



Winter Retreat

January 9-11, 2004

Friday evening 5:00 p.m. – Sunday noon

Redemptorist Retreat Center

1800 N. Timber Trail Lane

Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

Happy, Joyous & Free Will I Ever Get There?

Keynote speaker:

David Franczyk

David is a 1990 alum of McBride. He is currently president of the Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation and is member of the board of Rogers Memorial Hospital. He was recently named as outstanding volunteer by Northwestern Mutual. David will share his thoughts/experience on the theme of the retreat.

COST: \$120.00* (Includes lodging and meals)

Attendees must be recovering from addiction to drugs and/or alcohol.

Sign-in begins at 5:00 p.m. with dinner an hour later. Most rooms are single but if you prefer a roommate, please indicate on registration form.

Space is limited. Register early.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Check here if you prefer a double room.
Please give name of other person. _____

Registration fee: **\$120.00***

Donation to HMAA: _____

Total amount of check: _____

Make check payable to:
The Herrington/McBride
Alumni Association

Mail to:
Mary Krall
Box 265
Rochester, WI 53167

Registration Deadline:
January 2, 2004

*Financial support from the HMAA decreases the actual cost of the retreat.

The Moving Finger

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association

Winter 2003

The Stigma Of Addiction

by Mickey Gabbert

As I ponder my adolescent years, I remember riding the trolley bus on North Sixth Avenue from the suburbs to downtown Des Moines, Iowa. About halfway through the bus ride, we would pass Bethel Mission which was located on the west side of the street and the Harrison Rehabilitation Clinic on the east side of the street. All of the "drunks" would be sitting outside the Mission or walking across the street to the Clinic. This impression of alcoholism and alcoholics was set in my mind and I truly thought that to be an alcoholic, you had to be one of those individuals sitting alone in the gutter, homeless and too lazy to exert any willpower to get off the street, get a job and be a tax paying citizen. (I was better than them.)

Fifteen years later, I slept in that Mission, but the Rehab Center had long since closed. Even though I was homeless, broke and unemployed, I was still better than them. I couldn't be an alcoholic because I was wearing a 3-piece suit!

I had developed a stigma about what an alcoholic was/is. And this predetermined stigma continued until the year I turned thirty. That was the year I realized that I was one of them—an alcoholic.

A major problem in my recovery was that it seemed as if everyone else had that same stigma about alcoholics and addicts. My family and friends still saw addiction as a lack of will-power as did most of the people in that area. It was only at the support group meetings that people seemed to understand.

After a year and a half of sobriety, I moved to Minneapolis, the home of the Minnesota Medical Model for alcohol and drug treatment. In Minneapolis, it seemed like everybody had either been in treatment, worked in a treatment facility or had a family member or friend who had just gotten out of

treatment. It was the Nirvana of recovery. I felt accepted and understood. The stigma was no longer there. This feeling of belonging continued for several years, but whenever I left Minnesota I found the stigma alive and well.

About that time, Betty Ford came out of the addiction closet as did several other high profile individuals. The stigma seemed to lessen. Hollywood stars began to share their stories of recovery as did legislators and senators. The stigma almost seemed to go away. Treatment centers were everywhere and if you had a problem it was okay to seek help.

As we approached the mid-nineties, individuals began to stop talking about recovery and the only stories about the movie stars were about their relapses or them entering treatment for the umpteenth time. The stigma of addiction was returning and the concept of recovery was falling away. Many of our advocates for recovery became silent. One perished in a plane crash. Today the stigma has returned. The voices of recovery have become silent. Many of the treatment centers have closed. Insurance companies don't want to authorize or pay for treatment services. Hospitals see a greater profit in MRIs than in treating the most preventable disease.

Without the voices of recovery, the stigma will become larger and larger. My fear is that our children traveling to downtown will ride past a Mission and only see those men sitting there in the gutter as men with no will power.

Please Become A Voice Of Recovery

Editor's note—As a nursing student at a hospital on 6th street, I recall walking past that same mission and I formed the same impression of what an alcoholic was/is. And—that would never be me!!! Our disease knows no boundaries in regard to education, sex, social status etc. And recovery happens.



Continuing Care Group

by Mickey Gabbert

The alcohol and drug treatment staff at Rogers Memorial Hospital identifies addiction as a primary, progressive, chronic and fatal illness if left untreated. The staff also believes that giving up your chemicals is similar to working through a grief issue and that working through a grief issue often takes eighteen months provided you don't "get stuck." True recovery requires us to change numerous activities and behaviors many of which have been ingrained into our personalities and daily lives. Giving up those things takes time. Not doing so results in a dry drunk.

Primary treatment for addiction does not cure the patient. It merely provides an individual with the tools to fight this deadly disease on a daily basis.

We all need to remember that even the Lone Ranger had Tonto. In addition, he also had Silver. His initial recuperation took time as does ours. We need both Tontos and Silvers to support us in our journey of recovery.

At Rogers, we provide a continuing care group on Wednesday evenings to provide some of the supports that are needed in early recovery. This group is similar to a treatment group as the attendees provide feedback to each other and utilizes a facilitator. At twelve step groups, we receive experience, strength and hope from our peers and from our sponsor we receive good and orderly direction.

Continuing Care Group is available to anyone who has successfully completed primary treatment and is looking for additional support during early recovery. There is no cost for attending this group and the length of time of attendance is approximately twelve months.

We need to continue to remember that primary treatment is only the beginning of our journey in recovery. There will always be numerous unmanageabilities in our lives as they don't all go away once we stop our drinking/using. During the first months of our recovery, we need to utilize all of the supports available to us.

We invite all alumni to attend this group. Call 1-414-328-3761 for answers to additional questions you may have about this group.

The Moving Finger is published by and for the Herrington McBride Alumni Association.
Please send story ideas and feedback to:
HMAA Box 13581, Wauwatosa, WI 53213
Newsletter Editor: Natalie Zimmerman

www.hmrecovery.org

where friends in recovery come together

sponsored by the Herrington/McBride
Alumni Association

What Happened To "Why?"

by Bob Remme

As I often do, I left an AA meeting recently and remarked, "I had heard just what I needed to hear tonight." One of the speakers had shared how he had finally stopped asking the question "WHY" in regard to his alcoholism and things that had happened to him in his life. His words brought me quickly back to my first days and weeks at Herrington. How I searched for the answers to the "WHYS" that were in my life. "Why me?" "Why did this happen to me?" "Why did they choose to do this to me?" The list went on and on. The "WHYS" were endless. The "WHYS" were always answered with a healthy dose of blame directed at anyone or anything but the real source of the problem.

Upon leaving that meeting and reflecting, I realized something very important had happened. At last, I too had finally stopped asking the question, "WHY" of myself. When it stopped, I didn't know and I didn't really care. Most importantly, the answer that had eluded me for so long suddenly and without fanfare had entered my life. I had found the answer to the "WHYS" in my life and it really was quite simple. It was ME! I was an alcoholic whose life had become unmanageable. The unmanageability and the resulting consequences were from ME and MY behaviors and no one else's. The turmoil that surrounded my every day life had ended when my drinking stopped and recovery began. It sounds so simple now but it certainly didn't at first. What a simple answer to so many baffling questions.

With some additional thought, it finally made sense. Perhaps acceptance was finally starting to sink in. True and honest acceptance of my alcoholism. Acceptance that an on-going life long program of recovery can be a wondrous adventure if we let it. Remarkably, I didn't find myself asking myself the question, "Why didn't I do this before?" I now understood the answer to that question as well.

Walk/Run For Recovery

by Tim Fenner

The weather cleared and our annual Walk/Run for Recovery took place on the chilly morning of October 4th. The turnout was small because of competing events but thanks to generous sponsorship we covered expenses and have something to spend on the Herrington Recovery Center.

A personal thanks to all of the volunteers who helped with the event. A special thanks to those who stood in the cold to direct and cheer on the runners.

I would also like to thank Wauwatosa Savings Bank for their primary sponsorship and the John and Brenda Perry family who participated as starters and walkers. John indicated they would like to sponsor again next year. Thank you in advance.

The date will be changed next year to avoid conflicts with other walks/runs so start thinking about next year so that we can be assured of a good turnout.



Letter From HMAA President

By John Hopkins

On behalf of your board of directors, I would like to thank you for your support of the Herrington/McBride Alumni Association (HMAA) over the past year. This support has come in many ways. Some of you have attended functions such as the winter retreat, the reunion or the Walk/Run. Others have helped us by participating in the weekly raps at the Herrington Recovery Center. Still other have written to the board letting us know how you are doing.

During the past twelve months we have also received monetary donations from you and believe me we are very thankful for your generosity.

All donations to HMAA are retained by us and used to support our functions and activities. Your donations, in a very big way, help us to maintain HMAA and give us a way to help those of us who are in recovery and the people who are trying to get where we are today.

With each mailing of the newsletter, we include an envelope for you to make a donation to the HMAA. We rely on your ongoing support. Without sufficient financial support we cannot continue the work of helping both recovering and addicted people.

I would ask that each of you, if at all possible, participate in as many HMAA activities as you can. In addition, won't you take a moment and contribute to the extent you can? I assure you that your contribution will be acknowledged.

A Happy, Safe and Sober New Year to each and every one of you!

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