



Winter Retreat January 6-8, 2006

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

Redemptorist Retreat Center
1800 N. Timber Trail Lane
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

Acceptance: The Key To Serenity

Keynote speaker
Kathy Huff Burge

Kathy is in recovery and is a therapist for the
Partial Program for Rogers Memorial Hospital

COST: \$145.00 (Includes lodging and meals)

A limited number of scholarships are available for those in need of financial assistance.
Contact Mary Krall for information and application process.

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. There is no elevator to the 2nd floor, so if a first floor room is needed, check the appropriate space on the registration form.

Space is limited. Register early.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Need a first floor room? Yes ___ No ___ Roommate? Yes ___ No ___

Name of person _____

Registration fee: \$145.00*

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:
December 29, 2005

The Moving Finger

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association

Winter 2005

CELEBRATION OF 25 YEARS OF SOBRIETY BUILDING ON A CENTURY OF HEALING

by Kathy Huff Burge

by David Franczyk

Through the grace of God, the fellowship of AA and support from family and friends, I recently celebrated 25 years of Sobriety. It was an awe-inspiring experience. I spent a lot of time reflecting on the accumulation of those 24 hours. Throughout the years there has been for me a recurring attraction to water, rocks and old gnarly trees. In pain, exuberance and serenity, I have been drawn to these natural wonders where I connect to my Higher Power. The following is a letter I sent to family and friends. The contributions to my Sobriety Rock Garden were inspiring. I connected with people I haven't heard from for years and it was like yesterday. Some people parted with rocks or driftwood they had treasured for longer than I was sober. I received rocks in memory of my daughter Karen who died in 1979 and of a family pet. My husband brought me an 800 pound rock that still sits where it rolled off the truck. My 4 year old great grandson made a beautiful stepping stone and he still brings me unusual rocks when he finds them. I received a bottle of white sand from Hawaii from when my 2 sisters, brother and sister-in-law visited before my brother died. There were contributions from Canada, Honduras, Pikes Peak, the Pacific Ocean and the farm where I grew up. I feel so blessed!

And now, on to the letter.

(Content of the letter sent by Kathy)

On August 15, 2005, and if God is willing, I will be celebrating 25 years of sobriety. In AA it is called my sobriety birthday. As this day approaches, I have been reflecting on the many 24 hours God has given me.

I have always been a lover of rocks and old gnarly trees because they remain strong despite the many indignities they have endured throughout the course of their existence. They are what they are; they have no expectation of the world other than what is.

Rocks have a tough but not unbreakable surface. No two rocks are alike. They can be monstrous or as insignificant as a grain of sand. Earlier in my life, like a rock, I built a shell around me. Nothing was going to penetrate that wall. Slowly my shell cracked and I found there was not only pain, fear, resentments and inadequacy inside me but there was also creativity, love, acceptance and joy. There was also willingness

The building project at the Rogers Hospital Oconomowoc campus is moving forward as scheduled and will be open for service in January of 2006. The 37,000 square feet project will include a new education center for the over 500 school age children the hospital serves each year, a new partial hospitalization treatment area for adults and older adults and a more private entrance and reception area for patients and families.

Additionally, the third floor level of the new project will have meeting rooms for community mental health support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al Anon, Narcotics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous.* The sweeping view of our beautiful campus through the floor to ceiling windows on this level will provide a peaceful and comfortable setting for these support group meetings.

Thus far the Herrington McBride Alumni Association has raised \$78,000 of its \$100,000 commitment to this project-an outstanding achievement. Because of the commitment, the third floor meeting rooms will be completed and available for use at the same time the first two levels are completed. There will be three community rooms on the third floor and one will be named in honor of the Herrington McBride Alumni Association.

The building project is far enough along so that we have been able to conduct tours of the facility to both the Governing Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Directors and we would be happy to arrange a tour for an HMAA group.

Thank you very much for your commitment to this project and the work we do at Rogers Memorial Hospital. Your efforts will directly impact our ability to give hope and healing to those who can no longer function in their daily lives.

* Update, Rogers Memorial Hospital 2005 Annual Newsletter, Fall 2005

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"The Moving Finger writes, and having writ, moves on." - The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

to make things better. Nature has a way of making the inside beautiful and sometimes we have to break the rock to see the beauty.

In my life I have also been like a tree. When the wind of defeat was the strongest, I learned to bend and ask for help. I learned to accept the help of others and allowed them to coax me back to sanity. As a result, my life has become something I never could have imagined 25 years ago.

In my reflecting, so many of you have come to mind. Some of you have been in my life the whole time. With others, we washed up on each others shore like driftwood and sometimes we drifted away. Either way, you have supported, sustained, encouraged, confronted and loved me. You accepted me for who I was when I could not. You saw a strength that I could not feel. You saw God's light shining in me when I felt empty and abandoned. Those of you that I pushed away, took another chance and let me regain your trust. Through you, and with the grace of God, I healed. I learned to accept who I am. I learned to reach out to others when I feel weak and to extend a hand when I have something to share.

I especially want to thank my family. I rejoice in your capacity to love me regardless of what is going on in your life or mine. A special thanks to my daughter Karen who will be forever 14 in my heart. As painful as it was to lose you, you left a powerful gift that keeps on giving. That gift is my sobriety and subsequently, my life work. Like a pebble skittering its way across the water, your gift has rippled down to the many people who have heard your story. To my husband, Jim, "If it weren't for our sobriety, we would never have met and I thank God every day for you."

The culmination of all this reflecting is an idea swirling around in my mind. I would like to make a Sobriety Rock Garden in our yard. And, of course, I will ask for help! I would be honored if any of you would like to contribute a stone, a rock or a piece of driftwood as an ongoing reminder of the wonderful people and experiences I've encountered in my journey these past 25 years.

In keeping with the symbolism of life, it can be as ordinary as a stone picked up in your yard or one found in a special place in your own travels. It may be adorned, painted, etched, carved, smoothly polished or left in its natural state. I am sure it will combine with the others to make a beautiful kaleidoscope of memories.

Thank you, one and all, for your contributions to my sobriety and to my life throughout the years.

With love and gratitude,
Kathy Huff Burge

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

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

by Natalie Zimmerman

In recent months a number of statements have served to make me ponder their meaning in regard to my sobriety. Maybe they will have a similar effect upon you. The thoughts that follow are solely mine.

1. **"Our moment of defeat, becomes our greatest victory."**

It seems that when I finally admitted that I had been defeated by alcohol as it was ruling my life that I was the victor. If I had continued to fight, I would never have found sobriety and the life I have today. I, like all of you, had to finally throw in the towel and admit defeat.

2. **"We are all blessed. Are we all grateful?"**

I am no exception in this regard. I always seem to want more and continue to overlook all that is good in my life today. I have to be reminded by my sponsor and my fellow 12 Step attendees to be grateful for what is today.

3. **"We live life forward but we learn life backwards."**

I continue to learn from what happened yesterday. I can and do relate those things to new people in the program by sharing what works or worked for me and what happened as a result. This statement brings to mind one of the Promises—"we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it."

4. **"As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone."** *Page 83 of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.*

I am who I am. I cannot be what you think I should be. I hope you accept me as I am—still not perfect but better than I was. I don't believe any of us awakened one morning and decided that we would become chemical dependent with all of the effects that chemical dependency brings with it. For us, recovery becomes a miracle and the Promises do occur—sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly.

SPECIAL THANKS!!!!

1. To Mary Lou Hopkins, wife of HMAA past president and current board member, for her help all of these years at our annual reunion/picnic.
2. To each person's Higher Power for the guidance in our continuing recovery efforts.
3. To all who provide guidance for those just beginning their recovery journey.
4. To individuals who serve as temporary sponsors for Herrington House residents.
5. To the kitchen staff for preparation of the wonderful fare served at our annual reunion/picnic.

Upcoming/Ongoing Activities & Events

WINTER RETREAT

January 6, 7 & 8, 2006
(See back page of newsletter for information and registration form)

REUNION/PICNIC

June 17, 2006
(Information will be in next issue of newsletter)

RAP WITH RESIDENTS

Herrington House - Oconomowoc
Tuesdays @ 6 P.M.
(Must be pre-arranged with rap co-ordinator)
Call 1-800-767-4411 ext 516 if interested

Rogers - West Allis
Dates and Time varies
Call 1-262-781-2091 if interested

PIZZA WITH RESIDENTS

(Contact a board member if interested in attending)
Scheduled for March 2006

12 STEP MEETINGS

Rogers Memorial Hospital -
Oconomowoc Campus

AA MEETINGS

Monday - 7:30 P.M.
Wednesday - 8:00 P.M.
Saturday - 7:04 A.M.

West Allis Campus

AA Meetings
Sunday - 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday - 7:30 P.M.
Saturday - 9:00 A.M.

Caduceus Group 7 P.M. on Thursday
(Drs in recovery)

Narcotics Anonymous
Thursday - 7P.M.

SAVE THE DATE— JUNE 17, 2006

The date has been selected for next year's reunion/picnic so make sure you circle the date on you calendar. The format for the day has not been finalized at this writing but will be published in the next issue of the newsletter which you will receive in spring.

The AA & AI-Anon speakers at the most recent reunion were met with many positive comments. So, that will no doubt be included in the 2006 event.

The scavenger hunt continues to be the highlight of the day for the residents of Herrington House. It is a revelation to many that life can be fun without alcohol or drugs. As usual, the list of items on the list will remain a secret until the hunt begins!!!

HMAA is grateful to Rogers Memorial Hospital for hosting the event. The addition to the hospital will be open by then and we expect you will have an opportunity to tour the new facility.

As usual, we welcome ideas for the day's events and we can always use assistance with planning and during the day of the reunion/picnic.

HOLIDAY VISITS

Make it a priority during the holidays to visit with residents at Herrington House. Bring along some treats if you are in the holiday baking mood or come only with your gift of hope for the folks there during the holidays. Call before you come so as to find a time when residents are indeed free to visit with you. 1-800-767-4411.

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