

# 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".  
*(Ron would like any recipient of his custom "birthday" shirts from the Sunday morning AA meeting to please wear them.)*
- 11:30 Annual Meeting Chaired by HMAA President John Aschenbrenner.  
 12:00 Gourmet Picnic (Provided by Rogers Memorial Hospital)  
 1:00 Mark and Tina G.  
 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.")  
 \*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.)



The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
 Spring Issue 2012

# The Herrington Recovery

## Alumni Association Quarterly

### President's Message

By: John Aschenbrenner

There are times in which our organization reflects our alumni truly making a difference in the lives of our newcomers entering Herrington, and in the support we find ourselves giving to the new alumni when entering the world outside treatment. The past few months have afforded us such a reflection.



A new effort began with our bringing a New Year's Eve Celebration to Herrington House. You'll find Nicole P's moving account of what it meant to her when you read her article in this Newsletter. The event was a huge success and is already on the calendar for next New Year's Eve.

Fifty four alumni and friends attended our annual retreat during the first weekend after New Year's Day. Our retreat was dedicated to the memory of a fine young man who accidentally died during his relapse after treatment. The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund afforded ten full and three partial scholarships to young people, who could not otherwise have afforded the retreat – thus helping them set the stage for their New Year in Recovery. Brian's memory affords them the strength, fortitude and grace to continue working their recovery programs. Brian lives on in the hearts of so many of us and in the lives of the young people he continues to help in their recoveries.

And now, it's time to rummage through your closets to find your T-shirts, sandals and shorts for our annual reunion on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, which promises to be one of our best ever. Our Keynote speaker, "Dr. Sunday Morning Meetings Guy" – Ron R. will kick off our full day of speakers, great food, fun and our "open" AA Campfire meeting at sundown.

As many of you know, our Alumni Association works off a shoestring budget. We keep enough money in our treasury to keep us afloat, while attending to the residents at Herrington, our alumni and recovering people in general. Nobody on the Alumni Board, or those working closely with us in our efforts toward enriching recovering people's lives, makes a penny for our/their efforts. Every donated penny goes directly into our efforts. We have never asked directly for donations to our working fund, and it's always been a subtle and implied request in the form of your finding an envelope within each issue of our quarterly newsletter which affords you a quiet way to do as you wish. During these difficult economic times, understandably so, donations have been down, and rather than beginning to curtail our efforts, I'm hoping you might take a second glance at the envelope you find in front of you. Those of us who are able to work with recovering people directly – face to face, are the noticed people giving assistance. Your financial support is no less a means of assisting our fellows in recovery and is just as important, if more silent.

I'm wishing all of us another good year in recovery, day by day. I learned early on that when accepting yet another solid brass recovery token for another year in recovery, I take it for my family and friends and just as quickly I ask for the simple aluminum 24 hour token – I take that one for myself.



Recovery –  
 Opening ever new  
 beginnings

"All goes onward and outward-  
 Nothing Collapses"  
 - Walt Whitman



### 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 traveling trophy created – a beautifully crafted 3 foot high trophy – combining Classic Greek Sculpture and German Brass! The winner of this year's reunion playoff game agrees to take the trophy home with him!

House before it was torn down, and auctioned it to help subsidize the Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund. The reaction was electric! John is hoping for a reenactment of such potential generosity. If you have a worthy "recovery related" piece of memorabilia to auction, i.e. a first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, or perhaps another piece of the old Herrington that went missing when you discharged, etc, etc (Come on – be creative for our Reunion, )John could easily be coaxed into being auctioneer this year! Give him a call at 920-988-2044 and tell him what you're bringing!



### Remembering the "Doorknob Miracle" from last year's spontaneous auction:

Many of you will remember when John brought a brass doorknob - the last remaining piece of the Old Herrington



### 2012 Foundation Events

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Gathering**  
 Tuesday, May 22, 2012  
 Wisconsin Club  
 900 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233  
 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Price: \$60.00 per person

*For inquiries or to make reservations, contact Marion Heinz at 262-646-1370 or [mheinz@rogershospital.org](mailto:mheinz@rogershospital.org). More information can be found at [rogersmemorialfoundation.org](http://rogersmemorialfoundation.org).*

**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

*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).*

### On Resurrection and Rebirth



**Bill Wilson – Co-founder  
 of Alcoholics Anonymous**

"Men and Women in Alcoholics Anonymous never forget that only through suffering did they find enough humility to enter the portals of our new world. How privileged we are to understand so well the divine paradox that strength rises from weakness; that humiliation goes before resurrection; that pain is not only the price but the very touchstone of spiritual rebirth." ... "To those who have made progress in our program, humility amounts only to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we can be." – Bill Wilson



## A Young Man's "Good-Bye to Drugs Letter"

(An Assignment my therapist encouraged me to publish)



Dear Lord,

Thank you for the strength and courage to stop my hustln' and bustln' and get clean, so I can eat my pourage! No mo' shootn' and tootn'; No mo' hustln' and bustln', Although drugs made me some money and got me a free fix, you have now caused me to ruin the lives of many, even my own and it ain't funny! So all I gotta say is it's time to put down the syringe and stop the binge, to clean up my act and get back the sober life I once lived. Even though we had some good times, I'm now saying Good Bye to you, Heroin, and I'm glad I'll never see you again.

Matt L.

*Co-editor's note: I know this young man well, and after many months of sobriety and clean time, he continues to be a wonderful encouragement to so many, young and old – John A.*

## The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund

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 a relapse into his addiction last year, and his father earmarked many memorials at his funeral to be given to our Association and earmarked for our Annual Retreat – for those younger individuals who could not pay the entire cost of our Annual January Retreat. Brian's memory and fund afforded 13 young men and women either full or partial scholarships – helping them set the stage for another new year in recovery. If you wish to contribute to Brian's scholarship fund, please send your donation to our president, John Aschenbrenner – 505 South Fourth St. – Watertown, WI 53094. He will make certain a worthy young person will benefit from your donation



Strength through Spiritual Surrender

## Hope Found on New Year's Eve

By: Nicole P.



In the past, the end-of-the-year holiday frenzy had provided many opportunities for me to socialize and usher in the New Year with bubbly bliss. I anticipated the playfulness while waiting for that all so important midnight kiss proceeded by the ball dropping in New York's Times Square, while Dick Clark counted down.

This year I did not feel the end of year frenzy. In fact, I completely escaped the frenzy of the holidays even before Christmas. I was admitted to Herrington Recovery Center on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Never did I imagine that I would lie in prey to this viperous disease, spending the holidays in rehab. With the pangs of loneliness all too real, a willingness to surrender is now what I felt. New Year's Eve brought forth an overwhelming sense of gratitude this year. I'm grateful for sobriety, a clean year ahead, and good friends along with the supportive staff at HRC. I'm grateful for an alumni association who spent time, energy and thought into making sure the residents at HRC had a night to remember this past New Year's Eve. Yes I'm proud to say I "remembered" this one! Not only because my mind was free from chemicals but because we had so much fun.

The night started off with the cooking talent of Mike I, who prepared mouth watering tenderloin steaks and twice baked potatoes which melted in our mouths. Following the gourmet meal was a serious pool tournament, where Andy S methodically schooled all the other sharks in the house, winning the first annual HRC pool trophy. The weather was unseasonably warm and the sky was clear and many stars were visible in the sky as well as in the house, when the singing talent emerged after the Karaoke machine came out! Stars emerged, like John A and John H, belting out Tom Dooley.

No, this year we did not watch the glamorous "ball" dropping in New York or experience that joyous midnight kiss, but we did have an amazing night of fellowship, fun, laughter and most of all sobriety! I'm so very grateful for my continuing recovery.



*"The happy and fully alive recovering person initially fearing his life is over, learns quickly – that the recovering life is not a journey to the grave, with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to vitally skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, "Wow – what a Ride!"*

- Anonymous

## Mark Your Calendars:

Alumni Events for 2012 into 2013:

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 individuals who cannot afford retreats, etc.

Any question regarding donations should be directed to our president:

John Aschenbrenner

Phone: 920-988-2044



**"Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die!"**  
- Malacky McCourt

# Herrington McBride

## Herrington McBride Board Members

Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:

John Aschenbrenner – President  
Rob McCreddie – Vice-President  
Secretary – Mary Lee Grady  
Treasurer – Johnny King  
Phil Grabski - Editor of The Herrington Recovery  
Scott Elston  
Michael H.  
Michael Ingrilli  
Jeff Radtke  
Kristin Simons

Advisors:

John Hopkins – Past President  
Bill Martens, M. D. – Past President & Archivist  
Bob Olson – Past President  
Matthias Scheuth – Director of Rogers Foundation  
Cindy Suszek - Manager of Herrington Recovery Center  
Cori Smith & Laurie Linden – Therapists and Herrington's Clinical Liaisons to the Board

The Herrington Recovery is published by The Herrington McBride Association – a not-for-profit organization, with the generous help of Roger's Memorial Hospital

Layout and Printing - Village Graphics, Inc., Hartland, WI

Please send feedback and Newsletter 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)





## Starting Recovery Later in Life

By: *Rob Schroeder*

My desire for an alternative to reality started early in my childhood, as alcohol was always socially acceptable, even at a young age (13) to consume. My father was a non-admitted alcoholic as was his father, and I now know that the "Gene of Addiction" was obviously in me.

When I went to college and just continued my abuses, I started a career in hotel and restaurant management, which would provide me access to booze while working and back then it was actually acceptable to drink while working. What a life (I thought) - drinking at work and that I wouldn't be viewed as a person with an issue. My abuse continued over the next twenty plus years.

I married a woman who accepted my drinking, as she and her family had nearly the same tendencies. We were making a good living and that seemed to be just a normal way of life: new cars, house and all the material things we ever wanted. We then started a family of our own, with the birth of two sons that were then the light of our lives, but that never deterred me from my daily consumption.

The years past and my problem became everyone else's. I realized I had a problem, but was unable to accept or admit it to myself. I eventually turned into a closet drinker and thought if they didn't see me doing it, they didn't know about it. In hindsight that was the worst decision of my life, as I've come to know now. I would drink anytime I could, in private or public and didn't care what others thought, continuing to escape from my fabricated pressures of everyday life.

My wife finally had enough and made the decision that she wanted a better life, convincing the kids that my decision to continue drinking was more important than they were, and filed for a divorce-taking them with her.

I drank and drove for three weeks until the legal system caught up with me, and I had to start to dealing with my life as it presented itself. I was a drunk that was about to lose everything that was important in my life-my family!

I started my recovery program nearly two years ago, when I reached my admittance, acceptance and commitment to regain my life. I had lost the most important things in life: my immediate and parental family. My focus turned toward working to fix myself, which might provide me the hope for a true, new and meaningful life.

I started to attend AA meetings, work with a sponsor, and do the necessary Steps Work, but more importantly I found my way back to my Faith in God. My personal recovery program engages me in the hope of gaining a foothold on this disease. Included in my program is my Faith in God, readings, meditation, meetings and putting the 12 Steps to work in all

my activities. Now I know that my Sobriety must come first. Now working the 12th Step, I am a sponsor to a few individuals, work as an AODA volunteer for the county (attempting to reach some new-bees,) and make myself available to participants in the program who need help.

To date I have not had the opportunity to have any contact with my family, and my prayers reflect the desired opportunity for a chance for gradual reunion with them. I am fully responsible for my past, but have yet to be able to make full and direct amends to them for all the harm and hurt I caused. I know that this is now in God's hands and on His timetable. I have not desired to return to the past, while never wanting to forget it. My life is fulfilling in that I now have true friends I have come to know in the AA community and the progress I continue to make in my goal toward continued and life-long sobriety and my never ending prayer for the chance to re-enter my family's life.



*For those of you who have not met him,  
we're introducing:*

**Dr. Michael Miller**

**Medical Director –**

**Herrington Recovery Center**

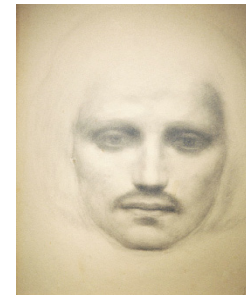
**And for those Alumni in or near the Atlanta Area  
who might be able to hear**

**Dr. Miller speak in Mid-April:**

**The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) 43rd Medical-Scientific Conference Medical Director of Herrington Recovery Center, Michael M. Miller, MD, FASAM, FAPA and Lead National Outreach Representative, Mary Jo Wiegatz will be at the ASAM conference. Further details will be available as the event draws closer or contact Mary Jo at [mwiegatz@rogershospital.org](mailto:mwiegatz@rogershospital.org).**

**Where: Hilton Atlanta Hotel**

**When: April 19 - 22, 2012**



**Your capacity  
to experience Joy  
can only be measured  
against the depth  
of pain already  
experienced.**

"Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears ... When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight ... Could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy; and you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.  
– Excerpted from "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran

## Scott L.'s Long Journey into Recovery

To my brothers and sisters in recovery:

My name is

Scott and I am a drug addict and alcoholic. My prayer for you is that this day finds you well.

My story is one of great gratitude for how my life has changed. This did not come easy for me. What did come easy for me was being an addict and alcoholic. This was the way I lived my life decade after decade. My use was no longer fun, not something I did for recreation. It is what I had to do to simply feel normal, to feel accepted by others in life. As my use escalated, so did the consequences of my actions and decisions. I found myself in a spot I could have never imagined. In this program we talk of "one day at a time" which is just how I was living my life; using one day at a time, hoping the next I could stop. I never could.

In January, 2001 everything finally caught up with me as I awoke in a hospital bed after just spending the last 3 days in a coma. Another week in the



hospital proved to everyone I had a problem. This led me to being taken to A.A. meetings. I actually managed to stick around for about a year. I was not working the program at all; I was working Scott's program. I refused to surrender, did not work the steps, had no sponsor, no God. I did know I was an alcoholic; knew my life was unmanageable but also knew no other way to live. Thus, it was not long till I was off and running again. My disease was trying to kill me and I did not care. I managed to fool a lot of people but the gut wrenching reality was that I could not fool myself.

Then the miracle of this program touched me - God doing for me what I could not do for myself. On February 1st, 2008 I made a decision that I wanted change. I had no idea how to do this but I remembered that there was something at those meetings that was real. I had seen people change. When I came back to A.A, I knew more of what not to do than any idea of what to do. The meetings at Rogers really helped me because there were people just like me in early recovery. There were also those I knew from years before that were headed down a path that I wanted to travel. Those friends will never know the full extent of what they showed me by walking the walk. After continuing to come back with an open mind and heart, it was amazing how the Herrington Recovery Program and A.A. influenced me. So I thank all of you who have gone through the program and taught me how to live again.

It took me a long time to accept my Higher Power, or God as I understand Him in my life. God was always there with me and for me. It was Scott who chose to not know Him. Today I can say I am a grateful drug addict and alcoholic because it led me to where I am today-into a spiritual awareness that leads me to a high I was always chasing. Our disease can lead us to an amazing new life – a life that can become a spiritual journey- the highest high of all.

**URGENT**

**Please Announce 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.