



Strength Through Surrender in Recovery

Herrington McBride

25th Annual Winter Retreat

January 6 - 8, 2012

Friday Evening at 5:00 pm – Sunday Noon
(Attendees must be recovering from their Addictions)

Dedicated to the Memory of Brian Kenevan

Redemptorist Retreat Center

1800 Timber Trail Lane - Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

The Art of Maintaining Our Life-long Recoveries

“In My Sister’s Voice”

Keynote Speaker:

Herrington Recovery Center Therapist, Laurie Linden, CAPSW, CSAC

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, giving your reasons and send your requests c/o John Aschenbrenner – 505 S. Fourth Street, Watertown, Wisconsin 53094. Requests are confidential, and please state and how long you have been on your recovery journey – including the amount you’re able to contribute. Scholarships, when given, are given one time. We set our rate to just cover our cost.

Please Note: I hate to even suggest this, but 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 Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund : _____

*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



The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
Winter/Holiday Retreat Issue 2011-2012

The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



President’s Message

By: John Aschenbrenner

The Holidays are with us and for many of us, along with the hustle and bustle, can be difficult times. Those illusions we have come to believe since childhood - of how peaceful and joyous we should be feeling and the media promoting alcohol as a key ingredient to the recipe of wonder in the holidays can afford us much less, as recovering people, than we hope for. Many of us begin to focus on our regrets and the shame we thought we had given up so long ago. We need to be careful and we need to be careful for each other. When our 12-Step Meetings fall on holidays, we often think there will be nobody attending. My experience is there are more people in attendance – the perfect image of recovering people taking care of themselves. I’ve come to believe these Holy Days are the perfect time to focus on both our 3rd and 11th Steps – it’s the perfect time to nurture our Spirituality. Personally I find the holidays to be the most difficult. I don’t think about drinking or using, but there is, after the years I have in Recovery, a pervasive and subtle apprehension – perhaps an unconscious memory of feeling so exhausted by the time the holidays end, all I wanted was to pack it away and push it back in the corner of the closet and slam the door. I try to focus on my Spirituality and Family. I try turning the focus from what I think I need, to the deep and unmet needs of the myriad of less fortunate people that surround all of us. And then there is the holiday gift I give myself and suggest it might be good for you and also the perfect gift for a friend or family member in Recovery. For the past 13 years I’ve been attending the Winter Retreat – always occurring the first weekend after the New Year Holiday. This issue of “The Herrington Recovery” announces it and the application is on the back cover – It’s the perfect way to set your focus on continuing Recovery in the New Year.



Finding Serenity in the Profoundly Quiet and Simple

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

By: Robert Frost



Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

**Winter Retreat – January 6th – 8th
Application on back cover!**

"I was looking for the easier softer way" Don S's Story

For most of us the story is the same or almost the same, our uniqueness is only imagined and when we imagine it we are alone. I believe I was an alcoholic all my life - that is to say the behaviors that caused me to use were with me as long as I can remember. Some of my earliest memories of school were of making excuses for not doing what I was supposed to and blaming others for the kettle of soup I was in. I was raised Catholic and was taught the prayers I still say today. I would robotically say the Lord's Prayer without thinking about the meaning. There was no conversation with God, only a plea to escape the situation I was in.

When I was fourteen I drank for the first time. Bottoms up; I drank the whole thing. Luckily for me, I threw it up. Whatever I did it was to excess. I drove too fast, drank more than most of my friends, and never took responsibility for my own actions. I was married to my first wife at the age of 25. This is where the story starts for me because of the children from my marriage. I find it amazing that I used liked I did even though I had three children. I loved our kids; I thought I protected them, but I was not their protector because I used every day.

In 1992, things came to a head. I was now 40 and a doctor gave me my new friend Xanax for panic attacks. In typical fashion, I ate them like candy; the more the better. I became even more depressed and sought out employee assistance for help. The counselor said I needed treatment for alcoholism and drug abuse. I admitted myself to Kettle Moraine Hospital for treatment. I learned about Alcoholics Anonymous in Group and had all the information needed to begin recovery. After the twenty-eight days of treatment, I returned home to start my new life. I attended AA meetings, but did not get a Sponsor or work the steps. After several months, I stopped going to meetings and did not take "How it works" seriously. I was looking for an easier softer way. I did not listen to the staff at Kettle Moraine who told me if I relapsed, it would be worse than when I first started recovery. I started to drink and thought it was under control; after all I quit for so many months! Soon I was right back where I was in the first place. To add to the mix, I was better at getting prescriptions from doctors. Things were worse, much worse. After five years, of this I was burned out. I could no longer function. My job was bad, my family life was toxic. The only friend I had left was upset with me. Financially things were failing. I asked myself, "Where is the problem?" I knew I needed help and I was finally willing to listen.

I went to my doctor and told him what was going on the best I could. He looked at me and said I would have to stop drinking. I responded that to stop drinking would be a problem. He dropped his papers on the desk and said I would need to check into the third floor at Rogers Hospital. I checked in to the third floor and found out that it added a whole new dimension to recovery. I was on the third floor for five days and went into Herrington. This time, I did what they told me to do

when I got out. I think fear was what motivated me the most. I went to meetings, found a Sponsor, and worked the steps. I found the promises to come true some more than others. This is what recovery has brought to me. I have a relationship with my Higher Power. I ask for knowledge of his will and try to carry it out. When I pray it is a heartfelt conversation not just words one after another. I have learned to embrace the idea that I am responsible for my actions. I learned that life is not perfect, but it is up to me how I handle it. I am thankful for each day and I am grateful for the relationships with my children and grandchildren. They bring me the greatest pleasure. Thank God for Charlie and Wendy, they brought this all to me in a way I could understand it. I am also grateful to John A. who by example showed me all of this was possible. I give thanks to my Sponsor Gerry P. who taught me to pray and to ask God for his plan in any given situation. The promises have revealed themselves to me in direct proportion to how I am working in the program.

On Adversity in Our Lives

- "A person who is beginning to sense the suffering of life is beginning to awaken to deeper realities, truer realities, for suffering smashes to pieces the complacency of our normal fictions about reality and forces us to become alive in a special sense - to see carefully, to feel deeply, to touch ourselves and our worlds in ways we have heretofore avoided. It may be said, and truly I think, that suffering is the first grace." ~ Ken Wilber
- "If you're going through hell, keep going." ~Winston Churchill
- "We have no right to ask when sorrow comes, «Why did this happen to me?» unless we ask the same question for every moment of happiness that comes our way." ~Author Unknown
- "I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish that He didn't trust me so much." ~Mother Teresa
- "Who will tell whether one happy moment of love or the joy of breathing or walking on a bright morning and smelling the fresh air, is not worth all the suffering and effort which life implies." ~Erich Fromm
- "Birds sing after a storm, so why shouldn't people feel as free, to delight in whatever remains to them?" ~Rose F. Kennedy
- "We turn to God for help when our foundations are shaking, only to learn that it is God who is shaking them." ~Charles C. West
- "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors." ~African Proverb
- "He who has a WHY to live can bear almost any HOW." ~Friedrich Nietzsche
- "If you know someone who tries to drown their sorrows, you might tell them sorrows know how to swim." ~Quoted from "P.S. I Love You."



Mark your yearly calendars:

Winter Retreat - January 6-8, 2012
Alumni Reunion - June 23, 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 (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 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 individuals who cannot afford retreats, etc. Any question regarding donations should be directed to our president: John Aschenbrenner. Phone: 920-988-2044



Looking for a Perfect Holiday Gift?

If you have a loved one in Recovery you might Give him/her the gift of our Retreat January 6th – 8th Friday at 5PM to Sunday at Noon... or it might be the perfect gift to yourself to help secure your Recovery in the New Year!
(Registration Form on Back Cover)

MARK YOUR CALENDERS:



June 23, 2012 – Alumni Reunion!
Don't pack your summer shorts & T-shirts too far away!



Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

John Aschenbrenner – President
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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

To my family, friends, guides and fellow travelers... Thank you!

An Anonymous Alumnus

If you have decided ...

For me, it's this one decision - made by myself, taking form in a promise and representing both a fundamental truth and a turning point. I've never reconsidered it, as I have so many other decisions before and since. I rely on it when life on its own terms seems too challenging. By the time I finally decided, family and friends had long pleaded for a change. But they didn't understand. How could they? I didn't understand I was in the middle of it all. We had all seen the consequences and presumed to know the cause. But the problem was my condition and that solution lay along a different path. Guides presented themselves to assist in my journey, but the decision was left with me. At that point, I felt impossibly alone - the surest sign that I did not understand. I later came to know that I had never been alone and found strength in the hope that these guides brought to me. But, at that point, the key was found in clarity. This was not a fight I could win. The power of my adversary was limitless and I was not. The strongest application of my willpower, directed by self knowledge, had taken me to this place, a spiritual fork in the road. To which path could I commit? What was I willing to do?

Path A - Incomprehensible demoralization: Clearly seen, it's troublingly familiar and brutally short; much shorter than I had ever been willing to admit. I had seen brothers, cousins and more take this path. Despite the allure of false promise, the influence of prior choices, this path scared me.

Path B - This simple program: Those welcome parts of my life to which I wanted to return were clear. Equally clear were the parts from which I had been running for most of that same life. How could I possibly choose b? Where would I find the courage to face myself?

In the end, it was my brother's voice that found me and kept me from shuffling my feet at that crossroad any longer. His message was simple and direct. My promise is to his memory as much as anything. I would follow the suggested steps and I would not quit. I promised never to believe that hope was an illusion, never to accept evil's ultimate lie. I decided to trust what was deep in my heart - to trust that I had always been, and would always be, safe in His hands. All that remained was to go into action. If faith is trust without reservation, then my faith is often tested. But, flawed though we are, we are also miracles. We have been granted the opportunity to carry this message. And when tested, the simple knowledge that we can thus be helpful to others carries us forward.



Reasons we need to keep our eye on the door, and welcome the anxious Newcomer into our Meetings:

A very conservative estimate of the number of alcoholics in the United States of America is 17 million. Each alcoholic has a direct affect on a minimum 4 other people. This means that at a minimum, 85 million Americans have their lives affected in a dramatically negative way because of alcoholism.

Absenteeism among alcoholics is a minimum 5 times greater than non alcoholics.

Alcohol is responsible for over 50% of all highway fatalities.

1 out of 4 Americans admitted to hospitals have alcohol related problems.

Each year the alcohol industry spends over 2 billion dollars advertising and promoting the consumption of alcohol.

Over 55% of students in grades 5 through 12 say that alcohol advertising encourages them to drink.

4 out of 10 criminal offenders admit that alcohol was a factor in their actions.

Alcohol is the number 1 drug problem in the United States as well as most of the industrialized world.

Over 1/2 million Americans between the ages of 9 and 12 are alcohol abusers.

An average American will drink the equivalent of 27 gallons of beer, 2 gallons of wine and 1 gallon of distilled spirits each year.

Alcohol is a prime factor in almost half of all murders, suicides and accidental deaths in America.

Alcohol kills over 6 times more youth than all other drugs combined.

Alcohol related brain damage can account for up to 24% of all forms of dementia. It can speed up the onset of Alzheimer's by as much as 4.7 years.

Don't forget that by helping the Newcomer you're helping more people than you might imagine and the help you give is helping YOU more than you allow yourself to realize. At meetings we need to keep our focus on our recovery, helping each other and always making a meeting welcoming to the newcomer entering the door - Remembering what it was like when we first entered that door.



The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund



Strength through Surrender

Brian was a young man and alumnus of our Association. He was known as a wonderful athlete who had a very kind heart - helping others less capable. When in treatment you'd find him helping an elderly gentleman in and out of the elevator or van. Everyone he touched came to love him. He accidentally died of his addiction earlier this year, and many memorials at his funeral were given to our Association and earmarked for our Annual Retreat - for those younger individuals who could not afford the entire cost of our Retreat. Those of you attending the retreat and able to make a donation to the fund are able to do so on the registration form (rear cover.) Those of you who are not attending the retreat and wishing to make a donation to the less fortunate who wish to attend, can send your donation to John Aschenbrenner, using the address on the registration form. Every penny of your donation goes to a worthy participant.



Faces and Voices of Recovery.

Find us at:

<http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>



A Special Thought for the New Year, 2012

"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 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

Remembering the Current Herrington Residents on New Year's Eve



For those of you alumni who might have been residents at Herrington or the former McBride Treatment Centers during the holidays, you will remember what a lonely time it can become. During Christmas there are many visitors - family and friends. New Year's Eve is a different situation. For obvious reasons, the residents don't leave the treatment center. They celebrate their own New Year's Eve in house. The Alumni Association has agreed to sponsor an annual New Year's Eve Celebration that evening. If any of you desire to send "Holiday Goodies," you can do so through John Aschenbrenner. Please call him at 920-988-2044 to make arrangements. If you'd like to send your words of encouragement you can send your cards directly to:

Residents
Herrington Recovery Center
Rogers Hospital
34700 Valley Road
Oconomowoc, WI 53066