

Later, Herrington residents and alumni gathered to begin the scavenger hunt. As in years past, the scavenger list worked on by me since early January was given to the scavengers. This year's theme was, "A Romp through Merry Ol' England," and within minutes they were off to find costumes to portray medieval England for the items on the lists.

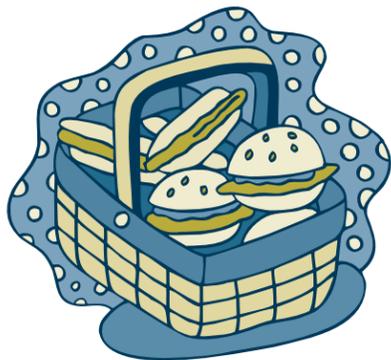
Meanwhile, others involved themselves with activities such as touring the new addition which houses the Herrington/McBride meeting room, reflecting on readings proposed by Monica, golf, playing Trivial Pursuit and just visiting with old friends. Children were entertained by a recreational therapist. The round of Trivial Pursuit was a real hoot. Only recovering people know how to "bluff" when it comes to playing the game!

The scavengers returned with quite an assortment of items! Gury and Mike's group spent a small fortune on costumes from a costume shop which included a full size deer head and an 8 foot tall black bear standing on its haunches. The taxidermist came back with them and afforded us a great time. He was remarkable good sport.

That group was the winner. Others came close-- Beau dressed as the monk from, "The Da Vinci Code," and folks bringing back hundreds of true, "Eyes of Newt," as is written about in Shakespeare's, "MacBeth." Prizes were donated by T-Lon Products.

What a remarkable day of sharing and fun affording those in early recovery that recovery is not only viable but enjoyable without drinking or using.

At sunset we gathered around the fire pit and held our closing AA open meeting. The theme was, "Spirituality." Those present shared their reality of their connectedness to their Higher Power. What a wonderful end to a perfect reunion. God had indeed, once again, been so very generous to us all.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Three alums were elected to the Board at the June reunion. Ron Ragotsky, Harold Peterson and Ashley Murphy attended their first meeting in August. Officers were elected at that time.

Thanks to Richard Pearson and Monica Murphy-Bredin for their services. They respectfully declined the opportunity to run for re-election.

THEME FOR RETREAT CHOSEN

"Recovery is a Journey: One Day at a Time" will be the theme of the annual retreat on January 5-7, 2007. The retreat will be held at the Redemptorist Retreat Center in Oconomowoc. Mary Krall is the chairperson of the retreat. Details and a registration form will be included in the next issue of The Moving Finger.

GUEST SPEAKER ON HER ADDICTION

Teresa Mester who completed the partial program at Rogers-West Allis was a speaker at the "Women's Gathering" which was hosted by Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation. Teresa spoke at both sessions and shared her story of addiction and her ongoing recovery.



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

The Moving Finger

"OUR GRATITUDE SPEAKS..."

by Rob McCreadie

As I sit at my keyboard on this beautiful July afternoon reflecting on what has transpired in my life since I last wrote an article for The Moving Finger I can only see a long list of things for which I feel a great deal of gratitude. That is not to say that life has not dealt me my share of bumps in the road. What it does say is that my attitude towards those bumps would not be possible were it not for my program of recovery.

I want to share a story about my father. My Dad, Sam, had been a pediatric pathologist for most of my life until his retirement at age 68. We didn't spend an abundance of time together when I was growing up, but there was never any doubt of the love that he had for his wife and the seven of us kids.

Sam broke his neck in August of 2001. He had been showing signs of dementia prior to that, but in October when he had to have surgery to correct the fractures that were not healing on their own, something very drastic happened. When he came out of the anesthesia, my Dad was gone. In his place was a man who looked and sounded like my Dad, but his brain had turned on him and he was no longer able to do the things that had brought him joy for most of his life. Sam was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

At the time, all I could see was my own grief and feelings of loss. It never dawned on me that this might have been difficult not only for the rest of our family but for him as well. I was still living the self-centered existence of active addiction when these events took place.

As time passed, Sam became more and more child-like in spite of his 80 plus years. He used to stand at the window and watch the sun go down over the lake each and every day. It was something that brought him great joy. He began describing his feelings as

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21st ANNUAL REUNION! THE BEST EVER

by John Ashenbrenner

Everyone, from the alumni to friends of alumni and the current residents of Herrington House are proclaiming it was the most remarkable reunion to date. I already begin to worry how we might "top" it next year. We gathered from as far away as Alaska and opened with the adapted meditation from Susan Taylor:

"We bring about new beginnings by deciding to bring about endings. To renew our lives we must be willing to change, to make an effort to leave behind the things that compromise our wholeness. The universe rushes in to support us whenever we attempt to take a step forward. Anytime we seek to be in harmony with life, to make ourselves more whole, all the blessings that flow from God stream toward us--to bolster and encourage us, because all Life is based on the side of supporting itself."

We already had 150 present for Michael H's keynote address on the theme, "Carrying the Message," referring to our 12 Step work in reaching out to the newcomer as well as our work supporting our own recovery. Michael's words evoked both moments of laughter that just as quickly turned into moments when one couldn't find a dry eye in the audience.

Following a short business meeting proposing new members for the board of directors and a financial report, we were graced with a wonderful picnic hosted by Mickey Gabbert, manager of AODA services for Rogers Memorial Hospital. The weather was warm and inviting.

The morning of 150 quickly turned into 350 plus as the afternoon began with an AA and AlAnon presentations hosted by Michael and his wife Susan. They bared their lives and their souls and took us into the depths of pain and the miracle of continuing recovery and the miracle of a family's continuing recovery.

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'OUR GRATITUDE SPEAKS...'

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different parts of the sunset. The brighter the color and the higher in the sky the happier his expression. Three weeks after I had gone into treatment I was speaking with my mother on the phone and she asked if I would like to speak with my father. I said that I would. When Dad got on the phone, I told him that I was going to come and see him on Sunday and asked him what he thought of that. Dad replied "Well Rob, the high pink part is you coming to visit on Sunday."

As was my Higher Power's plan, I was discharged after 88 days of treatment to go and live with my folks for the first time in over 25 years. I became my Dad's primary care-giver and spent some real quality time with him. I would feed, shower and shave him every day. I took him to the grocery store with me, or to the gas station, or wherever I needed to go. Sam loved to ride in the car. His sense of adventure was still very evident and his smile and the twinkle in his eye as bright as they had ever been.

My staying with Sam and my mother gave him two more years at home watching sunsets over the lake that he would not have been there for had I not been clean and able to care for him. He spent his final year of life in a nursing facility and I continued to go and see him every day.

As Sam approached the final stage of Alzheimers, I was able to hold his hand, look in his eyes and tell him that if he needed to go, it was OK, because we were all going to be alright. Some days he called me John, Steve or Joe, but he knew that I was someone that he knew and loved and his face would light up when I entered his room.

On the 6th and 8th of October Sam saw his 86th birthday and his 60th wedding anniversary. On the 9th he ate pie for both of those occasions as well as the birthday of my sister Kath. Dad loved pie!

On the 17th of October 2005, Sam died quietly. I was sad, of course, but the overwhelming feeling that I had at that time and today was gratitude for the time I was able to care for the man who had provided for me for many years and had loved me my entire life.

I was one of those that spoke at Sam's funeral and shared the story about the high pink part with the people that had come to celebrate my Dad's life. I said that once I was his high pink part, and now he is mine. Every time I see that color in a sunset, I smile and feel that it's Sam saying hello to me. I was able to put my recovery coin in Dad's pocket the day that we said goodbye to him.

None of these experiences would have been possible had it not been for the recovery that I enjoy and am grateful for a day at a time.

I'm an addict named Rob. Thanks for letting me share.

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THOUGHTS TO PONDER

by Natalie Zimmerman

RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY

These are the words on the plaque at the entrance to the Herrington/McBride meeting room which was recently dedicated as part of the new additon to Rogers Memorial Hospital.

Certainly our recovery is a journey. And, one in which we never reach our destination. It can be and is filled with bumps in the road and sometimes we get off the track. Enjoy the journey---One Day at a Time.

STIGMA IS IGNORANCE WRAPPED IN PREJUDICE AND HARDENED BY FEAR

Chemical dependency is steeped with stigma. Efforts are underway by various groups to eliminate or at least decrease the stigma. What can you do to reduce it? I don't have any great answer but I do think how we as recovering people live our lives each day certainly decreases the stigma.

YOU ARE NOT IN CHARGE!

Have you given up trying to control everything and everyone in your life? Have your turned your will and your life over to your Higher Power on a consistent basis or only when it is convenient. Do you trust?

I HAD TO QUIT BECAUSE I COULDN'T QUIT

In our attempts to quit using we tried over and over to control our using. It never worked. We found that one occasion of using only led to more. It happened over and over again. Finally, we surrendered to the fact that our drug(s) of choice was controlling our life and we gave up the fight.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

1. Notify us if you have a change of address, phone number and/or e-mail address.
2. Temporary sponsors continue to be needed for persons just entering recovery at all Rogers Memorial Hospital AODA programs.
3. Rap speakers are needed for each of the AODA programs. Date and times vary depending on the institution. There are some requirements for being a rap speaker.

Call 1-800-767-4411 ext.240 if you are responding to any of the above requests. Or, you may write to us at the address included in this newsletter.

Upcoming/Ongoing Activities & Events

WINTER RETREAT

January 5-7, 2007
Redemptorist Retreat Center
Oconomowoc
(information and registration form in next issue of newsletter)

RAP WITH PERSONS JUST ENTERING RECOVERY

Oconomowoc campus on Tuesdays at 6 P.M.

West Allis campus at various times
contact us at address in this newsletter or call
1-800-767-4411 ext. 516
(individual must be pre-approved)

PIZZA WITH HERRINGTON HOUSE RESIDENTS

September 5, 2006 at 6:00
(Contact a board member if interested in attending)

12 STEP MEETINGS AA

Oconomowoc campus
Monday -- 7PM
Wednesday -- 7PM
Saturday -- 7:04 AM
Sunday-- 8:30 AM
(all meetings are in the Herrington/McBride meeting room)

West Allis Campus

Sunday -- 6PM
Tuesday -- 7:30PM
Saturday--9AM

NA

West Allis campus
Thursday-- 7PM

ANNUAL REUNION/PICNIC

June 23, 2007
(information in next newsletter)

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

by Mickey Gabbert

Dennis Gillespie DDS, a Herrington alumni, and Mickey Gabbert, Manager of Rogers Memorial Hospital Alcohol and Drug Services presented an in-depth presentation to the Iowa Dental Assistants Association in DesMoines, Iowa. The purpose of the presentation was to educate dental office staffs on the signs and symptoms of substance abuse and how to approach patients who appear to have problems with substance use, abuse and dependency.

Dennis' power point presentation regarding methamphetamine use was graphic in nature. Dennis explained to the attendees the fallacy in the thinking around the term, "meth mouth." Many of the attendees were able to share personal experiences of seeing the progression of the disease first hand---watching patients deteriorate form one appointment to the next.

Dennis is currently on the Provider Review Committee for the State of Iowa which works with the State Licensing Board for dentists practicing in Iowa. Congratulations to Dennis on an excellent job of "carrying the message."

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change ~
Courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.*

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