

**Mark Your Calendars:**  
**THE ALUMNI**  
**WINTER RETREAT**  
Friday, January 3rd - Sunday, January 5th



## 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

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*Serving our Recovering Alumni & Their Friends:*

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*The Herrington McBride Alumni Association  
Autumn Edition, 2013*

# The Herrington Recovery

Alumni Association Quarterly



## From the Desk of our President

*By: Rob McCreadie*

I began writing this installment for the Herrington Recovery Newsletter from my hotel in Philadelphia where I went for the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous – 35. The convention celebrates 60 years of Narcotics Anonymous since Jimmy K. and a handful of other addicts in Southern California first founded it in 1953. What an incredible celebration of recovery this is! NA is now represented in more than 129 countries and over 19,000 recovering addicts have come to Philadelphia from all over the world.

Our Annual Reunion Picnic was a huge success! I was extremely pleased to have been joined by Rogers CEO Pat Hammer and his wife Melissa. Pat addressed the crowd and shared some of his passion for AODA treatment and recovery. Pat has already proven himself to be an invaluable ally to the recovering community. Bob Olson, Kristen Simons, Mike Ingrilli and all those who gave of their time and energy helped to make this year's event one of the best in memory!

We have just had another Pizza Night at Herrington where many members of the board and members of our recovery community come to share their experience, strength and hope with current residents in treatment. Herrington's Medical Director, Dr. Michael Miller and Cindy Suszek, Clinical Services Manager joined us to help pull off another successful event. Our next Pizza Night will be held in March of 2014.

RAPs continue to be popular, and I've still got a couple of dates available. If you've got at least one year of solid recovery and are willing to share your experience strength and hope with current residents, please feel free to email me at [clean@wi.rr.com](mailto:clean@wi.rr.com) in order to begin the process of being approved to speak at the house.

The next event on the calendar will be the Third Annual New Year's Eve Celebration at Herrington. This is, for many, the first opportunity to ring in the New Year without engaging in any self-destructive behavior in a very long time. We have had gourmet dinners, karaoke and pool tournaments in years past and this year is shaping up to top previous events.

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!



Mother Theresa

People are often unreasonable,  
illogical and self centered;  
*Forgive them anyway.*

If you are kind, people may accuse  
you of selfish, ulterior motives;  
*Be kind anyway.*

If you are successful, you will win some false friends  
and some true enemies;  
*Succeed anyway.*

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;  
*Be honest and frank anyway.*

What you spend years building, someone could  
destroy overnight;  
*Build anyway.*

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be  
jealous;  
*Be happy anyway.*

The good you do today, people will often forget  
tomorrow;  
*Do good anyway.*

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be  
enough;  
*Give the world the best you've got anyway.*

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and  
your God;  
*It was never between you and them anyway.*





## I DON'T EAT GREEN OLIVES ANYMORE

Last week, I ate alone. I was on the deck of a nice diner. It was a long, narrow deck. I was toward the front. I noticed a waitress carrying a saucer with five green stuffed olives on it, walk past me.

I followed her with my eyes.

Really, I was following her in my memory bank. Some of us in the program would call this, a trigger. And that it was. It dawned on me for the first time in more than thirty years; I don't eat green stuffed olives anymore. Why? At one time, an olive would sit precariously on the top of the delicious substance in a stem glass in front of me. Of course, I wanted more than one olive: so the others were brought to me on a skewer, so I could soak them, one at a time, in my most favorite beverage.

Memories that night came back, like they never have before. Early in sobriety, I wrestled with how I could possibly live without this particular breed of alcohol. In fact, I didn't want to go on living. My gut, heart and mind told me emphatically, a life without the "contents" of a tall, stem glass wasn't a life at all. It wasn't for me.

I continued to go to a lot of meetings. I finally made myself talk with my sponsor, and talk at meetings. Ever so slowly, common sense and a higher realization of what life could be like prevailed. Depression still clung to my "innards" and didn't subside quickly. My resolution to "hang on" strengthened. I came out of this much more strongly with an appreciation of both my sponsor, Al, and the Fellowship of AA.

My LOVE of AA today is clearly supported by my attendance at six AA meetings a week.

Today, I choose life. And I don't eat green olives anymore.  
-Ed. M.

## WHAT BOARD GAME WAS CALLED "KING" BY THE PERSIANS? (*Johnny the Greek is brought down again!*)



*The Loser!*



*The Winner!*

The Alumni Reunion's "Trivial Pursuit Match" began innocently enough, but given the game's history, that could not last! It had been since the Winter Retreat when the game was last played, which found Johnny the Greek's Team losing by default to Johnny the German's Team. It was difficult for Johnny the Greek to be called "loser" over the next 5 months. The gentlemanly and Lady-like manners of the game quickly degenerated into a bawdy display of fierce expletives! Bluffing, which only recovering people can conjure up reached new heights of creative deceit. There the teams were with their pies in the center of the board, when the question was asked to Johnny the Germans Team – "What board game was called 'King' by the Persians?"

The sweat dripped from their German brows, and nerves were ready to falter, as the Greek Team across the table sneered and mocked the German's Team. Suddenly an answer, "Chess" was blurted out. A dead silence fell upon both teams – you could have heard the proverbial pin crash to the floor. Johnny the Greek grimaced and moaned, "Correct!" Again, The Greek had to drag the humiliating Loser's Trophy home with him!

Let the challenge go forward! Johnny the German challenges Johnny the Greek to Trivial Pursuit at the Alumni Winter Retreat on Saturday evening, January 4th at a table prepared for us at the Retreat Center!

## MY NAME IS MEG, AND I AM AN ALCOHOLIC.

I took my last drink on November 11th, 2012. That day I somehow managed to drink a bottle of mouthwash, I realized I needed more help than I thought...who drinks mouthwash? I decided that I did not want this sad life any longer; I knew there was a better life out there for me. Since that day I have been an active member in AA and this is my story.

I was born on April 14th, 1988. I grew up in a normal family, consisting of an older brother, twin sister, younger twin brothers and my parents. I was raised catholic and still consider myself to be, just currently not active in my parish for personal reasons. I went to Catholic schools all my life, minus two years of public schooling for my 4th and 5th grade years. I, like many alcoholics; always felt like I was different than everyone else, and not because I was a twin, but something about me always felt inadequate. I was made fun of for what I wore by a lot of my classmates while I was in public school those two years. I remember coming home all the time with tears in my eyes, I was miserable. I am not blaming that as to why I drank, but it definitely was a dark time in my young life.

I eventually made it to high school, I was at ease with my life and for the first time I felt a sense of belonging. High School was just what I needed, and thankfully we had uniforms so that was comforting, though by this time in my life I had an impeccable fashion sense (if I do say so myself). I took my first drink when I was a Sophomore, I knew from that first sip that I had found my best friend, the best friend that I never knew existed- but I knew I was never going to live without. The rest of High School I only drank on some weekends, at parties and such. My drinking then was enjoyable and I was a happy drunk. I loved the effects alcohol had on me; I loved how it made me feel like I belonged. I loved how it gave me the confidence to talk to boys. I graduated from High School and was excited to start college. Life was good.

My freshman year in College I was a great student, only living twenty minutes away from home. Rarely did I drink, maybe twice. School was all I cared about. It wasn't until sophomore year that my drinking really took a turn for the



worst. I had transferred to the College that my twin sister attended; I missed her and thought it would be a great life change for me. This college was two hours away from home; freedom was what I thought I needed. My sophomore year went from me being able to balance schoolwork and drinking, to quickly becoming all about drinking. My life had become something I was ashamed of. My twin sister was along for the ride of my slow destruction. I ended up moving back home to attend a College closer to home, bringing my Sister along. My parents were heartbroken and we had let them down. That feeling of disappointment and regret just ate at me; somehow I convinced myself that alcohol would fix my situation. I still continued to drink heavily while I attended classes. Over time, drinking had made its way into my classes, I would drink during class which I knew was wrong, but I couldn't stop. The summer finally came and I was starting to feel a little better about my life, but again, I found my way back to the bottle. I had been up north with my aunt and we both drank ourselves to oblivion. We had decided we had it with our lives and decided we would just end it all. I felt at peace that I would finally find a way out of my messy life. I felt at peace with death. I ended up in the hospital, an hour drive from where we were. That hour was miserable for me, blood all over myself, and glass in my face and arm. My aunt was scratch free.

I had failed yet again at something else, leaving me in deep despair. I was back to my life of despair, trying my hardest to make something of myself, knowing all too well that I am an alcoholic. Still, I tried to manage my addiction all by myself... I quickly found out that I was my own worst enemy. My train wreck lasted for years. I did things I never thought I would ever do, I was living to feed my addiction. I would do crazy things to try to hide my drinking but I came to find out I never fooled anyone.

After multiple failed attempts at AA, IOP's and therapists, I found my safe haven; Herrington Recovery Center. My mother did all the work to get me in there and I am forever grateful for her care and concern for me. Still newly sober, my life is better than it ever has been. I finally am at peace with myself and no longer have to wake up in the morning and wonder what I did and what stupid things I said, it is a fabulous feeling. I am very involved in AA and have found that they are beneficial in my personal recovery. I have finally made friends in the AA community and I am so lucky to have every single one of them in my life. I feel hopeful for my future. I have learned that I am a dweller, so in knowing that I find great strength. I have to accept my past and all of the awful things I have done in order to move on and live a life of happiness. Like we say in AA, "One Day At A Time"-this is my favorite saying, because it has helped me to get to where I am today.

- Meg F.

## MARK YOUR CALENDERS

### THE ALUMNI WINTER RETREAT

Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>



#### Keynote Speaker John Aschenbrenner

##### *“Just Another Day in Paradise”*

Again, we'll gather on Friday at 5:00 PM and be together until Sunday afternoon at 1:00 PM. At the end of our last Retreat, John was unanimously “railroaded,” into not only hosting the retreat, but also being our Keynote Speaker. It's been a long time since any of us has heard his story. The cost is \$225. There is absolutely no reason anyone cannot afford the retreat. We have The Brian Kenevan Scholarship Fund for those who need help in paying for the weekend. Once you find the Formal Announcement and Registration Form in the November Winter Newsletter, you'll be able to contact John for scholarship opportunities. Anyone who is interested in helping people who cannot afford the retreat and wish to give to the scholarship fund, please contact John at: 920-988-2044.



Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.  
(Vince Lombardi)

**Rock bottom  
became the solid  
foundation on which  
I rebuilt my life.**

- J.K. Rowling

I am a married 43-year-old father of a beautiful 3-year-old daughter. I had been drinking and using drugs for about 25 years. Things started to go downhill for me after shoulder surgery in 2004 and neck surgery in 2005 at which time I became addicted to narcotic pain medication along with my alcohol addiction.

To say that my addiction progressed would be a huge understatement. Last year my doctor prescribed my Xanax twice a day to deal with the anxiety that my work was causing. It got to the point the I was chewing up pain meds prior to heavy power lifting in the gym, as well as eating the Xanax like Tic Tacs in the evenings.

This past April, when I was praying nightly for help, I decided to seek professional help in the form of an inpatient treatment program for 28 days.

I did not realize that the Xanax withdrawals could be fatal; not to mention the same was true for alcohol. I have been clean now for almost 90 days and feel that the weight of the world has been lifted off my shoulders.

When it gets to the point when you honestly don't know if you will wake in the morning, it is time to seek help. I realize now that alcohol and drugs had rendered me powerless and that only God could save me from my addictions.

Now clean, I go to an AA meeting every day of the week and realize now that I am an alcoholic and will be for the rest of my sober life. I am now more connected with my wife and daughter than I ever imagined I could be; for that I am truly blessed.

My name is Brian C. and I am an alcoholic.

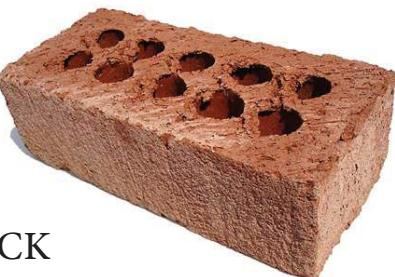
## Reunion 2013 Memories



*The Dream Team: Wendy, Charlie and Debbie*



*Our annual team of Chef's at this year's reunion picnic. Chris, Jim and Mike.*



## THE BRICK

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something.

As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, “What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?”

The young boy was apologetic. “Please, mister... please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do,” He pleaded. “I threw the brick because no one else would stop...” With tears dripping down his face and off his

chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. “It's my brother,” he said. “He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.”

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, “Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.”

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. “Thank you and may God bless you,” the grateful child told the stranger. Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: “Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!” God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.