



## HOPE...the Light That Shines Through the Darkness

November 12th, 2011

The Pfister Hotel - Grand Ballroom, 7th Floor  
5:30 p.m. Silent Auction & Hors d'oeuvres  
7:30 p.m. Dinner, Program and Live Auction  
\$225 per person - \$157 tax deductible  
Black-tie optional

Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation cordially invites you to the 2011 Celebrate the Light Gala. The funds raised at this event directly contribute to patient care through programs such as Spiritual Care, the Angel Fund, and Patient Care Grants. This year, more than 549 days of care will be provided to patients in the hospital's residential programs, including Herrington, whose personal financial resources and insurance coverage have been depleted.

Please join us for a night of spirited fun, sumptuous dining, touching inspiration and worthy recognition in support of the Foundation's lifesaving mission. For more information regarding registration, becoming a sponsor, or donating to our silent or live auctions, visit us online at [www.rogersmemorialfoundation.org](http://www.rogersmemorialfoundation.org) or contact Stacey Basile at 262-646-1651.



*"He who carries a grudge  
digs two graves"*

- Zen Koan

## Mark your calendars:

Pizza Night: Tuesday, September 6, 2011  
Winter Retreat, January 6-9, 2012

For the Weekly Calendar:

**AA Meetings - Rogers Hospital - Oconomowoc**

Monday - 7:00 Evening  
Wednesday - 7:00 Evening  
Thursday - 7:00 Evening  
Saturday - 7:04 Morning  
Sunday 8:30 Morning

**Rogers Hospital - West Allis**

Sunday - 6:00 Evening  
Saturday - 9:00 Morning

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 John at 920-988-2044 for information on how to proceed

Donations to the Alumni Association can be earmarked as to your wishes, i.e. to our working fund, as scholarships to individuals who cannot afford retreats, etc.

Any question regarding donations should be directed to our president: John Aschenbrenner  
Phone: 920-988-2044



**Check out this website:**

**<http://www.thefix.com/>**



The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
Autumn 2011 Issue

# The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly

formerly The Moving Finger

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



Recovery - Autumn fills with Gratitude



## President's Message

By: John Aschenbrenner

Autumn is a time of Gratitude, when we reflect on the goodness our recovery has afforded us: the strength others have shared in our times of difficulty, and when we were able to rise to the occasion and help those others...when they could not see the harbor in their storms and we were able to be their lighthouse and gently bring them home into recovery, helping them to maintain and enrich their recoveries as we nourish our own.

## For the Alumni and Our Thanksgiving

The Alumni Association was created over quarter a century ago out of gratitude for our recoveries, which through our cohesiveness to one another is also directed toward the newcomer entering our ranks on a daily basis, as they discharge from treatment. The association keeps a shoestring financial account, just enough to keep ourselves above water, as our mission is to help support our own recoveries and directly help the individual "just coming through the door" and in his/her early recovery. The board members are not paid and would never want to be. In your donations to us you can be assured that every penny coming our way through donations is used directly to assist the recovering individual. Your donations go either in the general coffers, or if you wish to specify an amount to the Brian Kenevan Memorial Scholarship fund, you can be assured that you will help a person not being able to afford the early January retreat a place for the weekend. Your help in either direction is way is a way of giving back, and perhaps might be a good way to help others if you're unable to sponsor the newcomer. You know as well as I do that every helping hand held out to the recovering individual does not go unnoticed - either in our own lives or those of others. Addiction is a deadly disease, and there is not one of us who hasn't seen that level of devastation in the lives of those we've known and who have succumbed to addictions will for us all. Your efforts save lives. Out of gratitude we've learned to take care of those of us still suffering and looking for a way out. We all need to give back to insure our own recovery - how we do it is so very personal. We hope to hear from you in this season of giving.



- John, your president to the Alumni Board

## ***This Summer's June Reunion and Memories of Earlier Days***

- ***Natalie Zimmerman***

Once again the annual picnic/reunion provided those attending with a wonderful opportunity to renew friendships and make new ones while enjoying wonderful food and conversation.

I have been blest to have been able to attend every picnic/reunion since the first one in 1985. As I have thought about those of the past, I compared all of the ones in years past to the present one. What was different? The first one was held at a Milwaukee County Park on S. 76<sup>th</sup> street. Or, maybe it was S. 84<sup>th</sup> street. It was potluck with everyone bringing their own meat to cook on the grill. It is memorable for me as that was the first time since I had been discharged from McBride the end of February of 1985 that I had spent enough time in my kitchen to bake a cake. Since I did most of my drinking in my kitchen, it was akin to being in a bar and I felt most uncomfortable there. Attendance was probably in the 30s as the program was yet very young.

As years went by and numbers of alumni grew, the picnic was preceded by a morning of sharing by alum speakers as well as Al-Anon representation as speakers. Picnics were held in various county parks. Food was catered by a local catering firm. Hamburgers and hotdogs were grilled by alums who carted their personal grills to the location. I don't recall ever being "rained out." It seems the weatherman always co-operated.

The last few years we have been fortunate to be able to hold the reunion/picnic at the Rogers Oconomowoc site and been able to utilize the community room and at adjacent patio and grounds. The numbers attending has grown over the years but one thing remains constant. The day provides a wonderful opportunity to share our individual strength, hope and courage with others in recovery—new and old timers. It is such a joy to reconnect with people that one has the opportunity to see only once a year at the annual affair. I strongly recommend you become an attendee as you will reap wonderful rewards by attending and connecting with fellow recovering persons.



### ***Reunion Speakers, Trivial Pursuit, Miracles and a \$900 Doorknob!***

- ***John Aschenbrenner***

Kudos to Bob Olsen and his Team for yet another remarkable Reunion on June 25<sup>th</sup> – The weather was absolutely perfect. Our Keynote Speaker, Steve McLeran set the tone with his heart-wrenching and sometimes very humorous address: "There are no coincidences in Recovery – only Miracles.) He brought us to tears just as quickly as to laughter. Steve's huge

heart and quick wit had everyone agreeing he has been one of our best Keynote Speakers – ever!

Phil and Toni G. – our husband and wife AA – Al-Anon team, gave such very insightful thoughts regarding their own recoveries and how the program has blessed their lives.

Charlie and Wendy, former therapists and so affectionately known to earlier alumni, hosted our Campfire Open AA Meeting at sunset, again using the "Miracles" theme. The hillside was filled with lawn chairs and blankets, and as people spoke about the miracles in their recovering lives, the fire crackled as Scottie fed it, like some Celtic Warrior of old.

Surprises? You bet! While the Scavengers were out hunting for their rock star loot, John the German's team lost to Johnny the Greek's team in the afternoon Trivial Pursuit Challenge of Challenges – Already Johnny's team has been challenged for a rematch at the upcoming January Retreat. Both teams apologize for the swearing, and a special thanks to the Herrington Nurse for her special skills and first aid supplies.

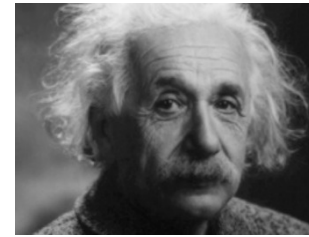
But the surprise of surprises snowballed from an afterthought...as I as leaving my home in the morning, I brought along a heavy solid brass doorknob, given me by Harry, a worker at Rogers since as long anyone remembers. It was the last piece of the Old Herrington before it was torn down last autumn. I had used it as a paper weight on my desk. It was auctioned to continue supporting our Brian Kenevan Memorial Retreat Scholarship Fund, I was hoping to get \$215 for the object, which is the cost of one retreat. The reaction was electric, and the crowd hushed as the aggressive bidding shot back and forth like lightening! The bidding over, the gavel dropped at \$900, and I learned later that if it had continued it would have gone well over \$1000.



### ***The Alumni Thanks Two Very Special Ladies: Mary & Natalie***

I have been on the Alumni Board for near 13 years and don't remember a time when Mary wasn't our treasurer, and also until just recently didn't lead our January Recovery Retreats. And equally so, I don't remember a time when Natalie wasn't on the board and until just recently didn't edit our "Moving Finger" quarterly Newsletter. Both have, over the years, affectionately been named The Sweethearts of our Alumni Association, and both have given their hearts in so very many ways to helping people secure and continue in their recoveries. They both have decided it was time to turn their seats on the board over to younger blood. At their last meeting, I asked them to be in attendance at our board meetings whenever they wished. Although that may not be in the cards, Natalie quickly quipped "Oh, we'll be around!" And I'm certain that both of them will!

On behalf of the Board and our general membership, we thank you so deeply.  
-John, on behalf of us all



### **Albert Einstein *On Life and Spirituality***

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

A man should look for what is,  
and not for what he thinks should be.

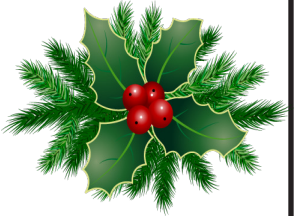
A person who never made a mistake, never tried  
anything new.

Few are those who see with their own eyes and  
feel with their own hearts.

Anyone who has never made a mistake  
has never tried anything new.

You can never solve a problem on the level  
on which it was created.

### **Looking for a Perfect Christmas Gift?**



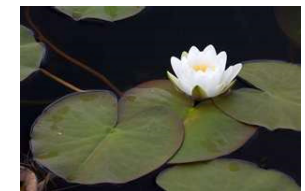
If you have a loved one in Recovery you might  
give him/her the gift of our Retreat

January 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

Friday at 5PM to Sunday at Noon  
or it might be the perfect gift to yourself  
to help secure your Recovery in the New Year!

Look for the registration form in our  
next issue, arriving in your mailbox  
shortly after Thanksgiving.

The cost is \$215.



***"He who recognizes his humility  
has just lost it"***

- ***Zen Koan***



### ***Herrington McBride Board Members***

*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

John Aschenbrenner – President  
Becky Heins – Vice-President  
Secretary – Mary Lee Grady  
Treasurer – Johnny Kennedy  
Rich Dreke  
Scott Elston  
Phil Grabski - Editor of The Herrington Recovery  
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Michael Ingrelli  
Rob McCreddie  
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Advisors:

John Hopkins – Past President  
Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist  
Bob Olson – Past President  
Matthias Scheuth – Director of Rogers Foundation  
Cindy Suszek - Manager of Herrington Recovery Center  
Cori Smith & Laurie Linden – Therapist and Herrington's  
Clinical Liaison to the Board

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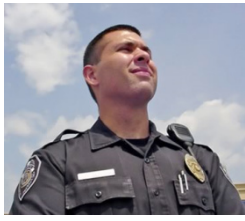
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## *How do you fix a broken man who doesn't realize he's broken?*

I was a law enforcement officer with three great kids and a loving girlfriend. I thought I was happy, but the illusion of happiness was created by the artistry of my downfall - alcohol. Every day, I found that crime and violence almost always involved some level of alcohol and drug addiction. Since I didn't go out and steal to support my habit, get violent, or fail to support my children I was different than they were. I believed my drinking was different.

I drank daily from the moment I arrived home to when I went to bed and often blacked out. I thought I was in control. I don't remember my last night of drinking. I'm sure I drank my usual amount, topping it off with sleep and cold medications. When I gained consciousness, I was still impaired. I somehow managed to dress and arm myself with my service weapon. I got into my unmarked patrol car and headed to work. On the way I rear ended another vehicle. Looking back, I knew God was beginning to take control and was watching over me. I think I started to realize I was still drunk about the time all my supervisors and other officers started arriving at the crash. I was transported to the law enforcement center and tested by for impairment and obviously failed. I was transported home after I was arrested and left to myself. I was so sick and filled with self loathing the only way to stop the pain was to start drinking again. At some point I went to the store to buy more alcohol. Obviously I was driving drunk and crashed my girlfriend's vehicle into our garage. Later and again, I drank until I passed out, failing to check in with my supervisors, as directed after my arrest earlier that day.

I was so drunk when my colleagues and friends found me they had to take me into custody for my own safety until I could be detoxed. Being in detox was the worst experience of my life, but once sober, I thought for the first time that I wanted to live sober. I didn't want to drink myself to death. I asked the AODA counselor at the hospital for help. He took an interest in me and I know he went above and beyond to help me. He helped me get admitted to Rogers Memorial Hospital. I felt a certain humility entering my life and only option I had was to surrender. I was afraid and began feeling emotions I hadn't felt in years.

My children and family were supportive, though deeply embarrassed when the news of the drunken cop hit the media. I was ashamed and needed to enter a working recovery or risk losing everything, not just my pride. When I got to Herrington I was an emotionally broken man. Forced to give up my ego I had accept that I was an alcoholic. Shortly after I arrived I was put in contact with my first sponsor who turned out to have a very similar story. More than any other thing my sponsor led me through the very murky water that is early

sobriety and I came to believe that hope existed and change was possible. I learned important lessons about turning my will and life over to God and how to ask for help.

Almost immediately after leaving Herrington I was fired from my job. I could have very easily have begun drinking again but I knew that I had something more important than my job, I had sobriety - a gift that was heaven sent. I am no longer in denial that I was broken and I want to continue to take the steps toward continuing repair. I now live life on life's terms. Things aren't always easy, in fact, at time they are very difficult but I have the strength to handle what comes my way. My doctor wrote something for me years ago when I was quite depressed and it read, "I know God wouldn't give me anything I can't handle" God has a plan for me and although he hasn't revealed the entire story, he gives me enough - a few chapters at a time to navigate my life. I hold my head high knowing I did something about my disease. I, like all of us, might have an uncertain future. I do what I am told. I talk with my sponsor, read the literature, and most importantly, attend the meetings to gain strength from the other members and try to give back what was so freely given to me. The Promises DO come true.

- Joel V.

## *On Recovery*

Once we enter into a working recovery, and we begin using the tools we've been given, and the people we reach out to continue to support us as we begin to support the newcomer, and we've connected or reconnected with A Power higher than our own, we gradually begin listening to the silent voice that begins to softly being heard from within. First a whisper, and then the soft spoken voice of the friend we've needed to befriend for so long, that allows us the reflection of a new self-respect based on our efforts and those of the others showing us that we again deserve to believe in ourselves. The inside begins to mirror the outside, and as we settle into our new enriching lives, we reflect the goodness we again are finding from deep within. What had become a two dimensional world now returns to the three dimensions we had long forgotten. Our black and white view of the world is seen again in Technicolor...and so we set out from our shores and begin the adventure we had given up so long ago. There is time, so long we breathe. A wise man once suggested that saints have a past, and sinners have a future. Our beings begin to feel gratitude and we begin wanting to return the help given us. Our futures no longer rely on our past and there is no limit to where the adventure will take us - and we learn to take comfort in the journey.

-Anonymous



## *Connections*

Recovery consists of concrete components that include working the Twelve Steps, reading the Big Book, and having a sponsor. Another often overlooked vital component is fellowship, defined as companionship, company, or a community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience. Fellowship involves connecting with others.

It seems to me that forming healthy connections with other people is one innate difficulty for the alcoholic or addict. It is for me. Initially, drinking alcohol seemed to provide some sort of connection with so-called "friends." I now know that these "friends" were merely enablers who justified heavy drinking and disappeared when the alcohol wasn't flowing. As my drinking career progressed, I found myself drinking more often alone. I hid my drinking from others. Bottles of alcohol were strategically hidden in various locations to enable a secret drink. I didn't want to be seen drinking in public. It was increasingly more difficult to approach other people and engage in conversation. I didn't know how to reach out for help. I became very disconnected and lonely. I was disconnected not only from other people, but I became disconnected from my own sense of self and my idea of a Higher Power.

When I first walked into Herrington last fall, I had a disconnected, completely fractured sense of self. I felt as if I had to be one person while at work, another person with family, and was someone else when drinking. I had no substantive friends. I had pushed away family and friends that truly cared about me. A connection with any sort of Higher Power was nonexistent. There was a thick wall around me isolating my fractured self from everything and everyone else.

Residential treatment at Herrington helped teach me to be who I am and to be alright with who I am. The "residential" part was key. I was removed from my debilitating environment and its stressors and placed in the experimental "bubble" to test and form new relationships. In addition to the meetings, group therapy, and assignments, I was now in a new community of activity and experience. I learned about myself and started healing my schisms. I now know that forming connections with others begins with oneself. Through self-acceptance and relief of self-obsession, I learned to open up, to start trusting, and to begin connecting. This sense of connection with others was my antidote for the tremendous loneliness that I was feeling. All of this was happening on a deep, subconscious level that I'm sure I didn't understand at the time. The intimate bonds I formed with others at Herrington were emphasized most on the days someone was discharged. Remember the day you left Herrington?

Although I worked very hard during treatment and thought I had mastered the lesson, I relapsed despite trying to apply treatment principles to my everyday life. I was baffled. What had I missed? I was readmitted to Herrington. My sponsor

actually went above and beyond to pick me up and drive me from Madison to detox at Rogers in a nighttime icy storm. This showed me the real desire to be of service to another, a willingness to do everything one can to help. I learned that my previous roommate at Herrington was found dead. This struck me on a very personal level. I was beginning to feel a deeper sense of connection with others. In deconstructing my relapse, I learned that I slowly unplugged myself by losing contact with Herrington alumni, attending AA meetings less frequently, and calling my sponsor less often. I became overconfident and thought I could do it on my own. I realized that, for me, staying connected with other sober people is what I needed to maintain my own sobriety. Forming connections became part of my spirituality. With more treatment, I became more connected with myself, my Higher Power, and with others.

Staying connected with sober people helps all of us maintain our sobriety. Conversely, losing connection is one factor leading to relapse. Staying connected is a two-way street and takes work. The more you give, the more you get. I've learned that reaching out to connect with others is most important when I've slipped back into depression, self-pity, or self-obsession. I maintain connections by telephone, e-mail, going to meetings with people, and special events like the Herrington picnic and hosting game nights or barbeques. The Herrington Alumni Association is a way to stay connected. AA is also based on connection. We all have a common illness or problem. It goes deep into our personal lives and causes us to open up to each other and talk about our innermost thoughts and most secret problems. We try to help each other get well. There is sympathy, understanding, and help that lead to sincere friendship. There is a sense of belonging and of purpose. Similar experiences, uncanny understanding, and absence of intolerance provide guidance from others during difficult times. We escape disaster together. Even when travelling or moving to a new location, new acquaintances can be found in AA. Via connection, a network or safety net is formed by many people to support each other's sobriety.

Gone are the days of not remembering faces, names, or topics of conversation. In sobriety, I can have a meaningful conversation with someone and get to know him. I can now remember a person, his or her name, and something about him. Other people come up to me to talk, plan events with me, and at times even reveal very personal things to me. I now have the ability to participate in and feel a deep sense of connection with others. Importantly, this helps me enjoy sobriety as opposed to fighting not to drink. I live sober. From this experience, I have learned that connections are not only wanted but are needed. We can't do it on our own; we need help. I believe each of us needs more than himself. Each one of us has a desire to be part of something beyond ourselves. We need others like ourselves. If what we desire is understanding and connection, then we must offer understanding and connection to others. Human nature demands companionship of others. And we are not alone.

-Gary P.