

For the Weekly Calendar:



AA Meetings – Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Monday – 7:00 Evening

Wednesday – 7:00 Evening

Thursday – 6:00 Evening

Saturday – 7:04 Morning (Nobody makes it by 7:00!)

Sunday – 8:30 Morning

NA Meeting - Rogers Hospital – Oconomowoc

Saturday – 7:00 Evening

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 Rob at: clean@wi.rr.com for information on how to proceed.



Your best
teacher is
your last
mistake.



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The Herrington McBride Alumni Association
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The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



From the Desk of our President

By: Rob McCreadie

Hello Friends,

When I sit down to write letters from the president's desk, I typically try to focus on the miracles of recovery and the many successes that I come in contact with daily, but I feel compelled to share a story of a personal nature with you at this writing.

Last month my younger brother Pete died from an opioid overdose. Sixteen months earlier, I lost a sister due to complications from addiction induced liver disease. Seven weeks after my sister's death, my mother died too. Because of the recovery I enjoy, I've got a wonderful support system in my remaining four sisters, my sponsor, my sponsors, my fiancée, my best friend and many more members of my extended recovery family. I am coping with my grief with an overwhelming outpouring of love and support.

I am going to refrain from telling my brother and sister's stories in specific terms. What I will tell you about my brother and what I believe the main reason that he is dead and I am not is the difference between working a program and living on the periphery of recovery. My brother had attended meetings off and on for years, but never really embraced recovery by working the steps with a sponsor. Following my brother's death I received calls and messages from numerous people who shared stories of how my brother had helped them to either get or stay clean by offering love, support and encouragement in spite of his own struggles. He typically knew the right thing to do, but regularly had difficulty following through with the necessary action. He often called to run things by me for my input, but then disregarded the advice he had sought. His favorite words were "I know."

The disease of addiction wants those of us who are afflicted dead. I see it as my job to do whatever is necessary to keep from taking that first one. If I don't step on the railroad tracks, I don't need to concern myself with which car of the train is going to kill me. The sad truth is that all too frequently the disease wins. I get angry when

this happens, I get sad, I feel gratitude for my own recovery and the many people who are in my life and in all of our lives because they take care of themselves by actively working programs of recovery. I have seen complacency take too many people back out into active addiction. The lucky ones make it back. Too many end up like my brother and sister.

I have been going through a broad range of emotion over the last seventeen months. Some of those emotions have been very painful and some have been pretty wonderful, with most falling somewhere in between. I have survived every emotion I have ever had and have loads of evidence that emotions are merely temporary states. Life on life's terms can be painful, but I'm a firm believer in the reality that there is no problem that can't be made worse by using! Pain is mandatory; misery is optional. Today I choose not to be miserable. I've drawn members of my support system a bit closer and I stay connected. I am never alone unless I choose to be. I know my pain will lessen over time and that I'll get through this. I miss my sister, my brother and many, many others who have died from addiction. I hate when the disease wins because I know that it doesn't have to! I have been given the precious gift of recovery, but I also do my part to protect this gift. I don't know why some of us are chosen and others are not, but I guard against complacency and I don't "play chicken" with my recovery. I continue to do all of the things that have kept me clean since I first began my journey 14 years ago. I was told that it takes five things to get and stay clean... go to meetings, get a sponsor, work steps, do service work and don't use no matter what. There are other things I have added to my program, but these five things are the foundation of my recovery and I am not about to stop doing what has worked for me and many more like me.

I am grateful for the life, family and friends that I have today, none of which would be possible if I had not been shown how to live Just For Today.

As always, I welcome feedback and suggestions as to how we can improve our alumni association in order to continue our mission and to support residents in treatment and throughout their transitions into the recovering community. Thanks to all for your continued kindness and support!



AA Historical Data:

The Birth of A.A. and Its Growth in the U.S./Canada

A.A. had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Prior to that time, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group, a mostly nonalcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living. In that period, the Oxford Groups in America were headed by the noted Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. Under this spiritual influence, and with the help of an old-time friend, Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober and had then maintained his recovery by working with other alcoholics, though none of these had actually recovered. Meanwhile, Dr. Bob's Oxford Group membership at Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety. When Dr. Bob and Bill finally met, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, he found himself face to face with a fellow sufferer who had made good. Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions and body. This all-important fact he had learned from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York, where Bill had often been a patient. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, he soon got sober, never to drink again. The founding spark of A.A. had been struck.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital, where one patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. Though the name Alcoholics Anonymous had not yet been coined, these three men actually made up the nucleus of the first A.A. group. In the fall of 1935, a second group of alcoholics slowly took shape in New York. A third appeared at Cleveland in 1939. It had taken over four years to produce 100 sober alcoholics in the three founding groups.

Early in 1939, the Fellowship published its basic textbook, Alcoholics Anonymous. The text, written by Bill, explained A.A.'s philosophy and methods, the core

of which was the now well-known Twelve Steps of recovery.

The book was also reinforced by case histories of some thirty recovered members. From this point, A.A.'s development was rapid.

Also in 1939, the Cleveland Plain Dealer carried a series of articles about A.A., supported by warm editorials. The Cleveland group of only twenty members was deluged by countless pleas for help. Alcoholics sober only a few weeks were set to work on brand-new cases. This was a new departure, and the results were fantastic. A few months later, Cleveland's membership had expanded to 500. For the first time, it was shown that sobriety could be mass-produced.

Meanwhile, in New York, Dr. Bob and Bill had in 1938 organized an over-all trusteeship for the budding Fellowship. Friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr. became board members alongside a contingent of A.A.s. This board was named The Alcoholic Foundation. However, all efforts to raise large amounts of money failed, because Mr. Rockefeller had wisely concluded that great sums might spoil the infant society. Nevertheless, the foundation managed to open a tiny office in New York to handle inquiries and to distribute the A.A. book — an enterprise which, by the way, had been mostly financed by the A.A.s themselves.

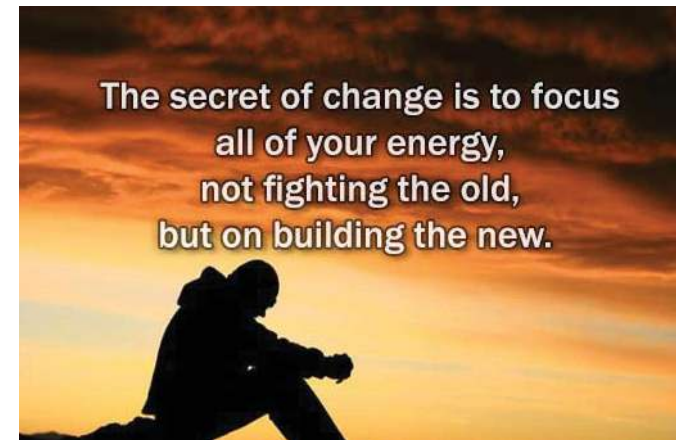
The book and the new office were quickly put to use. An article about A.A. was carried by Liberty magazine in the fall of 1939, resulting in some 800 urgent calls for help. In 1940, Mr. Rockefeller gave a dinner for many of his prominent New York friends to publicize A.A. This brought yet another flood of pleas. Each inquiry received a personal letter and a small pamphlet. Attention was also drawn to the book Alcoholics Anonymous, which soon moved into brisk circulation. Aided by mail from New York, and by A.A. travelers from already-established centers, many new groups came alive. At the year's end, the membership stood at 2,000.

Then, in March 1941, the Saturday Evening Post featured an excellent article about A.A., and the response was enormous. By the close of that year, the membership had jumped to 6,000, and the number of groups multiplied in proportion. Spreading across the U.S. and Canada, the Fellowship mushroomed.

By 1950, 100,000 recovered alcoholics could be found worldwide. Spectacular though this was, the period 1940-1950 was nonetheless one of great uncertainty. The crucial question was whether all those mercurial alcoholics could live and work together in groups. Could they hold together and function effectively? This was the unsolved problem. Corresponding with thousands of

of others hundreds of different times, but that day he said it to me. I was just in the right place, at the right time, and he said exactly what I needed to hear that day to understand. I will never forget it. God works in mysterious ways like that. Today, I am okay with my past and I am not worried about my future because I have turned it over to God. I am grateful for my past, instead of resentful toward it. The "bad" things that happened to me are just experiences that I needed to have happen to me in order to get to where I am today. I found that working on today, and only today, was truly my way to a better future.

Today I am in a much better place than I was when I was when I was drinking. Completely transformed - spiritually, mentally, and physically. I realize that all of the good things that are now happening for me are not solely because I stopped drinking. But I also realize that none of the good things would have happened if I hadn't. I am a grateful alcoholic because it led me to AA, which has taught me how to be happy...spiritually, mentally, and physically. Naturally and genuinely happy. -Kenny B.



"Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. It may mean the loss of many nights' sleep, great interference with your pleasures, interruptions to your business. It may mean sharing your money and your home, counseling frantic wives and relatives, innumerable trips to police courts, sanitariums, hospitals, jails and asylums. Your telephone may jangle at any time of the day or night." AA, 2001, p. 97



Deal Alcohol -

It's over between us.

The past two months apart have provided me with so much clarity. I am finally able to say, it's over.

Since this is not the first time you have heard these words from me, I feel the need to clarify what "IT'S OVER" means, and explain to you why it is, in fact, over between us.

So, what does IT'S OVER mean for us:

- It means PERMANENT. This is not like my previous attempts to quit you, this time is forever.*
- It means you are not WELCOME in my life.*
- It mean you have lost your CONTROL over me.*

So, why does it need end? Because all you do is TAKE. You take time, money and happiness. With you in my life, I lost large swaths of time. You have taken entire week-ends from me. Family trips, dinners and other events were ruined because of our relationship.

You caused me to lose FOCUS. While with you, I only think of YOU. You are selfish, and have caused me to become equally selfish. You put blinders on me. Without your blinders, I can see how good life is without you.

You cause me to lie and hurt everyone in my life. From my wife and kids, to neighbors, family, friends and coworkers, there is not a single person in my life who has not been affected by our relationship. That is UNHEALTHY.

The fact that it has taken me over eight years to understand the true nature of your intentions with me is a testament to how manipulative you are. Being away from you for two months has made this abundantly clear.

I am able to fill the space you took in my life with healthy, productive things. . . things I forgot about when you were clouding my head. Family time, exercise, reading, cooking, time with friends. . . all things NORMAL people do that YOU prevented me from doing.

*Good riddance,
John L.*

groups about their problems became a chief occupation of the New York headquarters.

By 1946, however, it had already become possible to draw sound conclusions about the kinds of attitude, practice and function that would best suit A.A.'s purpose. Those principles, which had emerged from strenuous group experience, were codified by Bill in what are today the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. By 1950, the earlier chaos had largely disappeared. A successful formula for A.A. unity and functioning had been achieved and put into practice. (See Page 9.)

During this hectic ten-year period, Dr. Bob devoted himself to the question of hospital care for alcoholics, and to their indoctrination with A.A. principles. Large numbers of alcoholics flocked to Akron to receive hospital care at St. Thomas, a Catholic hospital. Dr. Bob became a member of its staff. Subsequently, he and the remarkable Sister M. Ignatia, also of the staff, cared for and brought A.A. to some 5,000 sufferers. After Dr. Bob's death in 1950, Sister Ignatia continued to work at Cleveland's Charity Hospital, where she was assisted by the local groups and where 10,000 more sufferers first found A.A. This set a fine example of hospitalization wherein A.A. could cooperate with both medicine and religion.

In this same year of 1950, A.A. held its first International Convention at Cleveland. There, Dr. Bob made his last appearance and keyed his final talk to the need of keeping A.A. simple. Together with all present, he saw the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous enthusiastically adopted for the permanent use of the A.A. Fellowship throughout the world. (He died on November 16, 1950.)

The following year witnessed still another significant event. The New York office had greatly expanded its activities, and these now consisted of public relations, advice to new groups, services to hospitals, prisons, Loners, and Internationalists, and cooperation with other agencies in the alcoholism field. The headquarters was also publishing "standard" A.A. books and pamphlets, and it supervised their translation into other tongues. Our international magazine, the A.A. Grapevine, had achieved a large circulation. These and many other activities had become indispensable for A.A. as a whole.

Nevertheless, these vital services were still in the hands of an isolated board of trustees, whose only link to the Fellowship had been Bill and Dr. Bob. As the co-founders had foreseen years earlier, it became absolutely necessary to link A.A.'s world trusteeship (now the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous) with the Fellowship that it served. Delegates from all states and provinces of

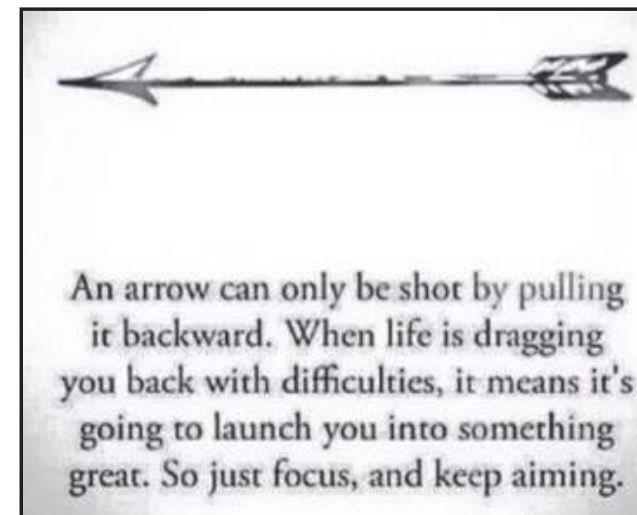
the U.S. and Canada were forthwith called in. Thus composed, this body for world service first met in 1951. Despite earlier misgivings, the gathering was a great success. For the first time, the remote trusteeship became directly accountable to A.A. as a whole. The A.A. General Service Conference had been created, and A.A.'s over-all functioning was thereby assured for the future.

A second International Convention was held in St. Louis in 1955 to celebrate the Fellowship's 20th anniversary. The General Service Conference had by then completely proved its worth. Here, on behalf of A.A.'s old-timers, Bill turned the future care and custody of A.A. over to the Conference and its trustees. At this moment, the Fellowship went on its own; A.A. had come of age.

Had it not been for A.A.'s early friends, Alcoholics Anonymous might never have come into being. And without its host of well-wishers who have since given of their time and effort — particularly those friends of medicine, religion, and world communications — A.A. could never have grown and prospered. The Fellowship here records its constant gratitude.

It was on January 24, 1971, that Bill, a victim of pneumonia, died in Miami Beach, Florida, where — seven months earlier — he had delivered at the 35th Anniversary International Convention what proved to be his last words to fellow A.A.s: "God bless you and Alcoholics Anonymous forever."

Since then, A.A. has become truly global, and this has revealed that A.A.'s way of life can today transcend most barriers of race, creed and language. A World Service Meeting, started in 1969, has been held biennially since 1972. Its locations alternate between New York and overseas. It has met in London, England; Helsinki, Finland; San Juan del Rio, Mexico; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Munich, Germany; Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; and Oviedo, Spain.



Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change

When I went through Herrington in October 2014, and for the several months that followed, I was going through a divorce, bankruptcy, and I was unemployed for 7 months. Yet, I was never happier in my life. I probably could have used any one of those reasons to keep drinking and most people wouldn't have been too disappointed in me. After all, I was going through a lot in a short amount of time, but the truth of the matter is, I was seeing the world in a whole new light that I never knew existed. I was happy, not because something good happened to me, but I could just be happy. Genuinely happy. Rather than looking at life with a negative attitude and being filled with self-pity because of all the bad things that were happening to me, I began to be grateful for the things that I did have. Acceptance, letting go, and turning it over to a higher power was key.

I never thought I would become an alcoholic. I can't tell you the day that it happened to me. Somewhere along the way I crossed that line. My drinking got progressively worse over a period of 15 years until it was no longer a manageable choice. I would wake up in the morning and hate what I saw looking back at me in the mirror. "Why did I do that again?" I would ask myself. "I'm not going to do that today" I would tell myself. And I meant it. I truly did! Except, I would be staring in the mirror the very next morning asking myself the very same question and telling myself the very same lies. Only, they weren't lies, because I really meant it! I wasn't going to drink that day! But as the day progressed, I would find myself buying more alcohol. I don't know why. It wasn't a decision. Something in my mind told me

I had to have it. I was just going to get a little! But a little was never enough, so I would have to go out again to get more. I was truly sorry! I didn't want to do it, I just wasn't willing to do what it took to stop. I still thought I could manage it and fix this problem without being labeled an alcoholic. How could I be? I couldn't be one of "them." I was smarter than that.

As my drinking got progressively worse, so did my life. I couldn't pick up my kids at the bus stop after school because I had been drinking that day. I would lie to my ex-wife and make up some excuse as to why I couldn't be there. I would wake up hours late for work on a regular basis and lie about where I was and why I was late. It was constant chaos inside my head and my mind could never be still. I was always trying to hide it and lie about it. My life was a rat race that primarily focused on alcohol.

I tried to come up with every excuse in the book not to go to Herrington. When I was in detox, I remember telling myself all the reasons why I couldn't go, or why I didn't need to go. Maybe I can just do another IOP and it would be different this time? Maybe I'll just go to more meetings and it will be different this time? I was still holding on. When I did go to Herrington, I remember waking up early the first morning to a beautiful sunrise over the lake and surrendering. I told myself that if I am here, I'm going to make the best of it. I'm going to go to every meeting and get the most out of my experience. I'm going to actually listen to what other people have to say for once instead of thinking that I have the answers and can pick and choose what I think will work for me.

The most important amend I ever made was the one that I made to myself. Once I was able to forgive myself, I was capable of forgiving anyone for anything, and that was the pathway to true peace in my heart. I don't judge others. I accept people for who they are and not wish they were someone different. I am grateful for the people in my life, shortcomings and all.

I was so consumed in guilt and shame for my previous actions that I was stuck in the past and couldn't move forward, and I was equally consumed with fear about the future. There were certain sayings that I heard around the AA tables that used to drive me crazy because I couldn't understand them. One of them was "live one day at a time." That didn't make any sense to me. It was a man that comes to regular meetings at Rogers who said something to me that made that whole concept click for me. I am forever grateful to him for that. He has probably said the same thing to hundreds