



Strength Through Surrender in Recovery

# Herrington McBride

## 24th Annual Winter Retreat

January 7 - 9, 2011

Friday Evening at 5:00 pm – Sunday Noon

(Attendees must be recovering for their Addictions)

### Redemptorist Retreat Center

1800 Timber Trail Lane - Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

### “FROM MY HEAD TO MY HEART”

Internalizing Our Life-Long Recovery

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Robert Salata, D.D.S.

Cost is \$215.00 which includes all meals & 2 night’s lodging.

A very limited amount of scholarships are available for those who require some financial assistance to total the cost of registration. Those requesting help are required to contribute what they honestly are able to, and the individual applying to our scholarship committee must do so in writing and send your requests c/o John Aschenbrenner – 505 S. Fourth Street, Watertown, Wisconsin 53094. Requests are confidential, and please include your reason and how long you have been on your recovery journey – including the amount you’re able to contribute. We set our rate to just cover our cost.

Please Note: Anyone arriving under the influence of any mood-altering substance will be asked to leave immediately – no refund will be given. Refunds will be made only up to two weeks prior to the retreat, as we have to pre-pay at the retreat center.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Need a 1st floor room? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Roommate’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Willing to share a room? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee: \$215.00

Donation to HMAA: \_\_\_\_\_ \*Donations will help those needing scholarships

Total Amount of Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Remember folks, we charge just enough to cover expenses)*

CHECK MUST  
ACCOMPANY  
REGISTRATION

MAKE CHECK  
PAYABLE TO  
HMAA.

Send directly to:  
John Aschenbrenner  
505 South Fourth Street  
Watertown, WI 53094



Strength Through Spirituality in Recovery

# The Moving Finger

“The Moving Finger writes, and having writ, moves on.”

– The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.”

The Herrington Recovery  
The Alumni Association Quarterly

## Our Gratitude - Winter Retreat Issue -

Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

*The Perfect Holiday gift to you or to yourself, to insure 2011 is the beginning of another year grounded in Recovery*

*(Registration Information on Back Cover)*

### Outgoing President’s Message

By: Bob Olson

Somehow we got our wires crossed and I did not write an outgoing president’s message – my last at bat. I had penned the usual president’s report. So given this opportunity, below is my true message:

“Looking back on the past four years of my tenure as your alumni president, I can say, and humbly, it was, indeed, an honor. To have been able to represent 1300 recovering individuals is, to say the least, such an inspiration to me.

I have learned and grown tremendously, with the help and guidance of my fellow board members and board advisers. The amount of kindness and patience that I have been shown will remain with me forever. I’d like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

The Herrington McBride Alumni Association has been turned over to the good hands of John Aschenbrenner, our new president, and Becky Heins, our new vice-president. Both bring a tremendous amount of energy and vision to our board. Kristin Simons, who has also been elected to the board, and our current members, I am certain we will continue to move forward in spreading our message and promoting our members-at-large to continue to embrace their recoveries.

Serving as your president has been such an honor for me, and I will never forget your support over the last four years. I will remain on the board as a past-president advisor.”

With warmest regards toward all of our continuing recoveries,

Bob Olson

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  
the things that compromise our wholeness.  
The universe rushes in to support us  
whenever we attempt  
to take a step forward.  
Anytime we seek to be in harmony with life,  
to allow ourselves to feel more whole,  
all the blessings that flow from God  
stream toward us,  
to bolster and encourage us,  
because all life is biased  
on the side  
of supporting itself.  
-Anonymous

## President's Message

By: John Aschenbrenner

"It's nearing Thanksgiving, and we have so very much to be grateful for. I would be remiss if we did not focus our gratitude initially toward our outgoing Editor, Natalie Zimmerman, who upon her husband, Ken's death completed the first quarter-century of the remarkable Zimmerman history editing our quarterly newsletter for the alumni. Her determination in bringing the best of Recovery in the written word to us has afforded so many of us the inspiration to make our way into yet another day of recovery – for that, Natalie, we will always remain so deeply grateful!" That said, and to honor the past work of Natalie, I find it fitting that we dedicate this larger issue of our newsletter to our individual gratitude as expressed in the words of some of our members, who like us all, continue to find struggle in their lives and yet gratefully maintain and enrich their recoveries on a day-to-day basis. Their stories and favorite inspirations will continue to inspire us.

As always we again announce our Winter Retreat, which I am busy planning for – I hope to find so many of you there. Again, I am both humbled and proud to have been voted to be your president – I hope to serve you well."

## It's Time to Move On

By: Natalie Zimmerman

Outgoing Editor of "The Moving Finger"

"As many of you know, I agreed to serve as interim editor of "The Moving Finger" back in 1998. Little did I expect to still be doing so in 2010. However, I have made the decision to call it quits and let the newsletter "move on" under the direction of another alumnus.

Not having been a journalism guru, I found the task to be daunting at times as I felt I lacked originality. Proof reading was a major headache as I read over the misspelled words and incorrect grammar and punctuation. Thanks to the folks in the marketing department who assisted me with the chore. And a special thanks to Dr. Bill Martens for doing some proofing, and also making certain the address list would get to the printer in a timely fashion, for each issue.

Having lived with the newsletter for over 25 years, there will be a period of loss in my life, but as we're told when in treatment for our chemical addictions, 'It's time to move on.' That phrase was used as we moved from inpatient to recovery house to the aftercare group, and

then out into the world in our 12-Step groups, and our lives being sober and clean – One Day at a Time!"

I plan to continue as an active member of HMAA in some capacity, and will see you at reunions and retreats. I hope all of you will reap the benefits of being an alumnus, just as I have for all these years."

### Favorite Quotations:

***"If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. Happy moments, praise God. Difficult moments, seek God. Quiet moments, worship God. Painful moments, trust God. Every moment, thank God."***

*-Marion S. and afforded us by her sponsee, Lynn K. who has kept it on her refrigerator door the past 22 years.*

***"It's never too late to be who you might have become"***

*- George Elliot*

*- Bob & Mary O's favorite quote that graces the foyer of Herrington Recovery Center*

***"Surrender doesn't mean I stop trying, it means I try, and then I surrender to the outcome." And on the practical side, I've come to understand that***

***"One drink is too many and a thousand could never be enough!"***

*- Jim D.*

***"How's that working for you?"***

***"He who angers you controls you!"***

*-Becky H.*

***"Just do the next right thing!"***

*-Carl H.*

***"I came into Recovery to save my ass and found my soul connected to it."***

*- John A.*

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

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

*- Ancient Buddhist sayings*



### Herrington McBride Board Members

*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

John Aschenbrenner – President  
Becky Heins – Vice-President  
Secretary – Mary Lee Grady  
Treasurer – Mary Krall  
Scott Elstrom  
Michael Hendrick  
Rob McCreadie  
Kristin Simons, M.D.  
Natalie Zimmerman

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Phil Grabski – Editor of Our Newsletter  
John Hopkins – Past President  
Bill Martens, M. D. – Our Archivist  
Bob Olson – Past President  
Mickey Gabbert – Rogers Hospital AODA Programs  
Dani Volk – Rogers Hospital Community Outreach  
Liason

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Please send feedback and ideas to:

John Aschenbrenner  
505 South Fourth Street  
Watertown, Wisconsin 53094  
johnjane@charter.net  
Phone: 920-988-2044

Send name, telephone, address & email changes to:

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

### Mark your calendars:

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

#### For the Weekly Calendar:

AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Monday – 7:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:00 Evening

Saturday – 7:04 Morning

Sunday 8:30 Morning

Rogers Hospital – West Allis

Sunday – 6:00 Evening

Tuesday - 7:30 Evening

Saturday – 9:00 Morning

NA Meeting – Rogers Hospital – West Allis

Thursday 7:15 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



## ***Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously***

### *Something New, Folks*

You Might Be Having a Problem when:

- You have awakened with an overwhelming feeling that you should go back and apologize... but you don't remember where.
- The Topsy Taxi service has banned you from all its vehicles.
- You refer to your favorite song only by its jukebox selection numbers, G-12.
- People consider your spouse a Saint for reasons that totally escape you.
- You bought your current pick-up truck because it has a cool place to hide a six pack.
- "But Officer, it's been a long time since I tried to say my ABC's!"
- All of your old friends are now members of 12-step groups.
- The 911 dispatch no longer has to ask your wife for the address.
- You think the nutrition information on the back of a beer can is proof that you should be able to buy it with food stamps.
- The only hymn to which you remember all the words was written by Hank Williams, Sr.
- You know for certain that putting your foot on the floor does not stop the room from spinning.
- Your insurance agent drops by and mentions your policy does cover treatment centers.
- The producers of the television program COPS still send you Christmas cards.
- And the Number One way you can tell if you have a drinking problem ...the only thing you're hugging is the porcelain goddess.



*Strength Through Surrender in Recovery*

## **The Struggles, Our Strength through Surrender & The Blessings of Our Recoveries**

About three times every night I'm startled awake by the phone ringing. It's the guards calling from the jail to make sure I'm not drunk. I stumble downstairs half asleep and blow into a breathalyzer hooked up to the telephone. Today I'm not worried about the test results.

What's ironic is just over one short year ago, I was the one putting people in the position I now find myself. For sixteen years I worked as a Police Officer.

My progression into addiction and alcoholism is probably no different than any of us in Recovery. I tried alcohol in my late teens and fell in love with the new abilities that I believed came with inebriation. I no longer felt awkward in almost all situations - I could talk without feeling self-conscious and most of all I could finally relate to others.

The amount I drank quickly progressed and I surrounded myself with others who drank like me. I never considered a first drink unless several more followed because I figured "what's the point!" unless I become completely inebriated. After a significant injury while on duty I was introduced to what I believed to be the perfect companion to alcohol - painkillers. I found it easy to either get prescriptions from doctors or find friends who had old prescriptions they no longer needed. What used to be a night of getting loaded now required painkillers to finish the job. What used to be a weekend occurrence was now a daily requirement. The delusional thinking that comes with the disease prevented me from objectively looking at my conduct and seeing a problem. Rather, I would rationalize my use as an entitlement. I deserved to be screwed up because I worked hard and paid my bills. I was responsible in every other aspect of my life so I felt I should be rewarded with alcohol and pills. Who was I hurting?

While arresting and transporting drunks and drug addicts to jail, I myself was living the same life they were. I would not think twice about downing a handful of pills while on duty or arriving at work with alcohol

still flowing in my blood. I believed I could get away with my conduct because of my position. I was one of the leading officers on my department for drug and alcohol arrests. Why shouldn't I be? Since I was both an addict and alcoholic I could spot the same very quickly. There was but one difference - I was in uniform and he wasn't. I used my position of trust to steal drugs from the drug users while railing about how weak they were and suggesting they get help. While putting handcuffs on a drunk I would tell them that I don't drink to ensure they knew I was better than they were. Any time I was called to a home while working I was on the lookout for prescriptions. Like many with this disease I preferred it rather than its solution. I had four uncles who, prior to their sober deaths, were active members of AA. So I knew the program worked but my ego refused to surrender. I couldn't imagine having to go to meetings for the rest of my life or sit around talking with "those people!" I was steadfast in my determination to manage my use. I was certain that if my drunken/drugged behavior became too obvious I had to simply re-group and plan my benders with more precision. If a loved one challenged me of course I denied. If caught I would take a small hiatus to an out-patient program to wait for the spotlight to move away from me. I used my time at out-patient treatments to figure out how to get away with using rather than learn how to stop drinking and using - the insanity of it all!

Thankfully the police finally came looking for me. My own co-workers caught me stealing pills while on duty and I was initially suspended from my job pending an investigation. I knew the outcome would be criminal charges, media attention, job loss and the probable loss of my home and family. Despite all this, I would not allow myself to see the connection of my behavior to the consequences.

I went to Herrington Recovery Center at the insistence of my family and attorney. I went there to get out of trouble. Within days my family became aware of how significant my use was. At Herrington I found

myself surrounded by people who were like me, and who were learning they didn't need alcohol and pills to feel comfortable. Instead of biding my time until I could use again, I began learning how to not use again for one day...and then another. I began learning how to recover. I began treatment as a way to help myself in court. I left treatment with a commitment to accept help with life in general, and mine in particular. All of the things I was certain I had lost are still with me today - thanks to Herrington and the program. In fact nothing has been lost and so much more has been gained. I have the most supportive family and friends because of the program. Though I'm obviously no longer a police officer, I have an incredible new job - thanks to friends in the program. I am heavily involved at Rogers Hospital and its efforts to support us, and will remain so as long as I allow God in my life. I remain eternally grateful."

- *Phil G.*

### My Gratitude

As I started writing this, I remembered that November is Gratitude month for those of us in the program. I thought it would be fitting to share my thoughts on this subject. After all, everybody has something to be grateful for and we should take the time to acknowledge it daily, especially getting sober. I was in the Herrington house in the summer of 2005. It was a result of my family intervening and guiding me to the path of treatment and recovery. For that I am extremely grateful.

While staying at Herrington I was blessed to meet many people with the same struggles as myself. Even now I can close my eyes and recall all the people in our group. And I still pull out my letters from friends and family sent in while in treatment. I had an excellent therapist and sponsor who cared about me more than I did myself at times. They gave me hope and provided me with the tools to go forward "cautiously optimistic". For those relationships I am very grateful.

I learned no one can do it alone. We all need support systems and more importantly we need to open up and reach out to them. Everyone should take pause daily to think about what they are grateful for. For me it was the unconditional love of friends and family that rose to support me. The treatment at Herrington resulted in a move toward a renewed and positive life. It gave back a father to his son, a friend back to his friends and a brother back to his siblings. And for this I remain eternally grateful.

-*Andy H*

### On Acceptance

Living life on life's terms has been a life-long problem for me, complicated by the use of alcohol. And now, in sobriety, it continues to be a challenge in my continuing recovery.

Having survived breast cancer and the sudden death of my husband without ever thinking of taking a drink is, to me, a miracle and evidence that The Program works. How did I do it? By going to meetings and talking about my fears and sorrows, by accepting the kind help of others, by talking with my sponsor, by morning meditation - by accepting events as they happened and believing that each new challenge makes me stronger and prepares me for the future - without alcohol.

- *Mary K.*

During the month of November, we celebrate gratitude by dropping money into the "Gratitude Box" when it comes around the recovery tables. I want to share with you when gratitude came into my life.

My life before AA was being grateful for whatever I didn't get busted for, and praying when I was horribly ill, to get better so I could take care of my kids.y kids.

Then Herrington came into the picture...the end of bartering with God and getting by on just pure luck. It was in July, 2006 that my luck wasn't enough anymore. I had a treatment team that helped me learn to help myself. My beginning to feel anything but anger started when I began to learn what feelings actually are. Mad, Sad, Glad, Afraid, Ashamed, Hurt...not the things I knew. I only knew mad, pissed, self pity, excuses and blame. I was ignorant when it came to real feelings. I cannot express what a difference in my life knowing what to feel has done for me, my children, boy-friend, mother, and friends. Feelings of gratitude didn't come quickly as the transformation I was growing into was so very difficult at times. I became Grateful when I began living life purposefully. I began to CHOOSE the life I was beginning to live over choosing the life I had always lived. As the saying goes, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten." I remember this is when my fear would disappear and the gratitude would appear. My life still has its challenges. The difference is I have a choice of how to handle them. How's that working for me?

GREAT! I can make whatever comes my way a lot worse than it is or accept it and ask for help when I need it. Today I am grateful that I can feel and show gratitude - and for me, what might seem simple to many, is huge for me!

- *Becky Heins*

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## The Voice of the Alumni

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*These published writings are the ideas and evolving thoughts from the recovering Alumni at Large. They do not necessarily reflect the total thought of either Rogers Hospital or The Alumni Association.*

*We ask that the individuals writing to this column be working a strong Recovery Program on a day-to-day basis, as is evidenced in their writing.*

### When the Magic gets Packed Away

By: *John A.*

I was, like most of us, at my lowest point - nothing more than a suit coat and tie held up by scaffolding - nothing remaining inside. I was the proverbial functional alcoholic, denying that reality the best I could with each day - I was not having a problem, and though I could not bring myself to the inconceivable - drinking in the morning, I needed to choke down 8-10 ounces of Scope Mouthwash, to steady myself before I could shave. Scope was 35% back then - 70 Proof - it's been diluted since! But my solidly formed denial system was still able to convince me I wasn't drinking in the morning! The insanity of it all! Then the inconceivable happened - On February 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1998, I got my DUI - The first angel in my Sobriety entered dressed in a Sheriff's uniform - it still remains my sobriety anniversary date. I was to address over 300 students and parents the next evening and knew that if I went home my marriage was over...then the single moment of clarity found me checking into detox unannounced at Rogers in Oconomowoc. After two days on the beautifully appointed 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, I moved into Herrington, where my journey continued.

The good Dr. E and Charlie showed me the way, and the first year was one of the most challenging and rewarding I can remember in my life. There was a certain magic in the air and in my soul, as I began being touched by the serendipitous hand of my Higher Power, gradually being reveled to me. Upon discharge I reflected back on what I called the hallowed halls of Herrington, as it was as if I was seeing in Technicolor rather than black & white, and in three dimensions rather than the two dimensions life had become. Spring and the greening in my soul turned into Summer turning into Autumn and the Winter -and into my first anniversary. Things began to normalize - the pink cloud we so often talk about became just the beautiful white cloud against a blue sky, until the storms of life's challenges set it, as they always do. Oh, we work hard to plan for those difficult times in life and through our Surrender we somehow handle them. It's the little

things - and the proverbial last straws on the camel's back I worry about! Automated phone messaging and shrink wrap, I half-jokingly say, are the things I worry about most - those things that blind side me.

We are challenged, as well we should be...Recovery is a life-long process, just as life is its own journey - illusions we try to hold onto are just that - illusions. People close to us will die, we will face so many difficult life situations, and we will continue in Recovery - working the program we steep ourselves in, and sharing with others in recovery who understand better than any non-affected people could ever understand- no matter how close to us.

When it comes to me personally I remember Dr. E telling the group back in late Winter of '98 - "There's a genetic predisposition to the addictive personality - and the underlying nature of that personality is an obsessive-compulsive nature." That rings as true for me as the clearest bell ever could. We need to remember, that we enter into treatment with an addictive personality, and when we discharge we leave with that exact same addictive personality - and yet we now have our bag of tools and network of recovering friends to help us work an effective program. After all the research is completed, the result is the reality that "going to meetings" is the single most effective activity for one to maintain and enrich himself in Recovery.

Those of us who have had the means to afford treatment soon come to realize there is no magic there - but we are afforded the time and space - to divorce ourselves from the addictive forces of a world we've allowed ourselves to become enmeshed in, and are able to listen to and counsel with people who dedicate their lives to helping us. I cringe when I hear someone say, "My last treatment didn't work for me." What he should be saying is, "I didn't work for my recovery when I was afforded the time and space to work on myself, learning to lead a new life." We need to work for our Recoveries as if our lives depended on it - because, in reality folks, they do!

As I've said so often, the only quote you'll see my name attached to is what I continue to hold onto - "I came into Recovery to save my ass, and found my soul connected to it!" For that I remain eternally grateful!