please do what you can to support your Alumni Association. For those of you who are working your employer may have grant money available. Remember, all donations are tax-exempt. An acknowledgment of any donation will be sent to you. Thank you for your contributions and your good will!

Summer reunion and picnic

The annual meeting, picnic and reunion of HMAA will take place on Saturday June 28, 2003 beginning at 9:45 a.m. on the grounds of Rogers Memorial Hospital in Oconomowoc.

The day will begin with a continental breakfast followed by speaker Attorney David Traver whose talk is entitled, "Finding Fulfillment in The Promises of Recovery." The annual meeting will follow and then the ample picnic fare supplied by the hospital will be enjoyed. At 2 p.m. the scavenger hunt, which was such a hit last year, will commence with prizes being awarded at 6 p.m.

One of the high points of the day will be the campfire meeting at 7:00 p.m., which is a moving spiritual experience. Mickey Gabbert, manager of AODA programs at Rogers Memorial will give the lead, which will continue the theme of The Promises.

All events of the day are free and open to all family members.

*Annual Meeting
and
Reunion Picnic*

June 28, 2003

Register today!

See back page for details.



www.hmrecovery.org

where friends in recovery come together

sponsored by the Herrington/McBride
Alumni Association

HMAA purchases memorial block

At its February meeting the Board of Directors voted to purchase a memorial brick for the Redemptorist Retreat Center's Wall of Gratitude. The brick will contain the HMAA name indicating us as a contributor. HMAA has held all but two of its retreats at the Center and have enjoyed the hospitality of the staff as well as excellent accommodations, food and an environment conducive to our weekend of sharing, growth and spiritual renewal.

Have you moved or changed your name?

Please notify us of any changes as soon as possible. We continue to receive a large number of newsletters returned due to expiration of forwarding time. Because we mail the newsletter first class, this has become quite expensive. More importantly, you will be missing announcements of upcoming events. You can send changes to:

HMAA Box 13581
Wauwatosa, WI. 53213

If you prefer, you can call 1-800-767-4411 ext 365 or send it via our website at www.hmrecovery.org

Let us hear from you

As a new feature of the Moving Finger, we are asking alums to send us information about themselves and their recovery. It can be sent anonymously or we will include your name in any form you desire. Items can be mailed to our address that is included in each issue or include it in the enclosed envelope.

Here is an example of an item of interest; John Hopkins and Natalie Zimmerman, members of the HMAA board are on the board of Addiction Resource Council of Waukesha County.

2003 winter retreat

Thirty-two people gathered at the Redemptorist Retreat Center in January for the 16th annual HMAA winter retreat. The theme of "HOW—Honesty, Openness, Willingness—The Foundation of Our Recovery" was introduced by Diane Garrison, clinical psychologist, who shared how these concepts had played and continue to play a part in her life journey.

The weekend was a time of sharing, caring and spiritual renewal. Laughter and tears along with the customary over-indulgence in ice-cream on Saturday evening made the weekend another success.

Plans are underway for the 2004 winter retreat, which will be held at the Redemptorist Retreat Center on January 9-11, 2004. (The retreat center closes over the holidays and that is the reason for the later date in 2004.) Mark your calendars.

Upcoming/Ongoing Events

Summer Reunion & Picnic
Saturday, June 28, 2003
(See back of newsletter for
more information)

Run for Recovery
Saturday, October 4, 2003
(Information in summer issue)

Winter Retreat
January 9-11, 2004
(Information in fall issue)

Rap with Herrington House residents
Tuesdays at 6 p.m.
(Must be arranged through
Rap coordinator)
Call 1-800-767-4411 ext. 516 if interested

Those hallowed halls of Herrington House

By John Aschenbrenner, Alumnus of Herrington House
February-April 1998

Reflecting on my past five years and on that precipitous day in February of 1998 when I was fortunate enough to appreciate my proverbial "bottom" and my creatively wrought and well-guarded system of denial came crashing in upon me, I didn't have a clue on how to begin crawling back from the gates of my self-imposed hell. For the first time, I realized that I am an alcoholic.

I remember those first days at Herrington House—shame based and wallowing in my misery, struggling with the reality of my addiction, my uncontrollability, powerlessness and what seemed an impossible future. What might be considered the formulation of my FIRST STEP(S) is best described in the words of Ken Wilber, post modern philosopher, writing on the essence and grace found in the inevitable suffering and struggle leading one into the first warm rays of recovery:

"A person who is beginning to sense the suffering of life, is, at the same time, beginning to awaken to deeper realities, truer realities. For suffering smashes to pieces the complacency of our normal fictions about reality, and forces us to become alive in a special sense— to see carefully, to feel deeply, to touch ourselves and our world in ways we have heretofore avoided. It has been said, and truly I think, that suffering is the first grace."

Gradually, the viability of treatment leading into the potential for my ongoing recovery began to take form. Bridges forged in humility, and with deeply needed amends began being rebuilt between family and friends, and those pathways leading to a return to alcohol use and my addictive behavior were slowly being destroyed. I began a gradual return to a semblance of Spirituality, and found my God to have become more forgiving, more compassionate, and gently more pervasive. As I began to empty of the negative forces and control of the disease, I began to fill with a subtle serenity and the invigorating generosity and beauty of this life before me, a breathtaking miracle I had avoided seeing. I remember it was about the third week in the program when I caught myself saying, "It can't get any better than this!" And then as we know—it does. Not that there weren't—and very difficult days continue when we're tempted to throw it all away—but we don't. Relying on our ability to surrender the difficulty to Our Higher Power while trying to remain within these 24 hours, the disparity passes—time moves into another 24 hours—and there comes a new day when we catch ourselves saying, "It can't get any better!" And on we go, one step after the other, one day at a time leading into the years and a lifetime in recovery.

The weeks passed, and finally came the time when the treatment team and I knew I was ready. I had achieved

adequate tools for continuing my recovery. The bitter-sweet affection for Herrington House remains with me as those days within those rooms and halls are among the most painful and yet most joyous in my life. I nervously returned to my family and work and with each day I became more comfortable and confident in my ability to "work my program" using the tools I had learned.

How often we become disillusioned by statistics suggesting the high incidence of relapse back into the grips of our disease. How often I have to counter those statistics with the words of Chapter 5 in "The Big Book" with which we begin each of our meetings. "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." Some people say it contains the only mistake written in "The Big Book." Instead the word rarely should be replaced by NEVER! I have to agree!

Those hallowed halls of Herrington! Something even rings spiritual in those words! I return to the house often, and I can feel it. How easy it is for me to think back and remember that I came to Herrington to save my skin and found that my very soul was attached to it.

HMAA Board of Directors

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The Moving Finger is published by and for the Herrington
McBride Alumni Association.
Please send story ideas and feedback to:
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