



# The Gateway

## 2010 Annual Conference Preview

When 2010 Voice of the Conference John Tesh learned there was a possibility that the legendary Dick A. might not have a speaking engagement the first weekend of August, the blur one saw would be his fingers dialing the telephone. Dick was, in fact, open that date and agreed to share his message at the annual conference, as its Saturday night speaker.

And a powerfully compelling message it is. If one measures strength of recovery in terms of overcoming obstacles and rising from the depths of despair to the heights of hope, it is easy to understand why Dick is one of the most sought-after speakers internationally. Yet, while he has experienced the lowest of lows and the highest of highs, the centerpiece of his message is his connectedness with the God of his understanding.

*The Gateway* caught up with Dick A. via phone from Akron, Ohio, where he was preparing to address some 20,000 folks at the annual Founders Day Celebration. “What AA is really about is developing a relationship with God and humankind,” he said. “If we’re connected in a positive way, there aren’t many problems we can’t solve. When I cried out to God and got connected, he took the desire away, and then I learned to apply that relationship to other areas of life, and life does pretty well.”

Notice that Dick A. said “pretty well;” he didn’t say “perfectly.” Just as everyone, he has suffered trials and tribulations in sobriety, but has emerged stronger, with his faith and sobriety intact. In 2001, he suffered a ruptured appendix, which was misdiagnosed and landed him in ICU for six weeks, and four years later was (correctly) diagnosed with

esophageal cancer. It was so advanced that the doctors told him to get his affairs in order. The story of how he recovered is nothing short of miraculous and illustrates how his conscious contact with God, though challenged, ultimately overcame his doubts and fears.

Rather than spoil the story, suffice it to say, in Dick’s words, “God has a reason for me to be here. Whatever work he has for you, he’s already working out the details, so your job is just to be willing and do the homework and legwork and not to push, because sometimes you’re pushing for your own will, not His, to be done. If

I’d kept pushing ... I wouldn’t be here.”

God has kept Dick A. busy throughout his 33 years of sobriety. Among his list of accomplishments: he was a musician, reporter for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, creative director for a national ad agency, commercial copywriter and producer, documentarian, author, and television and film producer. His acclaim within the recovery community began with a film he produced titled “House Full of Miracles” about the beginnings of AA. Although he considered that a learning experience, it did lead to other projects, including a book he is co-authoring with Bill Borchert titled *A Hundred Years of Family Recovery*. He and Borchert are also co-producing a TV series slated to launch next year chronicling the real-life stories of recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. (Borchert, incidentally wrote and produced *When Love Is Not Enough: The Lois Wilson Story* and *My Name Is Bill W.*, the two most well-known films on the formation of Alanon and AA.)

*Continued on page 3*



*The Hall's gate has a new addition in the form of our logo fashioned from iron.*



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# Hall Staff Looking Forward to Seeing You at The Conference



## Employee Anniversaries First and Second Quarter 2010

Sandra Barclay	15 years	Wendy Huffman	2 years	Eric Roberts	5 years
Joy Bechtold	25 years	Shelley Kirkman	2 years	Stephen Rohrbeck	3 years
Annie Boswell	2 years	Jennie LaValley	1 year	Kelly Scaggs	2 years
Kelly Bowman	9 years	William Lickel	2 years	Richard Shaver	2 years
Ruth Brown	9 years	Bernard McEachern	4 years	David Spillman	2 years
Randy Carter	8 years	Sara Martinez	1 year	Wayne Smith	10 years
Linda Dinwiddie	5 years	Lisa Morgan	7 years	Nancy Verdi	6 years
Jim Fenley	23 years	Rosemarie Palazzolo	3 years	Jacqueline Woodell	2 years
Scott Forrester	5 years	Linda Phillips	1 year	Brenda Woodring	5 years
Lauren Haarlow	11 years	Robert Poteat	12 years	Billy Wyrick	7 years
Billy Harrah	4 years	Noi Phaphatsalang	1 year	Mike Yow	17 years
Tony Holt	1 year	Raymond Ricks	6 years		

## Conference Preview *Continued from page 1*

“I wanted to get going on this series as soon as I got out of the hospital and finished treatment for the cancer,” said Dick A., “but Bill was still in production on the Lois Wilson project. So that’s another example of doing things on God’s timetable, not yours.”

As for bona fides for qualifying for Alcoholics Anonymous, Dick A. took his first drink at age 14 and four hours later was in the Louisville city jail; was arrested for assault and battery on a police officer at his senior prom; had been arrested 22 times by the time he found AA at age 27; lived on the street for two years; essentially quit eating and lost control of his kidneys and bowels.

“Even after I got here, I had enough brain damage that it took me a year and a half to learn to read again,” he disclosed. “But once I got here, I never doubted that I was supposed to be here. God just took the desire away.”



## *Fellowship Hall 2010 Conference Schedule*

<b>Friday, August 6, 2010</b>	
<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	Registration Southern Crescent Foyer
<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	Hospitality Room Opens Triad Central East
<b>8:00 p.m.</b>	Opening Remarks Southern Crescent Ballroom
<b>Speaker:</b>	Vito L. Hallandale, FL
<b>Saturday, August 7, 2010</b>	
<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	Registration Southern Crescent Foyer
<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	Hospitality Room Opens Triad Central East
<b>Speaker:</b>	Danny B. Houston, TX Southern Crescent Ballroom
<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	Break
<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Aaron J. Charlotte, NC Southern Crescent Ballroom
<b>12:00 p.m.</b>	Picnic Fellowship Hall
<b>2:00 p.m.</b>	Gratitude Meeting New Big Room (Classroom 142) at Fellowship Hall
<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	Registration Southern Crescent Foyer
<b>8:00 p.m.</b>	Hospitality Room Opens Triad Central East
<b>Speaker:</b>	Dick A. Lithia Springs, GA Southern Crescent Ballroom
<b>9:30 p.m.</b>	Ice Cream Social Southern Crescent Foyer
<b>Sunday, August 8, 2010</b>	
<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	Registration Southern Crescent Foyer
<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	Hospitality Room Opens Triad Central East
<b>Speaker:</b>	Mari G. Toronto, Ontario Southern Crescent Ballroom

## Foundation Awards Technology Grant

Fellowship Hall has received a technology grant from the Alexander Worth McAlister Foundation to provide audio-visual equipment that will greatly enhance the program and allow us to preserve our collection of speaker tapes.

Fellowship Hall uses audio-visual resources in the treatment program to educate and inspire the guests to begin the process of recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. Over the years, we have accumulated an extensive library of teaching videos and personal Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous testimonials from pioneers in the field of alcohol and drug treatment and tapes of some of the most inspiring speakers in the program. Because of deterioration of the tapes, we were in danger of losing some irreplaceable messages and a part of our history.

With the grant money, Fellowship Hall will purchase the equipment necessary to convert existing materials to a modern format and to view the updated resources. This will further enable us to add to our collection with contemporary programs and speakers, building our library and ensuring that future guests will have the opportunity to benefit from the years of experience our collection represents.

It is fitting that this particular foundation supports Fellowship Hall, as Mr. McAlister’s son, A. W. “Zander” McAlister, Jr. was a visionary who worked diligently to establish Fellowship Hall, served on its Board of Directors for decades, and was a generous contributor. Once again, we are grateful for his help in furthering our mission, and to the members of the foundation for awarding this grant.

## Jacqueline Woodell Is No Stranger To The Disease

For someone not in recovery, Jacqueline Woodell has a broader, deeper understanding of the disease of addiction than most laymen. Her knowledge and interest in the subject stems from several sources and is based both on intellectual curiosity and personal experience. As a member of the Lumbee Tribe, she is keenly aware of the ravages of alcoholism on Native Americans and has been touched by its effects both culturally and personally. Her father was such a raging alcoholic that her family refused to let him see her as a child unless he straightened up.

“He was one of those ‘rough rollers’ down on Lee St. (in Greensboro), but my aunt shielded me from all that,” she said. “She told him he’d never see his daughter as long as he stayed drunk, and she meant it. Somehow he managed to quit on his own. That was 38 years ago.”

Still, Jacqueline knows that her father was the exception rather than the rule and strongly encourages her people to follow the AA path.

“I know my people need a lot more help in the recovery field,” she said. “Alcoholism and drug addiction have gotten worse. Generationally, I think we’ve gotten better, because now we understand the genetic link, but we’re still hit harder by it. Just because you understand it, unless you do something about it, you haven’t gained anything.”

Since being hired as the lead housekeeper at Fellowship Hall in May 2008, Jacqueline’s passion about improving the lot of her tribe and her extended family has grown even more intense.

“I’ve met four different people who came through here who were from around Lumberton, where there is a heavy concentration of Lumbees,” she noted. “One guy hadn’t been home in a while and was afraid to go back, and I told him not to. There is a thriving drug scene there and alcoholism is rampant, so I said ‘Why do you want to go back to that if you don’t have to?’”

Jacqueline, though born in Lumberton, grew up in Philadelphia. She was both athletic and artistic as a child but leaned more toward the artistic side as she grew older. She has been an artist in residence at numerous colleges around the Northeast, including the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton. Still deeply immersed in Native American culture, she has attended powwows and tribal gatherings all over North America.

“We used to travel up to Canada, over to New Jersey, pretty much anywhere,” she recalled. “My dad used to pop us in the car and we’d head out for the weekend. I don’t do it so much now that my kids are grown, but I plan to get back into it.”



*“Don’t get me wrong, the staff is wonderful,” she smiled, “but it’s inspiring to me to be around the guests. It’s nice to see them change from week to week, watch their emotions and attitudes change. By the end they’re a whole different person.”*

Her three children are a great source of pride for Jacqueline. Her youngest daughter, Mardella Sunshine Costanzo, graduated this May from UNC Pembroke with a degree in education; daughter Danielle Bright Dawn Woodell, a 13-year Navy veteran, will get her degree in sports medicine from a naval school in Jacksonville, Fla. in the fall; and son Rancourt (which means small bear) Little Mountain Woodell lives in upstate Pennsylvania.

Local educators may remember Jacqueline’s grandmother, Leona Lowery Carter, who was a very well-known teacher in Greensboro for many years.

“She was one of the first Native American women teachers in Pembroke,” she said. “She relocated to Greensboro with other Indians about 45 years ago, and that’s how my family wound up here.”

Jacqueline credits the guests with making her job a pleasure. “Don’t get me wrong, the staff is wonderful,” she smiled, “but it’s inspiring to me to be around the guests. It’s nice to see them change from week to

week, watch their emotions and attitudes change. By the end they’re a whole different person.”

And though she is content in her job, she hints that her future may be in nursing.

### This Date in AA History

**July 2, 1960** — Father Ed Dowling died.

**July 2-3, 1955** — Bill W. turned "the fellowship over to the fellowship" at 4 p.m. At least 5000 attended the 20th anniversary at the St. Louis Convention.

**July 3-5, 1970** — 10,900 attended 35th anniversary of AA in Miami. Bill W. gave his last talk to AA.

**July 14, 1979** — Dr. Ernest Kurtz published *NOT-GOD, History of AA*.

**July 22, 1877** — William Duncan Silkworth was born in Brooklyn, NY.

**July 28-30, 1950** — The first AA Convention celebrated the 15th anniversary of AA, held in Cleveland.

**August 8, 1879** — Dr. Bob S. was born in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

## Wendy Huffman Had to Learn to Nurse Herself Before She Could Nurse Others

January 5 is a red-letter day for Wendy Huffman in more ways than one. Not only is it her clean date, but also the date she interviewed for, and was offered, a job at Fellowship Hall.

“It was my one-year birthday,” she smiled. “I got clean in ’07 and exactly a year later got the job here. So that date will always be special.”

A lot of things in Wendy’s life are special these days, a far cry from that fateful January day three and a half years ago when she found her way to Fellowship Hall — as a guest, not an employee. Today she is a valued member of the nursing staff here, a member in good standing of Narcotics Anonymous, and, above all, a member of the human race.

“I had given up hope,” she said. “I had given up on myself. I was living in a self-made prison with no way out. The shame and guilt and the feeling of hopelessness were overwhelming. There was no real reason to live that I could see.”

Like many addicts and alcoholics, Wendy had a lot of potential growing up in Lumberton, N.C. Although from a poor family, she used a combination of scholarships, work-study programs and financial aid to earn a bachelor’s degree in biology and chemistry from UNC Pembroke. Her initial goal was to become a physician, but marriage and a child eventually changed those plans to nursing school. Still, she earned a full two-year scholarship to nursing school, graduated and began practicing.

Her descent into full-blown addiction did not happen until

after her husband’s unexpected death in 1998. “I felt angry that I was left to raise a small child on my own,” she states. “Eventually I stopped working to spend time with him, but very quickly, my addiction progressed.” Wendy credits divine intervention for not only initiating the process of recovery but for keeping it going.



*“I’m able to share openly with them that we can recover,” she said. “I let them know that I was given a second chance and they have too. My lost dreams have awakened and theirs will too. I wake up happy and excited about life most days. This was exactly where I needed to be to get that hope back, and is still right where I need to be.”*

“I was terrified of what was going to happen when I entered treatment,” she recalled. “I remember someone in the program saying, ‘We’re going to love you until you learn to love yourself,’ and I thought, ‘what a bunch of nonsense.’ I was an atheist; I had denounced God. One thing that I hung onto early on was the saying ‘Religion is for those afraid of going to hell; spirituality is for those who’ve already been there.’ But soon I came to believe in a loving, caring God who was much, much larger than me.” Her position at the Hall allows her to interact with the guests, which she sees as an opportunity to spread the message of recovery.

“I’m able to share openly with them that we can recover,” she said. “I let them know that I was given a second chance and they have too. My lost dreams have awakened and theirs will too. I wake up happy and excited about life most days. This was exactly where I needed to be to get that hope back, and is still right where I need to be.”

In addition to recovery and her career, the joy of Wendy’s life is her 15-year-old son Jared.

“He’s a great kid,” she beamed. “I was overcome with shame and guilt when I got here, but I had to quit beating myself up.

*Continued on page 7*

**August 11, 1938** — Akron and New York members began writing stories for Big Book.

**August 15, 1890** — E. M. Jellinek, author of “The Disease Concept of Alcoholism” and “The Jellinek Curve,” was born.

**August 16, 1939** — Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia admitted the first alcoholic to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio.

**August 18, 1988** — The first Canadian National AA Convention was held, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

**August 26, 1941** — Bill wrote Dr. Bob to tell him Works Publishing had been incorporated.

**August 28, 1954** — *24 Hours a Day* was published by Richmond W.

**September 11, 2001** — 30 Vesey St, New York, AA’s first office was damaged during the World Trade Center attack.

**September 13, 1937** — Florence R. became the first female AA member, in New York.

**September 19, 1975** — Jack Alexander, author of the famous *Saturday Evening Post* article, died.

**September 30, 1939** — Morris Markey published a story on “AA, Alcoholics and God” in *Liberty Magazine*.

**Other significant events in September for which we have no specific date:**

**No specific Sept. date, 1948** — The first issue of *The Grapevine* was published in pocketbook size.

**No specific Sept. date, 1946** — The first AA group in Mexico City was formed.

## Ogi & The Old-Timers

### When Sobriety Knocks, Answer The Door



Last year I received a letter from a dear friend who, unbeknownst to me, had started going to AA meetings. Since 2004, we had trodden much of the same territory journalistically — she had worked for me at a weekly newspaper I edited and we both had freelanced for another glossy monthly paper—but during that span I had never picked up even the faintest hint that she was struggling with

her level of alcohol consumption.

Actually, the letter was not specifically to me but was sent out to a small handful of her trusted confidantes. It was an internal dialogue she was having with herself, written from the perspective of someone applying for a job, that someone being Sobriety. The “Dear Madam” letter was a metaphor for the battle we all have with ourselves when it starts to become obvious that we’ve relinquished control of our lives to the bottle. My friend, let’s call her Mary, dated her letter at that moment when we’re “standing at the crossroads,” when we know we need to quit drinking (or drugging) but decide to put it off until another day, that moment when intellect and denial are locked in a struggle for our being, and denial is about to win. Again.

Here are a few snippets: “My name is Sobriety and I am applying to work for you. ... I want the position of being your full-time business consultant, insurance agent, personal assistant and bodyguard for life. ... I’m afraid that if you don’t take action immediately and hire me now, I see a bad future for you, because you have been becoming more and more vulnerable to an eventual takeover by Alcohol Abuse.

... Just let me and my team work our magic and I promise that you not only won’t be disappointed, you will be protecting yourself indefinitely from a potentially disastrous fate.”

Now that she has set up the visit, Mary then swoops in for the kill. “So, we both know that for awhile there, Moderation came and went as she pleased, and that eventually she finally gave up and quit ... and it’s time to admit that she’s just not here anymore, and she’s not coming back. ... Alcohol Abuse here isn’t going to be happy about the news that you’ve hired me. He won’t be willing to go away that easily and is undoubt-

edly going to send some of his sleazy salespeople to do his dirty work: they are Temptation, Insecurity, Anxiety, Fatigue, Loneliness and Boredom. ... As long as you let my team know and don’t try to handle it yourself, it’ll be there. After awhile the salesmen will eventually realize they’re not getting in and will come knocking less and less frequently.”

Then she seals the deal: “But I’m telling you, if you allow just one day to go by without me, those salesmen could potentially come in and wreck the place, and you could be at risk of losing everything I’ve helped you achieve. ... As for my references, well, that’s easy. Just look at anyone you know who’s had me on board for the past several years. You can see my work and influence on their success, growth, and sense of control and purpose in their lives. ... I will look forward to receiving the keys to the workplace at approximately now.”



As you can readily see, Mary is not only a gifted writer, but one who has a firm handle on what it takes to get and stay sober. But what may not be so apparent is the fact that she wrote this piece when she was about a month sober. Thirty days!

*Second, it dispels what I consider another myth, that one must lose everything in life before becoming teachable. Granted, it helps, but Mary is living proof that one’s bottom is internal rather than external. She still had her job, her family, her status in the community, her looks, and all the other trappings of success. She wore the mask of denial well, but inside she was dying a solitary death, one day at a time.*

I share this with you for two reasons: one, because it reinforces my long-held belief that one need not be sober for decades in order to grasp the steps and to spread the message. When I hear an oldtimer condescendingly state to the newcomer, “You’ve got to get it before you can give it away,” an oblique way of demonstrating superiority, I feel like referring them to Mary and the many others like her.

My view is that the benchmark is “having had a spiritual awakening.” Once you’ve had it — whether it happened after two weeks, two years or two decades — you’re qualified to start giving it away.

Second, it dispels what I consider another myth, that one must lose everything in life before becoming teachable. Granted, it helps, but Mary is living proof that one’s bottom is internal rather than external. She still had her job, her family, her status in the community, her looks, and all the other trappings of success. She wore the mask of denial well, but inside she was dying a solitary death, one day at a time.

Yet today, well into her second year of recovery, she’s a beacon of hope, spirituality and humility to all around her. All because she read the letter to herself and heeded its advice.

*Ogi’s not exactly an old-timer, but he does hang around a lot of them.*

## Hall Happenings

### North Carolina EAPA Training Hosted by Fellowship Hall

Fellowship Hall was pleased to host a NC Employee Assistance Professionals Association (NC EAPA) Regional Training and Board Meeting on May 20 and 21.

The NC EAPA Board met on Thursday afternoon and an all-day training was conducted on Friday for 18 EAPA members. Fellowship Hall's Assistant Clinical Director, Mike Yow, LCAS, made the afternoon presentation on "Assessing and Effectively Treating Chemical Dependency".

Employee Assistance Professionals are trained counselors, skilled at assessing personal problems or issues that may be

affecting an employee's workplace performance. With substance abuse in the workplace being the profound problem that it is, much of their time is spent working with employees whose chemical use is causing problems on the job. Those that are assessed as being addicted are referred for treatment.

Fellowship Hall is proud to have long been a preferred provider of many EAP's for alcohol and drug addiction treatment. We salute the work they do to promote a safe workplace environment for all, and especially for helping guide so many toward a path of recovery.

### Hall Provides Training for Addictions Professionals

While Fellowship Hall's primary focus is and always will be treating substance abuse, its mission has recently expanded somewhat. It has become a statewide training center for substance abuse professionals.

The facility has begun hosting a series of presentations by some of the most renowned experts in the field. While they are geared toward professionals, interested laymen are also welcome to attend.

The sessions are coordinated and facilitated by Fellowship Hall clinical director Jim Fenley.

"They're on current and relevant topics and are presented by some of the top professionals in that particular area," he noted. "They provide vital training to the treatment staff and training opportunities from professionals to the general public as well."

This year Fenley has lined up eight sessions, each lasting four hours, generally in the afternoon from 1-4 p.m. Some of the topics to be addressed are "The Genetics of Alcoholism," "Women, Domestic Violence and Addiction," "Hepatitis C," "Families Facing Substance Abuse" and "Gender-Specific Substance Abuse Treatments."

The full schedule of training sessions is available on the Fellowship Hall website. They are also included on the North Carolina Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board's website, [www.ncsappb.org](http://www.ncsappb.org), which lists all similar presentations statewide.

The next training is slated for Sept. 10 and is titled "Dual Relationships and Ethics." It will be conducted by Sharon DeEsch, MA, LCAS, who manages the CD-Intensive Outpatient Program for the Moses Cone Health System, Behavioral Health.

Each professional attendee earns four substance abuse specific contact hours per training with the state licensure board, the NCSAPPB. Each training costs \$30.00, payable upon arrival.

For additional information or to register, please contact Kelly Bowman at 800-659-3381 or [kellyb@fellowshiphall.com](mailto:kellyb@fellowshiphall.com).



### Wendy Huffman *Continued from page 5*

I finally began to realize that all the values he had, all the respect he has for others, I taught him that. I can't discredit myself for instilling those values in him." Wendy's hobbies include yoga, golf, swimming, kayaking and "anything outdoors."

"I shut myself away from everything for so long," she said. "Now I can enjoy life in my job, my role as a mom, my place in NA as both a sponsor and sponsee, and my leisure time. The miracle happened and it seems to keep on happening."

#### A Little Bit of 10th Step Work

*The Gateway* regrets that in the Spring 2010 publication we spelled Mr. Bryant Bivins' name incorrectly.

# Fellowship Hall Annual Conference

**August 6, 7 & 8, 2010**

**Marriott-Downtown Greensboro  
336.379.8000 or 336.387.8007**

For more information, call 800.659.3381 or register online at [www.fellowshiphall.com](http://www.fellowshiphall.com) or simply fill out the form below and mail it with your check to:

**Fellowship Hall Conference  
P. O. Box 13890  
Greensboro, NC 27415**

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration cost for all sessions is \$15 per person or \$10 per person per day. Enclosed is my check or money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_. Make checks payable to Fellowship Hall.

Note: Registration at the Conference for all sessions will be \$20 per person or \$10 per person per day.

Name(s) to be printed on badge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending Hall picnic (\$5 per person payable at the picnic) \_\_\_\_\_



*Email suggestions, submissions for The Gateway, and requests to be placed on our mailing list to [comyp@fellowshiphall.com](mailto:comyp@fellowshiphall.com)*



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