

## Mark Your Calendars:

### Alumni events for 2013 into 2014

June 22nd Annual Reunion  
September 2nd Pizza Night  
January 3rd - 5th Winter 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

### Al-Anon Meeting-Rogers Hospital Oconomowoc

Tuesday – 7:00 Evening

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.



Interested in more recovery news?

<http://www.thefix.com>



## Herrington McBride Board Members

*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

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Cori Smith – Therapist and Herrington's Clinical Liaisons to the Board

James Dropik

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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
Spring Issue 2013

# The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



## From the Desk of our President

Rob McCreddie

As spring is upon us and the landscape comes alive with new life, I'm reminded of the rebirth that

we experience in recovery. Change

comes with each new year and a conversation has begun on how to best keep up with the changing population coming through the Herrington Recovery Center. We are seeing a younger population of residents who are opiate dependent and fewer of the old guard alcoholics than we have historically. I don't want to place too much emphasis on drugs of choice since, as we all know, recovery has nothing to do with drugs of choice and everything to do with learning to cope with life on life's terms without engaging in any self-destructive behavior.

Part of our mission as the board of directors is not only to offer support to patients in treatment, but more specifically to continue that support through the transition back into their communities and throughout the course of what all hope will be long, healthy and rewarding lives in recovery.

## HMAA Mission Statement

This Association was founded to:

Promote mutual acquaintance and beneficial good fellowship among all members of the Association.

Support and promote, both in action and financially, alcoholism and chemical dependency treatment.

Advance community and public education in the area of alcoholism and chemical dependency.

As you know, any major transition or change is an "at risk" time for a recovering individual, particularly in early recovery. I am resorting to one of the most valuable

lessons that I learned when I was in treatment; I'm asking for help! So, in the spirit of getting back to basics, I would like to include you, the friends, family and members in this discussion. If there is a need that isn't being met or a suggestion of how better to fulfill our mission and be more inclusive to all who graduate from treatment, I want to hear it. We as a board are continuing to offer temporary sponsorship to those currently in treatment as we support our personal programs of recovery. We are also available for support and conversation via telephone, email and at meetings. And of course the annual reunion, retreat, New Year's party, pizza nights, RAP speakers and all of the other board and hospital sponsored events will continue to take place. Please feel free to email me at [clean@wi.rr.com](mailto:clean@wi.rr.com) and I hope to see you at this year's annual alumni association reunion.



*Most folks are as happy  
as they make up their minds to be.  
-Abraham Lincoln*

## Winter Retreat a Great Success

By: John Aschenbrenner



“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 those things  
that compromise our wholeness.  
The universe  
rushes in to support us  
whenever we attempt  
to take a step forward  
to make ourselves more whole.  
All the blessing  
that flow from God  
stream toward us,  
to bolster and encourage us,  
because  
all Life is biased  
on the side of supporting itself.”

The January 4-6<sup>th</sup> Winter Retreat at the Redemptorist Retreat Center was a great success. We had 30 retreat attendees and following dinner on Friday evening our Keynote Speaker set the tone for the weekend. Andy Olin took us through the beginnings and progression of his addiction, into his treatment at Herrington and how good life has gotten. I always allow our keynote speaker to set the theme of the Retreat, and he chose *“Choices and Changes.”* Andy has near 1 ½ years of uninterrupted recovery, and the changes he related to in his life were a great inspiration to younger and older alike. Many of us older individuals in recovery begin to look to the younger people for their inspirations – believing that if they can do it at their age, we can certainly continue doing it at our age. Our other speakers

also did a remarkable job, some causing very emotional reactions from us all – taking us back to similar dark times in our own lives.

Saturday evening Bill Martens, as usual brought in great custard, and we had sundaes until we could no longer eat more; even with Bill’s prodding. Some of us chose to watch the game, and others began flexing our muscles for another ferocious game of Trivial Pursuit (likened to be just a 1/2 step lower in ferocity than what went on in the Roman Coliseum millennium in the past!) It was to be the playoff game beginning 2113. Johnny the German was in ready form, and though Johnny the Greek agreed to the challenge, he was nowhere to be found, obviously cowering in a destination far removed from the retreat center. Johnny the German’s team won by forfeit and the 2 foot high loser’s trophy was dropped off in the front of his home, for his entire neighborhood to be witness to his cowardliness! Let the new challenge go forth! Johnny the Greek, you’re given the opportunity to relieve himself of his yellow-bellied cowardliness at the June Alumni Reunion – though his chances remain slim to none!

All in all the retreat was a remarkable success. The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund was able to give full or partial scholarships to those in need of help. Brian’s good works continue his memory in the hearts of us all. If you’d like to donate to his memorial scholarship fund, and help individuals to attend the next retreat which they otherwise could not attend please contact me at 920-988-2044.



*Redemptorist Retreat Center in Oconomowoc*

Mark your calendars for 2014. Our next Winter Retreat is already scheduled for January 3-6<sup>th</sup>.



## A Night to Remember

The New Year was brought in at HRC this year with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual New Year’s Eve Celebration. After the amazing success and fun that was had at the 1<sup>st</sup> one last year I was a little worried that maybe this wouldn’t be quite as fun.

Maybe we got lucky that a lot of pool players and really good singers were there last year and nobody would be interested in participating this year and we would just sit around and stare at each other.

I could not have been more wrong.

Turns out that I’ve still got some negative thinking and expectations that I need to work on.

The evening started with what honestly has to be the best, most tender and delicious steak I’ve ever had, and you can have 2nds and even 3rds if you want. Mike I. needs to publish how he does it in the next newsletter please.

After everybody was stuffed the real excitement began as we kicked off the pool tournament with a field of 16 people. After a lot of good games it came down to a crazy ending between Austin and our alumni association president Rob M. Austin was set up to cut the eight ball into the corner pocket for the win. And he did, however he made another ball, the cue ball. Rob thought he had lost but after a little explanation he graciously accepted the trophy which I hear is proudly on his mantle at home.

However for myself and I think a lot of people there, the best part of the evening is the karaoke machine. When it was decided to have one last year I never thought we would get more than maybe 1 person to get up and sing, but it was going the entire evening. And everybody sounded great this year I was surprised again and it was going constantly from the time we got down from dinner until we had to shut it down. I even thought John Travolta showed up but it was Nick’s version of “Greased Lightning”. We had amazing soloists, duets and trios. A few people even incorporated an obviously unrehearsed but still entertaining dance routine. While the food, pool and karaoke is a lot of fun, for me the night means so much more. I see the residents and alumni at meetings and we talk a little before and after. However this celebration is an opportunity to connect with everybody outside of that environment. As real people, not just alcoholics or addicts, but as people enjoying themselves, with their guard down, laughing and joking with each other and connecting on a new level.

That to me is a gift of sobriety, first finding myself and then being able to open up and let others in and finding out that we can have fun without alcohol.



## ‘I Owe It All to A.A.’

When I walked through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1991, I walked through for all the wrong reasons. I always thought I knew so much (like everything) and found out how little I knew.

I was overwhelmed with my own self-center coolness. I thought I was “different.” I was different alright -- my face, my hair, my eyes, my hands, everything on the outside was different. However everything on the inside was the same.

I don’t know why I started drinking but I know why I continued. I liked to get high. Somehow I managed to graduate from a Catholic school (which my mother sent me to after the death of my brother who died from an overdose of Heroin in 1969) and moved from a very small town to the big city with this guy. We got an apartment and both got jobs.

Life was not bad. I drank socially and did drugs occasionally. The first thing I learned when I came to AA that Alcohol was a disease. It was primary, progressive, it ran a predictable course, chronic and fatal. And when I looked back that was very clear to me.

After so many days, weeks, months or years, I’m not quite sure when because unfortunately the disease did not let me know what phase I was in, I was drinking everyday using drugs just to feel normal.

Things got worse and for the next three years I spent a lot of time in and out of jail. In 1990 I was arrested for theft and I spent nine months in jail and swore I would not ever drink or use again. I thought all I needed was a job, someone to give me a chance.

I had attended an AA meeting when I was in jail and I wanted what they had. I was attracted to the program and where they were in their lives after sharing with us my story. I never forgot that.

A month later I took my daughter and went back home town where I was born and entered rehab and started going to meetings. It was tough. Living life on life’s terms and having to do everything sober for the first time was scary.

All I had to do was not pick-up one day at a time. I have managed to put together, by the grace of God, 10 years. The miracles that have happened to me in the past 10 years are great.

And I owe it all to AA.

-- Mary B

## Most Important Things Learned in Life



I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life. I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life". I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that even when I have pains,

I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone.

People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

~Dr. Maya Angelou

## The Mouse trap

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. "What food might this contain?" the mouse wondered. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

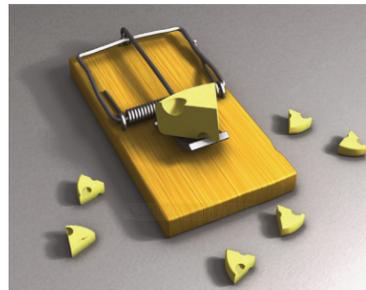
Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning: "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said "Mr.Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The pig sympathized, but said "I am so very sorry, Mr.Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow and said "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone.



That very night a sound was heard throughout the house - like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever.

Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient. But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well; she died. So many! people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness. So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember: when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another. Each of us is a vital thread in another person's tapestry.

## I Am Your Disease

I hate meetings. I hate Higher Power. I hate anyone who has a program. To all who come in to contact with me, I wish you death and I wish you suffering.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am the disease of addiction; I am cunning, baffling and powerful. That's me. I have killed millions and I am pleased.

I love to catch you with the element of surprise. I love to pretend that I am your friend or lover. I have given you comfort, have I not? Wasn't I always there when you were lonely? When you wanted to die, didn't you call me? Wasn't I always there? I love to make you hurt. I love to make you cry. Better yet, I love it when I make you so numb that you can neither hurt nor cry. You can't feel anything at all. This is true glory. I give suffering. I've always been there for you. When things were going right in your life, you invited me. You said you didn't deserve those good things and I was the only one who would agree with you. Together we were able to destroy all the good things in your life.

People don't take me seriously. They take strokes seriously, heart attacks seriously, even diabetes they take seriously. Fools that they are they don't know that, without my help, these illnesses would often not be possible, I am such a hated disease yet so many have chosen me over reality, over peace, over serenity. More than you hate me, I hate the twelve steps and all of you who have a twelve step program. Your program, your meetings, your Higher Power all weaken me and don't allow me to function in the manner I am accustomed.

So, I lie here quietly. You don't see me but I am growing bigger than ever. When you only exist, I may live. When you live in recovery, following those hateful "steps" I only exist. But I am here and until we meet again, if we meet again, I wish you continued suffering and death.



"I have come to believe that hard times are not just meaningless suffering and that something good might turn up at any moment. That's a big change for someone who used to come to in the morning feeling sentenced to another day of life. When I wake up today, there are lots of possibilities. I can hardly wait to see what's going to happen next."

~ Alcoholics Anonymous

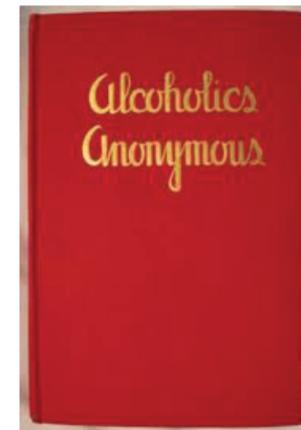


Bill Wilson and his sponsor Ebby Thatcher

In 1960, at the Long Beach, California Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson wrote this dedication in an AA book that he gave to Ebby Thatcher.

*"Dear Ebby,  
No day passes that I do not remember that you brought me the message that saved me - and only God knows how many more.*

*In affection, Bill*



## Why we call it the Big Book

A printer in Cornwall, NY, named Edward Blackwell, had been highly recommended to Bill Wilson. Blackwell was the President of Cornwall Press. So Bill and Hank Parkhurst (author of the personal story "The Unbeliever" in the first edition of the Big Book) went to Cornwall to see Blackwell. There they were told that the book would probably be only about four hundred

pages when printed. That seemed a bit skimpy. They wanted to sell the book for \$3.50 per copy. That was a very large sum in those days, probably the equivalent of about \$50 today, and people might not think they were getting their money's worth.

They picked the cheapest, thickest paper the printer had, and requested that each page be printed with unusually large margins surrounding the text. This made for an unusually large book. Thus, the book came to be nicknamed the "Big Book." Blackwell had an excess of red material for the bindings, so he offered them a special deal. Eager to save costs, Bill and Hank agreed. They also thought, according to some reports, that the color red would make the book more attractive and marketable.

A New York AA member named Ray Campbell, a recognized artist, was asked to design the dust jacket. His story, "An Artist's Concept", appears in the Big Book's first edition. He submitted various designs for consideration including one which was blue and in an Art Deco style. The one which was chosen was red, and yellow, with a little black, and a little white. The words Alcoholics Anonymous were printed across the top in large

white script. It became known as the "Circus" jacket because of its loud circus colors. The unused blue jacket is today in the Archives at the Stepping Stones Foundation.

The first printing was the only one on which a red binding and the red "Circus" dust jacket was used. All the other printings of the first edition, except for the fourth printing, were in various shades of blue. The fourth printing, due to another overstock of binding material and thus, lower cost, was bound in blue as well as in green.

Bill Wilson, Hank Parkhurst, Dorothy Snyder (Clarence Snyder's Wife) and Ruth Hock, Bill's secretary, went to the little hamlet of Cornwall many times to oversee the printing and correct the galleys before the final galleys were approved as ready for printing.

Despite all their efforts at proofreading, there was a typographical error in the first printing. On page 234, the second and third line from the bottom was printed twice. This was corrected in the second printing.

Bill, and finally the Alcoholic Foundation, raised the necessary funds to cover the initial printing costs, as Ed Blackwell could not roll the presses until, and unless, they came up with at least enough money to cover the cost of the paper.

A run of four thousand seven hundred and thirty copies rolled off the press in April 1939. Two-hundred seventy-nine books were distributed without charge. In rare book auctions today in 2001, a first printing Big Book will command well in excess of \$10,000. About 8 years ago a "virgin" first printing Big Book in the original sealed shipping box was bought at auction for well over \$10,000, and the buyer did not even open the box to verify the book was inside, as it is more valuable in the sealed box. Members today continue to hope that more copies of first edition printings will be found and brought to light, instead of collecting dust in some attic or basement