



## 26th Annual Herrington-McBride Reunion/Picnic! Saturday, June 25th

On the grounds at Roger's Memorial Hospital

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### Agenda of Events for Picnic / Reunion

- 9:30 Continental Breakfast  
10:00 Welcome from Bob Olson, Past President and Advisor to HMAA  
10:15 Keynote address by Steve McLeran, "There are no coincidences, only Miracles."  
11:30 Annual Meeting Chaired by HMAA President John Aschenbrenner.  
12:00 Gourmet Picnic Lunch  
(Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)  
1:00 AA & AI-Anon Speakers-Phil and Toni G.  
(Games and Activities for children on the grounds with a Rec. Therapist.)  
2:30 Annual Scavenger Hunt for present Herrington residents and interested others.  
*As in years past, the scavenger hunt list is kept under lock and key until just before the groups are sent out to collect items. Prizes provided by "T-Lon Products Inc."*

Those individuals choosing to remain behind are welcome to participate in:

- John A's challenge to Johnny the Greek - "Winning back the Title:
- Summer's Master of Trivial Pursuit" - Pick your team captain!

Dinner will be on your own. If you need suggestions of restaurants, ask one of the locals.

- 6:30 Scavengers are due back with their "LOOT" for judging and the awarding of prizes.  
7:30 "Miracles" Fireside Open AA Meeting hosted by "Charlie"-Former HRC Therapist  
(We welcome not only recovering alums but family and friends of Herrington/McBride.

*Our "Miracles" Fire will afford us a spiritual culmination to our day's activities. It Affirms the Goodness of our recovery and reminds us of those struggles that leave us so grateful for the present.*

ALL EVENTS WILL BE HELD INSIDE THE MPC  
IF THE WEATHER IS INCLEMENT!

### Mark your calendars:

Our upcoming June Reunion & Picnic: Saturday,  
June 25, 2011  
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



*Serenity  
has less to do  
with avoiding the storm  
than it does with maintaining one's  
calm  
in the midst of the storm*

# Herrington McBride

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
Summer 2011 Issue

## The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly

### The Moving Finger

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



#### Slow Dance

Have you ever watched  
the kids on a merry-go-round  
or listened to the rain slapping on the ground?  
Ever follow a butterfly's erratic flight  
or gazed at the sun at the fading of night?

You'd better slow down...  
don't dance so fast...  
time is short...  
the music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly?  
When you ask, "How are you?"  
do you hear the reply?

When the day is done do you lie in your bed  
with the next hundred chores in your head?  
You'd better slow down...

don't dance so fast...  
time is short...  
the music won't last.  
Ever told your child  
"We'll do it tomorrow?"

and in your haste, not see his sorrow?  
Ever lost touch  
and let a friendship die  
cause you never had time to call and say "Hi?"

You'd better slow down...  
don't dance so fast...  
time is short...  
the Music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere  
you miss half the fun of getting there.  
When you worry and hurry through your day  
it's an unopened gift  
just thrown away.

You'd better slow down...  
don't dance so fast...  
time is short...  
the music won't last  
-Anonymoyus

### President's Message

By: John Aschenbrenner

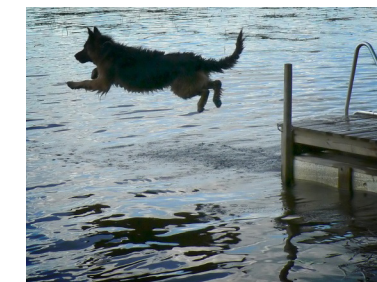
Summer is finally here, as are the summer holidays, family gatherings, festivals and summer vacations. Even for those of us most dedicated to our recoveries, our (hopefully) fleeting thoughts of years past can be a challenge. Please remember to make a special effort to continue to follow our regular schedule of meetings, and to

consider an extra meeting if the summer becomes a bit challenging. We need to continue/reinforce that special relationship we have with our sponsor. Then there are our phone lists of people we can talk to - might want to keep an extra copy in the back pocket of our favorite shorts!

Certainly there are the challenges but there are the awesome rewards. I remember my first summer in recovery. It was like being able to perceive the glories of summer in a 3 dimension Technicolor rather than in the mundane and depressing 2 dimension black and white which my life had become.

I left my treatment at Herrington just prior to summer beginning and remember my first Herrington/McBride Summer Reunion that June. I couldn't believe the good time I was having, and without having to fortify myself with alcohol. I remember thinking, "Is it really possible to have this much of a good time?" It was...and it continues to be. Leaving that Reunion, I recalled the image of William Wallace in "Braveheart," bellowing the word "Freedom!"

So, get out your T-Shirts, shorts and sandals, and clear your calendar for Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing you at this year's reunion. I know that our host, Bob, has made a special effort to make this year's celebration so very memorable. I'll see you there!



Recovery - Summers filled  
with Miracles in-the-Making



**George Carlin**  
on continuing Recovery

"Just cause you got the monkey  
off your back  
doesn't mean the circus has left town."



## Dillon & Jim Recovery for a Son and his Father

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### “A Miracle-Still-in-the-Making”

#### Dillon D’s Story:

“I began drinking and using at age 16. It took me to a completely different world, and my alcoholism hit the ground running. I was never a social drinker. My alcoholism progressed and got worse, but there was no in-between period or specific turning point in which I went from normal drinker to alcoholic; I was an alcoholic before I ever took my first drink and it activated as soon as I got my first buzz. Looking back, I now see my Higher Power at work right from the beginning, through incidents in which I could have, but didn’t get DUIs, and attempts by my parents to get me help early on, but having no real consequences, I was unable to heed His guidance. I wasn’t even close to comprehending that alcohol was a problem.

It took an OWI two weeks before heading off for college in Minnesota to have my first truly eye opening experience. I had the OWI hanging over my head for my entire freshman year in Minnesota, yet, I was quickly drinking again. I went to outpatient counseling for court but I was clearly not ready to live a life of sobriety. Again, although not knowing at the time my Higher Power was at work, an alcoholic professor was placed in my life. Receiving reference letters from the professor and some other people, the judge then told me a story about how alcohol had affected his son, and he actually gave me the lightest sentence he could. My Higher Power was speaking through others back then, but twenty-two days in Huber the summer after my freshman year, and I was back to drinking.

Underlying depression combined with alcoholic drinking intensified, leading to a lost job and inability to keep up with school; I could only drink. A major depressive episode and suicidal ideation on one bender led to a three day hold in a psych ward. I agreed to an outpatient program, knowing I needed to quit drinking. However, not having reached my bottom, I quickly drank again.

On May 17, 2009 I attempted suicide by acetaminophen overdose while on another bender. I eventually called 911 for help. I spent time in the ICU and was told to prepare for certain side effects and they even started vetting me for a pre-liver transplant list. Every time they saw me they said that my labs looked like hell but I was looking alright. I recovered physically. Mentally however, it was back to the psych ward.

In my second trip to the psych ward in as many months, I took the first step. I admitted defeat, knew I was an alcoholic and accepted it. I admitted everything had caught up with me and I didn’t know what to do. A nurse commented that it was very humbling and, looking back, I realize that was my first taste of humility and my First Step. Residential treatment for addiction and mental health at Herrington came next. I wanted to be sober because I knew I had to be, but even more than that I wanted a different way of living. I now know that it was spirituality I was searching for. I began to feel that serenity and peace after AA meetings. Hooking up with a sponsor, **working t**

**The Steps and participating** in treatment gave me glimpses into a better life.

Reaching the Sixth Step was when I really started to consider myself in recovery, as opposed to just being dry. For me the first five steps were all about me and my past, helping to admit my behavior and letting go of it. When I got to the Sixth Step I began understanding the guide for living a new life and maintaining sobriety.

I wanted spirituality but resented organized religion. I never really liked pre-formulated prayers because I didn’t feel sincere saying something rehearsed for me. One night in Herrington I just started writing. It was sort of like a stream of consciousness that turned into a gratitude letter to my Higher Power. It was a spiritual awakening for me. There is a gradual ever-building-spiritual-awakening I experience with my conscious contact with my Higher Power, which is never fully complete, and then there are events like this in which I perceive as specific spiritual awakenings. Through this process I felt a connection with my Higher Power.

After this I simply allowed my spirituality to grow into whatever way it worked for me. Prayer and meditation overlapped and became natural. Nowadays, all I pray for is that I live what the Creator’s will is for me. I never claim to know what that will is, but I know it cannot involve drinking. I will have inner peace and serenity when my will is aligned with the Creator’s.

Shortly after leaving Herrington, I went back up to Minnesota for school, living in a sober house for college students. I was sober for about five and a half months after leaving Herrington; the Creator however, re-humbled me when I began to stray from a day by day approach to working the program and living a spiritual life. I relapsed and struggled for about two months, not stopping meetings completely but unable to put together any time of sobriety.

One night I prayed for my Higher Power to keep me sober and do His will by any means necessary, even if it meant more consequences. Shortly after, I was caught drunk and kicked out of the sober house. I moved back home to Milwaukee, putting school on hold. It sucked but even at the time I knew the Creator had answered my prayers, as usual. I told him to give me whatever consequences I needed and he did. Back home I had great family support, my original sponsor, and the inspiration of a fellow AA member in my father, who made sure that we both got to meetings. My father working the program provided a tool that cannot be overstated in my path back to recovery. I have managed to put some 24s together by realizing all that matters is staying sober in this current 24 hours. This keeps me from getting complacent and also from overwhelming myself with the future.

I can only continue to be grateful and accept that what I am doing at this particular moment is what I am meant to be doing at this particular moment. Being healthy spiritually is the number one priority in my life, and if I am, then everything else will fall into place. I try to keep my program simple; I want happiness and inner peace and I know a spiritual life will do that for me, and in order to live a spiritual life I know two things for sure: I can’t drink and I must improve conscious contact with my Higher Power.

I feel my Higher Power’s presence and know when I am working against His will. The greatest gift from my Higher Power is receiving His guidance at any time in any situation. I know when I am healthy

to turn pink and carry me. I now have the tools to make it through today without using. Today I am willing to do whatever it takes to not pick up that next drug or drink.

Every morning I make coffee, read my morning meditation and devote some quiet time to my Higher Power. I also devote sometime during the day to my recovery; currently it’s either my outpatient treatment, or an AA meeting.

My living situation is such that I have moved back with my parents after being out of the house for 10 years. I can honestly say that it hasn’t been a cakewalk but the worst day is a 1000 times better than my best day while using. My parents still have their doubts and suspicions about my recovery; I gave them every reason to. Sometimes I find myself returning to my old addict ways of thinking. I wanted trust from my parents immediately, which, when I left Herrington, I knew would develop over a length of time.

I am doing everything in my control to stay sober, there are variables beyond my control which I have to accept and let go of. I have to be patient and let life happen on life’s terms.

Today I woke up with that same pink cloud which carried me out of the doors of Herrington. It’s still here, I’m still sober, and that’s all that matters today.



### Herrington McBride Board Members

*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

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Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist  
Bob Olson – Past President  
Matthias Scheuth – Director of Rogers Foundation  
Cori Smith – Therapist and Herrington’s Clinical Liaison to the Board

**THIS IS YOUR LIFE.**  
DO WHAT YOU LOVE, AND DO IT OFTEN.  
IF YOU DON’T LIKE SOMETHING, CHANGE IT.  
IF YOU DON’T LIKE YOUR JOB, QUIT.  
IF YOU DON’T HAVE ENOUGH TIME, STOP WATCHING TV.  
IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE, STOP!  
THEY WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU START DOING THINGS YOU LOVE.  
STOP OVER ANALYZING, ALL EMOTIONS ARE BEAUTIFUL. WHEN YOU EAT, APPRECIATE  
**LIFE IS SIMPLE. EVERY LAST BITE.**  
OPEN YOUR MIND, ARMS, AND HEART TO NEW THINGS AND PEOPLE, WE ARE UNITED IN OUR DIFFERENCES.  
ASK THE NEXT PERSON YOU SEE WHAT THEIR PASSION IS, AND SHARE YOUR INSPIRING DREAM WITH THEM.  
**TRAVEL OFTEN;** GETTING LOST WILL HELP YOU FIND YOURSELF.  
SOME OPPORTUNITIES ONLY COME ONCE, SEIZE THEM.  
LIFE IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU MEET, AND THE THINGS YOU CREATE WITH THEM  
SO GO OUT AND START CREATING.  
**LIFE IS SHORT. AND WEAR YOUR PASSION.**

“THE HOLSTEE MANIFESTO” ©2009

“Follow Your Bliss!”

-Joseph Campbell



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Please send feedback and ideas to:

Phil Grabski, Editor  
N26 W27517 Wildflower Road  
Pewaukee, Wisconsin 53072  
pgrabski1@gmail.com  
Phone: 262-993-8663

Send name, telephone, address & email changes to:

HMAA Box 13581  
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213  
or by email to [Wemart@aol.com](mailto:Wemart@aol.com)

spiritually because I am aware of reminders from my Higher Power during normal everyday situations, not only that I am supposed to be sober but that I want to be sober. He keeps me enthused because I am sober and positive, with the knowledge that I only have to be sober right now. My name is Dillon, I'm an alcoholic, enjoying another sober 24 hours.

### **Jim D's (Dillon's Father's) Story:**

My name is Jim. and I'm an alcoholic and addict. I need to remind myself of that every day. Today I would not be happy, joyous, and free if not for a miracle. Miracles never existed in my life before, just good luck and bad luck.

Alcohol and drugs were a part of my life since I was eighteen years old - recreational at first, and eventually a daily occurrence. I dabbled in everything, eventually settling on pot and alcohol. Around thirty years old, the wheels were spinning and I researched IOP treatment, but refused to commit to it.

By thirty-five I fell into prescription drugs, namely Valium. This lasted for six years. My wife was unaware of the prescription drugs until I came clean with her. I made a decision to attend one-on-one counseling. I stopped using alcohol for seven years and pills for three years but continued using pot. Eventually I was back full speed ahead.

I was using everything for one and a half years when my son Dillon entered the Herrington Recovery Center in June of 2009. I looked forward to visiting Dillon because I felt very comfortable and connected to the residents. Deep down in my heart I knew I was one of them. I asked questions and was interested in the program.

Family Focus Day is when everything changed. Throughout the day, shame, guilt, fear, etc... were running rampant. Dillon started by introducing himself, "Hi, I'm Dillon and I'm an alcoholic." I introduced myself by saying, "I'm Jim, Dillon's dad; I'm here to support my son." I felt so small and sick to my stomach because I knew I was in the same boat. My son had the courage to admit he was an alcoholic, but here I was at Family Focus and what do you think I had in my pocket? That's right, pills which I was using that day. Three words come to mind: cunning, baffling, powerful.

Sitting in that room, it really hit home when the AA speaker, Scott E. told his story. Scott's story was clearly meant for the residents but I found myself identifying with everything he said as if it were my story (funny how God works!) He truly reached me and The First Step began festering inside me. As Family Focus was wrapping up for the day, we were supposed to introduce ourselves again and mention something that we had learned that day. When my turn arrived, I gave a little history about myself and I felt everything come together, thinking it was time to pull the trigger. For the first time in my life, I called myself an alcoholic. Every one of the residents stood up and applauded, which gave me strength.

The problem with coming clean at Family Focus was committing to staying sober. I knew that my story was breaking news back at the HRC. Certainly Dillon's counselor Deb would be concerned about sending him home with me. Dillon once commented that Deb would have a field day with me. All of these thoughts circled through my head causing fear but I felt, well here's my son admitting he is an alcoholic and he's getting better, so it has to be able to work for me too.

Walking out that day, the Family Therapist, Ron H., told me,

"Jim that was very spiritual!" I looked at Ron and thought he was crazy. My first thought was that I didn't go to Church and I'm not religious - What the heck is he talking about? Today, spirituality means so much more to me and I now understand what Ron meant. Today I admit I'm an alcoholic and addict. That day at Family Focus I had only courage to admit I was alcoholic (progress, not perfection!)

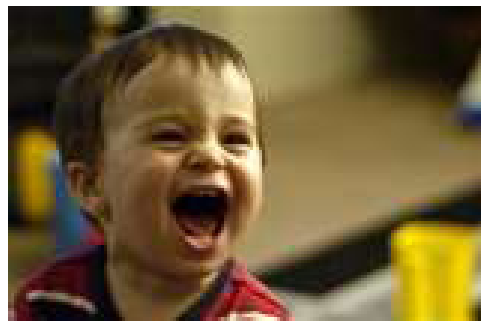
After Family Focus, Dillon made sure to get the Big Book in my possession. Home on a weekend pass, he was required to attend an AA meeting each day. I decided to join him for what was my very first AA meeting. If I only knew then what these meetings would come to mean. Prior to my second AA meeting Dillon said something that will always stick with me, "Dad, you don't have to be scared, there're good people in there." Those words are what I needed to hear to help ease the fear.

I started working The Steps with a sponsor - honestly, openly and willingly, without trying to pick and choose what I would or would not do. I continue to attend three to four meetings weekly and attend AA retreats. I never in my wildest dreams would have thought that I would be attending a retreat, let alone an AA retreat. Throughout all of this my wife has been there, giving me the support and freedom to do what I needed to in order to work this program. She is now a proud member of Al-Anon.

I have gone from sitting terrified and embarrassed in the Family Focus room to having the privilege of sponsoring Herrington residents and other AA Members. The reward I receive from working with others is truly remarkable. I get joy from others' success as well as a strengthening of my own sobriety.

My sobriety date is 7-10-09. I'm very grateful to Dillon for all his help and advice. Today we attend meetings together and can even participate in the same break outs at times. The best perk of all of this was the Herrington Two-for-One Special Deal!

The unique bond my son and I share is something that can't be manufactured. It is a miracle-still-in-the-making. I would like to say thank you Scott E., John A., Deb A. and of course The Fellowship. God Bless to All.



### ***"When Man Plans God Laughs"***

*Anonymous*



### ***A Spark of Light and Hope***

*By: Lisa R.*

There we stood in the parking lot together. Having already said our goodbyes, he just looked at me with his bag over his shoulder. And I began to cry. He asks me, "Honey, What's wrong? I gotta go..." And I simply choked out, "I want to come too!" That's the conversation my husband and I shared, standing in the Herrington parking lot. I remember those seconds, that hug, and those tears so vividly that I choke up just by the memory.

My husband had been at Herrington for a few weeks and as he was getting better, I was noticing my sickness. He was the alcoholic. I was the one with issues. I loved someone with the disease of alcoholism. I don't have the disease but I'm the one who needed help too. I saw his new-found calmness with life from working the AA program at Herrington, and I was jealous. He was prospering and I was floundering. I didn't want to work his program; that seemed too hard to me. I wanted what he was getting. Herrington was doing for my husband what I couldn't, and oddly enough, that hurt my ego.

Whenever I entered the doors of Herrington to meet the counselors, I was welcomed. I couldn't believe that people in the house were so kind and non-judgmental of me. I thought I was the enemy; the wife who had failed to stop my husband's drinking. That was my shame.

The Weekend Family Days at the house opened my eyes to know that I wasn't the only person feeling angst, fear, hurt and realizing the uselessness my efforts had on the disease. I learned that even though I thought I was helping and even though all of my efforts were well intended, I needed to get out of the way and focus on getting help for myself. I loved my alcoholic unconditionally, wanted his recovery more than my own, and had no idea that I needed just as much help as he did.

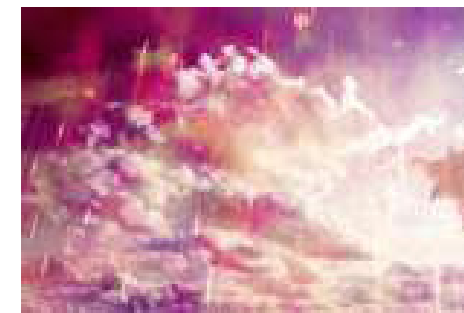
I had been going to Al-Anon for about 6 months at that time. I went to one meeting a week where I listened, sometimes I shared, but mostly I just cried. The people at my meeting were wonderful, giving me Kleenex, offering encouragement, and giving me a hug. I had found comfort and trust there and now I wanted more. Herrington was for him, and Al-Anon was for me. I reached out for help and decided to go to regular Al-Anon meetings. I got a sponsor and started going to two meetings a week and my life has never been the same since. Thank goodness!

Until that breakdown in the Herrington parking lot, I hadn't really realized or accepted that the disease of alcoholism my husband battled, had affected me. I'd been so busy trying to fix him while covering up the secrets, that I had lost me.

Before Al-Anon, I was sad, frustrated, fake, angry, mad, hurt, and desperate. I didn't know how to deal with all of these emotions; they'd pop out at inappropriate times, so I stuffed them deep down. Instead of living life, I simply existed each day.

I planted both feet and jumped full bodied into the Al-Anon program. I stopped tip-toeing around the program, and got involved. I started working the steps and concentrating on me and me alone.

Today I have peace in my soul, comfort in my heart and a sincerely personal relationship with my Higher Power. When my wedding ring catches a spark of light and I silently thank the spark of hope that flashed while at Herrington. I am a grateful member of Al-Anon.



### ***The Pink Cloud***

*By: Nick H.*

I had heard the term, "The Pink Cloud" quite a bit while in treatment at Herrington but had never understood what it meant. So I did what most people do these days when they don't understand a concept or idea, I googled it. I quickly found a definition that related to addiction, recovery and me. Here is what I found: "A day, followed by a series of days or weeks, where the addict or alcoholic experiences acceptance. He or she is excited at the prospect of what recovery from addiction and alcoholism has to offer and feel as if they have grasped what it takes to maintain quality recovery." This sounds right, because this is the feeling I've had ever since I walked out the front doors of Herrington. For me, Herrington was the key to the lock that I had been searching for my entire life. I watched my friends & family going through life knowing what they wanted to make of it, how they were going to do it, and obtaining that drive to complete their dreams. I had no such drive - all I wanted to do was drink and use.

I couldn't seem to understand why everyone else wanted to stop hours before I did. It took 12 years for me to admit to myself that I was an addict, and it took an additional 3 years to accept that fact.

I have the typical trail of destruction. I've lied, cheated, and stole my way through life to get my drugs of choice. If there's a drug I haven't done it's because I couldn't get my hands on it and not because I had a moral objection. I watched other people grow up, have children, buy homes, and live the so-called American Dream. I always wondered why these people did not spend their excess money on something to make them relax or have fun. It was recently that I separated the words drugs/alcohol from the word fun.

The experience, strength, and hope that were shared with me throughout my stay at Herrington, whether it was in Group or AA meetings, had me starting to accept the idea that I have a disease. I could however live a life free from addiction as long as I used the tools given to me.

The dark cloud I had lugged around for 14 years had begun