

# Herrington's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Reunion

## Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

### Agenda of Events

- 9:30 Continental Breakfast  
10:00 Welcome from Bob Olson, Past President and Advisor to HMAA  
10:15 Keynote address by Ron Ragotzy, "Tears of Gratitude"  
11:30 Annual Meeting Chaired by HMAA President John Aschenbrenner.  
12:00 Gourmet Picnic (Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)  
1:00 AA & Al-Anon Speaker  
Afternoon Games and Activities for children with a Rec. Therapist  
2:30 Annual Scavenger Hunt for present Herrington residents and any 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.")  
2:45 Trivial Pursuit Johnny the German's Team vs. Johnny the Greek's Team (the only place on earth where Trivial Pursuit get's bloody!)  
\*Dinner will be on your own. If you need suggestions for 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".  
(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 allows us to remember those struggles that leave us so grateful for the present.

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

**Reunion Co-Chairs: Kristin Simons and Bob Olson**



The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
Summer Issue 2012

# The Herrington Recovery

## Alumni Association Quarterly



### From the Desk of our President

By: John Aschenbrenner

### It's time for our Annual Alumni Reunion!

Since its inception nearly three decades ago, our Herrington/McBride Alumni Association has been dedicated to assisting current residents at Herrington Recovery Center and fellow alumni who came through Herrington and the former McBride Recovery Centers as well as our recovering friends in the community.

Our association is not for profit and we keep a treasury of just enough to keep us afloat – every donated penny goes directly into assisting people who desire sobriety and helping others maintain who are already working their recovery programs.

We've learned early on that we need to cherish our recoveries and celebrate our accomplishments – providing worthy examples in showing that not only can recovery be an exciting new life-long adventure, but it can also be so very enjoyable and a very worthy way of living. So, again, it's time to share with each other and with those who are currently residents in treatment a reunion of gratitude – gratitude for each other and for those who are just entering recovery.

There are many alumni and friends of our alumni who begin planning for this very celebrated event as soon as they hang their new calendars in January. It's again time to pack up the kids, put on our T-shirts, shorts and sandals, get your car filled with gas or get your plane tickets and head for Rogers. Get ready for a full day of speakers, great food, the infamous scavenger hunt, Johnny the Greek vs. Johnny the German's Trivial Pursuit Championship and evening (open) campfire AA Meeting. We'll have a recreation therapist offering kids of all ages fun activities for the afternoon. Why does your alumni association offer you this annual event? We believe, just as we believe in celebrating our religious holidays, birthdays and anniversaries, that important times and events in our personal lives need to and should be celebrated. Those of us who have been in recovery for some time understand this, just as those new to recovery are beginning to understand that sober celebrations

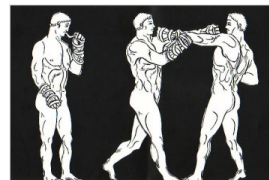
can be much more worthy than when we were drinking/using. For those very new to recovery, it may be the first opportunity to have a great deal of fun without using a substance changing our perception – many of us thought that just couldn't happen, and we found differently! We look forward to seeing you at our reunion. There is absolutely no cost and we promise you a great time. Oh, I almost forgot...I need team members on my side to take on Johnny the Greek in the Trivial Pursuit Championship. Actually I now hold the title, and just need to retain it. We now have a beautiful Classical Greek/German Brass Sculpture traveling trophy, made of the finest marble and German brass! It will grace our table at the reunion



**Recovery – A Personal Celebration of Growth & Change**

### Celebrating Our New Way's To Celebrate!

#### Johnny the German vs. Johnny the Greek Trivial Pursuit Tournament and the new Traveling Trophy!



It's with profound pleasure that Johnny the German announces his team taking Johnny the Greek's Team during the Alumni Retreat. To show his gratitude to the team, Johnny the German has had a 3 foot high traveling trophy beautifully crafted– combining Classic Greek Sculpture and German Brass! The winner of this year's reunion playoff game agrees to take the trophy home with him!



#### HMAA Alumni Are Cordially Invited! 2012 Rogers Hospital Foundation

17<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing  
Monday, July 16, 2012

The Legend at Brandybrook  
1 Legend Way, Wales, WI 53183

Price: \$500 individual / \$2,000 foursome

All alumni are encouraged to join us - as a single or as a foursome - for a day of exquisite golf, exciting games, and exceptional prizes as we tee off at one of Wisconsin's finest private golf resorts in support of mental health. Following golf, relax in the clubhouse with a chair massage before sitting down for the dinner and program featuring an inspirational story of recovery.

Patients at the Herrington Recovery Center will directly benefit from your support at this event, as one hundred percent of the proceeds will go toward Patient Care Grants, providing free treatment to those in need. For inquiries or to make reservations, contact Stacey Basile at 262-646-1651 or [sbasile@rogershospital.org](mailto:sbasile@rogershospital.org). More information can be found at [rogersmemorialfoundation.org](http://rogersmemorialfoundation.org).



**Our Celebrated Herrington Reunion  
Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**WE NEED YOUR AUCTION DONATIONS!**  
**Reunion Auction for the Brian Kenevan  
 Retreat Scholarship Fund**

As many of you remember from last year's reunion; after our keynote speaker's address, we auctioned a brass doorknob from the old Herrington House to benefit the Retreat Scholarship Fund, in Brian's name – generously allowing young people who cannot afford our January recovery retreat the opportunity for full or partial scholarships. The doorknob was won by the highest bidder, closing at \$1000. It afforded 5 young people full scholarships to our retreat which we hope affected their lives.



Please think about recovery-related objects you might donate to be auctioned at our reunion, to benefit our fund, i.e. meditation books, inspirational objects, or anything non-recovery related that you might feel worthy for our auction. Remember that a first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous – our Big Book is fetching a handsome \$12,000 these days. Please put your name on the object and you'll be given recognition for your donation. If you wish to remain anonymous, we will certainly respect that. Leave John a message at 920-988-2044 and tell him what you're donating, and bring it with you on the morning of the reunion, or if you can't attend he'll tell you where to send it. You can also contact him at: herrington2004@hotmail.com

**The Miracle of Gratitude**

*"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow." - Melody Beattie*



**In Brian's honor, please announce this at your meetings and help save lives:**

"It's been estimated that 98% of all heroin deaths are accidental. An especially crucial time for this to happen, is after an individual has been in treatment and has had a period of abstinence from his/her drug. Especially younger people are not aware that when you're off the drug for a time, the tolerance you had built for the drug decreases and in the event of a relapse, taking the same amount as before can very easily be lethal. Please help get the word out. – John A.

**Again I think it worthy to reprint the letter  
 Brian's Father wrote in memory of his son:**

**Brian's Father's Letter:**

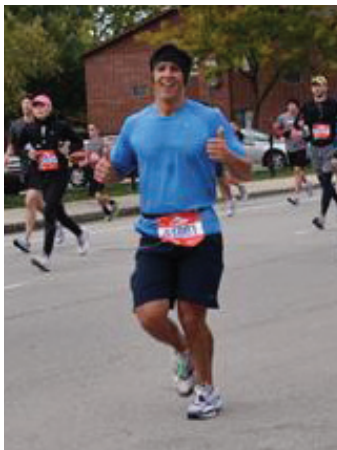
*My son Brian died of a heroin overdose on February 2, 2011. Not only was he my son, he was my best friend. We both played major roles in one another's lives. His death has been devastating to me. I loved him more than anyone could ever imagine.*

*He was such a wonderful, kind and caring person. He loved people and animals. People and animals loved him. If someone was in need or in pain, he would do whatever it took to help them. I could not believe how many people helped us to celebrate and pay tribute to Brian's life. He helped countless others with their sobriety. The people and the lives he touched are truly amazing. He was such a good person.*

*If you met Brian for the first time you would never suspect him of using or abusing drugs. He always had a huge bright smile on his face. His physical condition was second to none. He loved to run marathons and do long bike races. He constantly lifted weights and worked out at the gym. If only his mind had been as healthy as his body. He had his ups and down with substance abuse for the past 8 years. He could do very well for periods of time, but the demons always called him back. I have no doubt he was sincere about achieving sobriety, but, for whatever reason he was not able to maintain it.*

*The world has a little less light without him; however, heaven has gained a new angel. He now watches over us all. He will always be with us and live on in our hearts and our minds. When I think of him I smile most of the time, sometimes I cry. I miss you!*

*Love, Dad*



*Brian in Marathon  
 – he died at age 24*



**Mark Your Calendars:**

Alumni Events for 2012 into 2013:	
2012	
January 7-9	25 <sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Retreat
February 7	Board Meeting
March 6	Pizza Night at Herrington-6PM
April 3	Board Meeting
June 5	Board Meeting
June 23	Alumni Reunion
August 7	Board Meeting
Sept. 4	Pizza Night at Herrington-6PM
October 2	Board Meeting
December 4	Board Meeting
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve Celebration at Herrington-6PM



2013	
January 4-6	26 <sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Retreat

**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 (Nobody makes it by 7:00!)  
 Sunday – 8:30 Morning  
Rogers Hospital – West Allis  
 Sunday – 6:00 Evening  
 Wednesday - 7:30 Evening (NA Meeting)  
 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. Alumni seeking to be sponsors and who are working a strong Recovery Program and living near Herrington are welcome to inquire by calling John (We always need temporary sponsors.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Donations to the Alumni Association can be earmarked as to your wishes, i.e. to our working fund, as scholarships to the Brian Kenevan Memorial Fund, used for younger individuals who cannot afford retreats, etc.*

*Any question regarding donations should be directed to our president:*

*John Aschenbrenner  
 Phone: 920-988-2044*



**Herrington McBride Board Members**

*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

- John Aschenbrenner – President
- Rob McCreadie – Vice-President
- Secretary – Mary Lee Grady
- Treasurer – Johnny King
- Phil Grabski – Editor
- Scott Elston
- Michael H.
- Michael Ingrilli
- Jeff Radtke
- Kristin Simons
- John Hopkins – Past President
- Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist
- Bob Olson – Past President

**Advisors:**

- Matthias Scheuth – Director of the Rogers Foundation
- Cindy Suszek – Manager of Herrington Recovery Center
- Cori Smith – Therapist and Herrington's Clinical Liaisons to the Board
- James Dropik

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



## I found Al-anon By: Marilyn D.

I am a daughter, wife and mother of alcoholics. Just as only an alcoholic or addict can understand another alcoholic or addicts thinking and personal struggles with addiction and the destructive behaviors they exhibit, the addiction can be difficult for the nonalcoholic to understand. The same goes for the family member or friend dealing or living with an alcoholic or addict. Only the non-alcoholic can understand another non-alcoholic's behavior and the mental anguish of living with this disease.

Growing up in an alcoholic home has affected my thinking and my own negative behaviors. I have been troubled by insecurity, lack of trust, fear, guilt, worry, denial and low self-esteem. Codependency, enabling, and caretaker of my loved ones were common practice for me. I assumed financial responsibilities to make things easier for my loved ones to cope. I have spent excessive amount of time worrying, I tried to control them. I have obsessed about their drinking and have spent many sleepless nights trying to force solutions for their problems. My obsession was on what I could do to fix the alcoholics.

My thinking became irrational and I became obsessed with how I was going to get them to quit drinking. I became scared, tired, lonely, frustrated, angry, and resentful. I felt shame and guilt for the alcoholic's behaviors. My denial in accepting this disease and refusal to believe I could control the situations lead me to a path of my own isolation. I took on responsibility for their actions and no one understood them like I did. I blamed myself, I thought there must be something that happened, or even something I did. This was my fault and only I could fix them. I was consumed with worry and fear. I feared the telephone at night scared to answer for fear of something terrible happened. My obsession with my alcoholics drained me emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Consequences of the alcoholic behaviors and the progression of the disease forced to deal with DUI's, jail time, trouble with the law, car accidents, depression, fractured bones from frequent falls, bruises, isolation, and other major events never prepared me for what would come. In May of 2009, I received the dreadful call that my 21 year old son had attempted suicide. His pain became too much for him to endure. He is intelligent, athletic, hardworking, and never had trouble academically, so it was hard for me to accept that he had a drinking problem. A mother's relationship with this disease is difficult, because of the overwhelming responsibility a mother has for her

children to protect and take care of them. Dealing with a parent's alcoholism wasn't easy either. When I needed my mother the most she was emotionally unavailable battling and living alone in isolation with this disease too.

This event changed my life. I knew I needed help too, but didn't know where to get it. My son found himself in a recovery program at the Herrington Treatment Center and spent 44 days there. He started working on himself and found AA. He suggested that I go to Al-anon, and this is where my own recovery from the effects of alcoholism began. I found help and support, and they understood as no else could. It was a safe place for me. Al-Anon's fellowship provided courage, strength and hope. Today, I follow a program based on the 12 steps adapted by AA. I have daily readers and applied slogans, such as; let go and let god, one day at a time, this too shall pass, and the serenity prayer. I am grateful to have my own program. I am learning to put my trust in a higher power. I have come to believe that I have no control over alcoholism. I still struggle to let go and let god, but miracles do happen. My husband found AA while our son was in treatment at Herrington. He continues to be clean and sober by working his own program.

I still am a daughter, wife and mother of alcoholics; I understand alcoholism is a life long illness. The personal control, progress, struggles, relapses, and choices of others are not for me to decide. I have to turn it over to my higher power. The family disease of alcoholism has and continues to affect me but I know today that I did not cause it, I can't cure it, and I can't control it. I have a recovery program where I can find help for myself. I am a forever grateful member of Al-anon.

### Our Deepest Fear

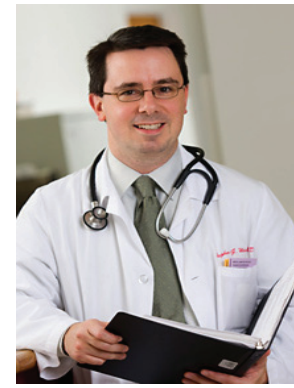
"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of the Universe. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to make manifest the glory of god which is within us. It is not in just some of us, it is in all of us. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others."

- Marianne Williamson, Excerpt from "A Return to Love"

### On Spirituality

"Spirituality is not 'canned fog.' In the midst of mystery and paradox there can be real and relevant wisdom in the Spirit of God." - Dr. Sam Southard

## Does Your Doctor Know?



Is your doctor aware that you are a recovering alcoholic and/or drug addict? Not only is it important for him or her to know that information but it is important for you and it could possibly be important for others.

When our doctors know we are recovering they can better treat us and most importantly, take our addictions into consideration when prescribing medications. In many instances medicines other than those with addictive properties can be prescribed. This is just as important for the alcoholic and addict alike. Knowing about our addictions and recoveries can also better assist your doctor when determining causes of conditions that arise due to our previous history. It's another way of being proactive in our recoveries.

Providing such pertinent to our doctors, dentists, and other health care providers will ensure a better medical care for us. It's also one less secret we have to carry.

You might wonder how providing this information can help others. Once, well-grounded in recovery, we often know more how to help or guide others who are still in the throes of addiction than many others, including doctors. It is not unheard of for a doctor to put a patient with an addiction in touch with a recovering person. If you haven't done so already, contact your doctor.

### Cindy Suszek

#### Clinical Service

#### Manager - Herrington Recovery Center



Your HMAA board of directors wants to help our alumni members become better acquainted with some of the current key staff working at HRC. Periodically we will include a piece that does just that. This quarter will highlight HRC's Clinical Service Manager, Cindy Suszek.

On behalf of the Alumni Board it's a true pleasure to introduce Cindy Suszek, our Clinical Service

Manager at Herrington Recovery Center. Cindy is a licensed professional counselor specializing in substance

abuse counseling and is also a certified trauma services specialist, and certified employee assistance professional. Cindy has over 24 years of professional experience, having worked as a counselor, a director in Homes for Independent Living, DePaul Hospital, Pro Health Care, Ceridian, United Community Center, and of course in her present position at Herrington.

I have the privilege of working with Cindy on the Herrington Quality Board and also working closely with her regarding our annual reunion. Cindy is a truly professional member of the Herrington Treatment Team and, in my opinion, cares deeply in supporting the mission of the treatment center and recovery in general.

Bob Olson  
Past President of the Alumni Association.



### Ruth O'Neil's Passing April 22, 2012

Ruth O'Neil of Toms River, New Jersey passed away on Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. She was 97 years old and had just celebrated 68 years of sobriety on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Sober since 1944, it is possible Ruth had the longest living sobriety of anyone at the time of her death. She knew and helped Dr. Willim D. Silkworth, who wrote most of "The Doctor's Opinion" in the Big Book,

Ruth was a wonderful power of example in all she did. Within a few months of her getting sober, at a meeting in Brooklyn, she was given a business card by another member. On one side of the card was the Four Absolutes of the Oxford Group (Absolute Honesty, Absolute Unselfishness, Absolute Live, and Absolute Purity) and on the other side of the card was the following prayer. She recited it daily and shared it when she spoke. It has become known as "Ruth's Prayer:"

Thank You, dear God, for another day,

The chance to live in a decent way,

To feel again the joy of living  
and happiness that comes from giving.

Thank You for friends who can understand  
and the peace that flows from Your loving hand.

Help me to wake with the morning sun,  
with the prayer today, "Thy will be done."

For with Your help I will find the way.

Thank you again, dear God, for AA.

