



The Gateway

2009 Conference Will Be Hard To Top

Fellowship Hall has a proud tradition of bringing in the finest, most eloquent AA, NA and Alanon speakers from around the country for its annual conference. Since the turn of the century alone, the always-anticipated event has featured such illustrious trusted servants as Dr. Bob's son, Smitty (who has since passed away), the inimitable Clancy I., from Van Nuys, California, and Father Ed M., from Davenport, Iowa. But this year's 59th edition may have actually outdone itself.

The August 7-9 event featured five speakers who, one after the other, spread the message of hope and triumph over adversity that was, at the same time, touching, inspiring, heart-rending and hilarious.

Father Samuel L. got the weekend off to a rousing start, letting the crowd of over 600 registrants know that even men of the cloth are not exempt from the disease of addiction. John H., of Sanford, Florida, opened Saturday morning with a demonstration that male spouses of alcoholics can get just as sick as their female Alanon counterparts. Bo T., of West Blocton, Alabama, followed with a powerful message of redemption from a seemingly fatal malady.

Sunday morning, Mary T., of Santa Fe, New Mexico, sent the crowd home with a straight-from-the-heart talk about how alcoholism ruined her life and Alcoholics Anonymous gave it back. But before that, Saturday evening's speaker, Angie P., from Cincinnati, regaled the audience with a message that still had them buzzing the next morning. Her description of going from the highs of being a Las Vegas

lounge singer sharing the stage with some of the best-known artists in show business, to the lows of being a homeless junkie rejected by even the dregs of society, left

literally no one in the room unmoved, with many moved to tears. She even demonstrated that she still has her vocal chops by closing her talk with her rendition of "Amazing Grace." It's no wonder that she was asked to speak at the 2005 International AA Convention in Toronto.

"I think that's the most inspiring and entertaining talk I've ever heard," remarked Voice of the Conference Kim A. afterward. "I heard her tape, but you really don't get the full effect until you've seen her in person."

Added Judson B., who will be the Voice in 2011, "I think we hit a home run with that one."

For the second straight year, John T. of Greensboro facilitated the Gratitude Sharing Ceremony following the picnic at the Hall. He will likely have to turn that duty over to someone else next year, as he will assume the role of Voice of the Conference for 2010.

Fellowship Hall President Rodney Battles announced that Friday morning, the facility had welcomed its 21,589th guest, and that the conference would return to the Downtown Greensboro Marriott next August 6, 7 and 8, marking its sixth straight year in the Southern Crescent Ballroom at the finely appointed hotel.



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New Position Of Therapy Assistant Created

When a new position of Therapy Assistant was created in January 2008, the job description noted several qualifications. Applicants should possess a working knowledge of both AA and NA, be familiar with the treatment process, and have an optimistic attitude toward recovery. But there is one more attribute that is not so tangible, falling under the “know it when you see it” category. Fellowship Hall President Rodney Battles calls it “recovery charisma.”



Annie Boswell

“There are people out there who just have that quality of ‘recovery charisma,’” he said. “You see them in meetings, and I can name several out here, who seem to draw people to them. You see it in their faces and the way they interact with people. Newcomers see it in them and may not know exactly what it is but they say, ‘Whatever they’ve got, I want a piece of it.’”

The idea for the new position came shortly after the opening of the new wing in September 2008 that added 12 beds to Fellowship Hall’s capacity. Battles realized that staffing numbers would also have to rise to maintain the preferred staff-to-guest ratio. His idea was to create a new position which would report directly to Clinical Director Jim Fenley and work out of the nurses’ station.

“Rodney approached me and I got with the staff and we all agreed wholeheartedly that we could use some help,” said Fenley. “I put out the word in the community and got flooded with applicants. By January, we had the position filled, and it’s really worked out great.” Added Battles, “It’s sort of an extension of both the nursing and therapy departments. We saw that the connection between therapy and nurses and guests could be improved, and the board agreed that this is the way to do it.”

Actually, the position was filled by six people, three full-time and three part-time, given that it is a round-the-clock post. A fourth part-timer may be added soon. “It’s three shifts a day, 24/7,” said Fenley, “so that someone is always on duty. Each shift has a fulltime staffer and a part-time backup.”

The six full-time and part-time therapy assistants are Bernard McEachern, Raymond Ricks, Annie Boswell, Jennie LaValley, William Lickel, and Jennifer Towe. The job entails a variety of duties, all geared toward maintaining consistency and continuity and improving the Hall’s efficiency in treating its guests. It includes monitoring guest behavior and adherence to rules; making sure they are where they need to be for lectures, classes, etc.; providing transportation to medical appointments, halfway house visits, etc.; accompanying guests to AA and NA meetings; doing room checks to monitor neatness and cleanliness; assisting activities director Kelly Bowman; and performing walkthroughs around the clock.

“These are the staffers who make the routine, day-to-day contact with the guests,” explained Battles. “They make sure they know where they’re supposed to go and to be on time, know what the rules are, know they’re supposed to keep their rooms clean. Plus, if someone’s having a rough day, they’re able to sit down with them and give them some support — not provide counseling, but just let them know they’ve been there and that it’ll get better. It makes the guests feel like they’re part of the process right off the bat.”



William Lickel

Noted Fenley, “Especially with the larger facility, we needed a staff presence in a lot of areas, and having the therapy assistants around has really made a difference in a lot of ways, both in guest accountability and overall efficiency.”

The position has the ancillary benefit of being a sort of on-the-job proving ground for potential counselors, giving them an opportunity to discover whether or not a career in substance abuse counseling may be in their future.

“Some are in school studying counseling now,” said Fenley, “although that’s certainly not a prerequisite for the job. But if we find one is good counselor material, it’s a way for us to bring them up through the system and train them to be a counselor someday. It’s good because they’d be a known entity. We train them during their workday so they’d get added training and bring them up through the ranks.”

Echoed Battles, “I’ll be very surprised if we don’t have some future counselors in our program right now.” Now embarking on his second decade at the helm of the Hall, Battles sees the role of therapy assistant as a natural evolution of the treatment process.

“We’ve always let the program define the need,” he said. “The amount of assistance they’ve provided to the overall treatment team has been invaluable. That extra level of support has been beneficial to both the guests and staff.”

As the Big Book says, “This is how it works.”

(Not pictured : Raymond Ricks, Bernard McEachern)



Jennie LaValley and Jennifer Towe

Addressing World Convention Only The Latest Gift for Amy Kasdorf



Since she'd only been at Fellowship Hall for a little less than a year, Amy Kasdorf was a bit hesitant to ask for two weeks off. But when she told her supervisor the reason for her request, the response was an unqualified, "Sure, take as long as you need." After all, the time away from the Hall would be work-related and might even benefit her in her job as a primary counselor. You see, Amy had been asked to address the 33rd World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous, held in August, 2009, in Barcelona, Spain.

"There were over 6,000 of us there, from literally all over the world," she recalled. "Needless to say, it was a humbling experience to see all those faces, and be among all those people who'd come together for the common purpose of saving lives. What an honor, what a gift to be a small piece of this beautiful worldwide fellowship."

Amy's address was titled "The Way Forward," and she obviously sees a bright future for the fellowship, citing several examples of NA's growth and stability.

"Our basic text has now been translated into 39 languages," she noted. "NA is growing by leaps and bounds all over Europe and the Middle East. During the 'clean-time count-downs' there was a great percentage of people with 20 and 30 years, even into the 40s, so that and the fact that you can get 6,000 recovering addicts from all over the world to show up tells you that NA has reached maturity."

With 22 years in recovery, Amy's story is typical in some ways but almost unique in others.

"I crashed and burned right on schedule," she said. "My life was crumbling, every area of life coming apart. I was in commercial real estate and was one of those who held it together and was a functioning addict for many years. But I began to cross lines, and the shame began to surface. Finally, I looked in the mirror one morning and didn't recognize the person looking back. I looked hollow and I felt hollow."

Not long afterward, Amy overdosed and was rushed to the hospital. It was there where her story deviates from most.

"I had a friend whose husband was in another fellowship, and she'd confronted me before," she disclosed. "I called her from the hospital and went to my first meeting that night. Driving home, the tears started running down my cheeks. I realized I'd seen people laughing and smiling and that I had not done that in a long time. That was enough to get me to a meeting the next day and that was it. I've been going ever since."

Amy realizes she is one of the lucky few who walks in a meeting without benefit of treatment and never walks out of the revolving door again.

"Oh yes, people like me are in the minority," she said, "but I'm the proof it can be done. I'd had a long period of abstinence before, but never a program, never a support system. But when I got in NA, things started to make sense and I was able to embrace the steps. I realized very quickly that this was where I belonged and I just dove in headfirst. And I've never lost that spark. I work to keep it lit."

A couple of years into sobriety, Amy's "recovery charisma" was already showing, and it was suggested to her that she'd make a good counselor.

"I wasn't at all sure that was a good idea," she smiled, "but I did start volunteering as a tech at a treatment facility in Asheville. After about a year, I realized that I did want to do it, so I went back to school and got my certification. I got a job as a primary counselor soon thereafter and have been doing it ever since."

Amy, a Pennsylvania native, clearly has no regrets and has endured the vicissitudes of life with her spirit and sense of gratitude intact.

"There have been great joys and great sorrows," she admitted. "I was in a relationship with a man for 14 years who died in an accident, and the only way I can describe it is that the pain I felt and the love I felt was equally overwhelming. The program taught me that I could get through anything clean. I could walk through it with a sense of grace and dignity and let go with love. That's quite a gift."

Another of those gifts, she feels, was her move to Fellowship Hall last September. "As far as jobs go," she said, "I feel like I have a place where I fit. I got here and felt like I was finally home. This is a wonderful staff that's really passionate, that embraces and endorses the steps. That's how we stay clean and sober." Indeed.

Employee Anniversaries First and Second Quarter 2009

Sandra Barclay	14 years	Shelley Kirkman	1 year	Kelly Scaggs	1 year
Joy Bechtold	24 years	Sharon Kniskern	3 years	Richard Shaver	1 year
Annie Boswell	1 year	William Lickel	1 year	David Spillman	1 year
Kelly Bowman	8 years	Bernard McEachern	3 years	Wayne Smith	9 years
Ruth Brown	8 years	Megail Meadows	2 years	Nancy Verdi	5 years
Randy Carter	7 years	Lisa Morgan	6 years	Jimmy Watkins	1 year
Linda Dinwiddie	4 years	Morty Morgenstern	1 year	Jacqueline Woodell	1 year
Jim Fenley	22 years	Rosemarie Palazzolo	2 years	Brenda Woodring	4 years
Scott Forrester	4 years	Robert Poteat	11 years	Billy Wyrick	6 years
Lauren Haarlow	10 years	Raymond Ricks	5 years	Mike Yow	16 years
Billy Harrah	3 years	Eric Roberts	4 years		
Wendy Huffman	1 year	Stephen Rohrbeck	2 years		

Lea Moniz Found Her Calling - And Knows It

People's reaction to their first glimpse of Fellowship Hall likely varies according to their reason for being there. For the incoming guest, it is probably somewhere between fear and dread; for the family member, relief tempered by trepidation; and for the prospective employee, a sense of anticipation, excitement and gratitude.

Lea Moniz falls into the last category, but her initial response was one of being overwhelmed almost to the point of tears.

"When I first saw it, I thought I was going to cry, I really did," she said. "I knew at that moment that this was where I was supposed to be at that time in my life." That time in her life was a rather unsettling one for Lea. A registered nurse, she had worked at the Betty Ford Center — yes, that Betty Ford Center — for the past 10 years, but had moved back to her native Winston-Salem to be near her mother, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

"I loved my life in California, loved working at Betty Ford," she said, "but I knew that the only right thing to do was move back here and be with my mom. I have two brothers, but at a time like that, mothers and daughters need to be together."

Lea was well aware of Fellowship Hall, and compares it quite favorably with Betty Ford, and had made some inquiries to the Hall about some possible part-time work, but never heard back and "figured it was not meant to be." She added, "But then I got a call from the nursing director Linda Dinwiddie, and she said they wanted somebody fulltime, so I came out, met her and President Rodney Battles, and they hired me."

One must suspect, with Lea's demeanor, background, and the fact that she'd been in recovery herself for over 12 years (now 14) that Dinwiddie and Battles did not have to labor over that decision very long.

She had only been at the Hall for around a month when her mom took a turn for the worse and passed away shortly

thereafter. "Everybody here absolutely embraced me and got me through that time," she recalled. "Even though I hadn't been here that long, they treated me like one of their own, and I'll never forget that."

Lea's career and her disease are inextricably bound in ways that surely must be kismet.



"I ended up in the hospital as a result of my untreated and undiagnosed alcoholism," she explained, "and the way the nurses treated me was really inspirational. I said that someday, if I can get my life together, that's what I'd like to do."

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The Winston-Salem Reynolds High School grad got her nursing degree from Forsyth Tech and quickly became an R.N. at Baptist Hospital. But gradually as her alcoholism progressed, she wound up at Betty Ford — as a patient, not a nurse.

"That's when I realized I wanted to go into substance abuse," she noted. "They have a two-year sobriety rule (at Betty Ford), and I was literally counting down the days. I applied the moment I had two years."

Despite her mother's death and the end of a marriage, Lea has weathered the storms of life with her sense of gratitude intact.

"I realize how blessed I am every single day," she said. "I get to combine the two things that are most important to me — recovery and nursing — in my everyday life. Not everybody can say that. I honestly love working with these people who're trying to turn their life around. I know I'm where I'm supposed to be, doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

As for the future, the former competitive triathlete affirmed that she's leaving that in God's hands.

"I've learned that every time I have a plan, God has a better one," she smiled. "So I'll just get out of the way and wait for a plan to be revealed."

This Date in AA History

December 5

1985 - Dave B, founder of the Montreal Group, died weeks before AA's 50th anniversary. Now his story is in the 4th Edition of the Big Book.

December 6

1979 - The death of Henrietta Sieberling was reported in The Akron Beacon.

December 7

1949 - Sister Ignatia accepted the Poverello Medal of St. Francis on AA's behalf.

December 12

1934 - Bill had what he called a "spiritual experience" at Towns Hospital.
1937 - Bill met with the Rockefeller Foundation and tried to get seed money.

December 20

1945 - Rowland Hazard, who had carried the Oxford Group message to Ebby, died.

December 27

1893 - Rev. Samuel Shoemaker was born.

No specific date in December

1938 - Using Oxford Group principles, Bill closed the loopholes and changed his original six steps to 12.

January 2

1889 - Bridget Della Mary Gavin, who would become Sister Ignatia, was born in Ireland.

January 3

1941 - Jack Alexander told Bill Wilson the Oxford Group would be in his Saturday Evening Post article on A.A.

January 7

1984 - "Pass it On" was first published on this date.

January 8

1938 - New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.

January 13

2003 - Dr. Earle Marsh, author of "Physician Heal Thyself," died. He was sober for 49 years.

The "Judge's Jug" Raises \$25,000!

The Eighth Annual E. Raymond Alexander, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament was held on Friday, August 7, 2009, at Crooked Tree Golf Course. The "Judge's Jug" traditionally serves as the kick-off event for the Fellowship Hall Annual Conference. Proceeds from the tournament benefit the Treatment Completion Scholarship Fund. This year's event raised over \$25,000 for the fund. We offer our appreciation to our many sponsors and supporters. Signage listing our donors was on display during the conference at the Downtown Marriott Greensboro.

Special thanks go to our two lead sponsors, David Robinson, Senior Vice-President and Investment Officer at Wells Fargo Advisors, and Alan Overbey, Employee Specialist at Strategic Employee Benefit Services

Under beautiful and sunny skies, a full field of golfers enjoyed a day of golf, good food, fun and fellowship. Participants received a round of golf and a generous gift bag. The tournament was followed by a picnic on the grounds of Fellowship Hall. Trophies were awarded to the top three teams and numerous door prizes were given away.

The 2009 "Judge's Jug" champions are:

Tom Monaghan
Stan Kinney
Jerry Davis
Brett Kinney

As is our tradition, the winning team photograph is on display at Fellowship Hall alongside the E. Raymond Alexander, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament crystal trophy until a new championship team is crowned in 2010.

We are grateful to the tournament committee and others who helped make this year's tournament such a success. We are already looking forward to next year's outing on August 6, 2010. Plan to join us!



Winning Foursome; (left to right) Tom Monaghan, Stan Kinney, Jerry Davis, Brett Kinney



Carol Alexander expressing gratitude

January 15

1948 - Polk Health Center Alcoholic Clinic for Negroes started operations with 14 willing subjects. The Washington Black Group of A.A. cooperated with the clinic.

January 19

1943 - A Canadian newspaper reported that eight men met at Little Denmark, a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada's first A.A. group.

January 24

1971 - Bill Wilson died in Miami, Florida, only weeks after sending a postcard to Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, saying he wanted to live long enough to see Hughes become President.

January 25

1915 - Dr. Bob Smith married Anne Ripley.

February 9

2002 - Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's daughter, died.

February 10

1922 - Harold E. Hughes was born on a farm near Ida Grove, Iowa. After his recovery from alcoholism, he became Governor of Iowa, a United States Senator,

and the leading dark horse for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972. He authored the legislation which created the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

February 12

1945 - World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 14

1971 - AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.
 2000 - William Y., aka "California Bill," died in Winston-Salem, NC.

February 19

1967 - Father "John Doe" (Ralph Pfau), the first Catholic priest in AA, died.

February 24

2002 - Hal Marley, "Dr. Attitude of Gratitude," died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

No specific date in February

1939 - Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.
 1951 - Fortune Magazine article about AA was published in pamphlet form.

Ogi & The Old-Timers

Angels Among Us



One of Greensboro's most trusted and beloved servants, the late and great Clarence P., used to end his AA talk with the admonition, "Look around the room; there may be an angel sitting beside you."

While I've never doubted the veracity of Clarence's claim, I would add that some-

times angels can be found outside the rooms, as well. And they'll generally appear at the precise moment you need them most.

Skeptical? Read on.

When I got sober I was editing a small entertainment and sports publication in Greensboro. On this day, I had driven to Durham to interview Barry Bergman, the owner of the Record Bar, a very successful music store chain with a couple of hundred branches scattered throughout the Southeast. Barry had just sold the chain to a company from Belgium for what he described as a "wheelbarrow full of money," which in American dollars came to over \$50 million.

As I entered his building at the appointed hour, his secretary led me down a long hallway to his office, which was about as spacious as a small house, three walls made of mahogany and the fourth a bank of speakers that looked like they could've been used for a Who concert. He rose from behind his Texas-sized desk to shake my hand, smiled, introduced himself and proceeded to grant me as gracious and far-ranging an interview as a scribe could ever ask for. He'd blocked me out an hour, but we chatted for close to two, interrupted only by two phone calls — from Lyle Lovett and another entertainer — as the three were making travel arrangements for a party at Jimmy Buffett's Key West estate. (I'm not making this up.)

At the stroke of 5 p.m., with no intercom conversation whatsoever, Barry's secretary brought him a Pepsi with a swizzle stick in it, as if this were standard operating procedure. We continued to chat as he nonchalantly sipped his drink, and as I finally left I felt a sense of euphoria over having rubbed elbows with this guy who hangs out with,

among others, two of my all-time musical heroes.

But before I could get to the service station around the corner, my alcoholic thinking had kicked in, and that elation had turned to despair. It went something like: Here's this guy, about my age, drops out of Duke after three years, starts a little music store with his dad, becomes phenomenally wealthy, jet-sets around the globe with the glitterati, and is getting ready to launch a record label and recording studio. And, worst of all, he can drink with impunity!

And here I am, went to college seven years (hey, it was East Carolina), drank my way out of the music business, working for a crumby little Mickey Mouse rag, driving a beat-up 15-year-old car, living in a ramshackle frame house in the woods. And, damnit, I can't even drink! Life sucks and then you die.

By the time I pulled in the station to get gas, I'd already made the conscious decision to get a six-pack, knock it back on the way home, and either apologize to my wife and pick up a start over chip or, the more likely scenario, hit the bars and crawl home whenever.

I went inside to pay and, wouldn't you know it, they didn't sell beer. I stood in front of the vending machines trying to decide whether to get a soda or pull across the street to the convenience store,

which clearly sold beer. The convenience store won.

Pumping my gas and gazing across the street, I was interrupted by a voice from the other side of the pump. It was what we call in the South, a good ol' boy, probably in his 60s, wearing bib overalls and a ball cap, driving a rusty old pickup truck. The old boy, his face a bit weather-beaten but with a crinkled-up smile, looked me dead in the eye and asked, "You by any chance know a fellow with the name of Bill Wilson?"

As I picked my jaw up off of the pavement, I replied incredulously, "Why yes, as a matter of fact I do! But how in the world could you have possibly known that?"

He answered, "You had your hands in your pocket, rattling your change when you were in there. I could hear your chip making a noise, and I figured most folks don't walk around with a poker chip in their pocket."

Continued on pg. 7



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Hall Happenings

HALLoween Staff Costume Party - "Boo!" err... I mean, "Moo!"



"A Costume Line" of Fellowship Hall staff.



Best costume went to Connye Post's "Divine Bovine"!

Medical Director

Alyson Kuroski-Mazzei, D.O. became the Hall's Medical Director on September 1. Alyson, a graduate of Duke University's Psychiatric Residency Program, is very familiar with Fellowship Hall. As part of her training at Duke, Dr. Kuroski-Mazzei completed a month-long Addiction Medicine rotation at the Hall in 2002. Alyson has been a member of Fellowship Hall's Professional Staff since 2004, providing medical coverage on an as-needed basis. Please look for a feature story on "Doctor Alyson" in the next Gateway.

Follow the Signs

A journey reaches its destination. After a long-term effort with the State of North Carolina's Department of Transportation, Fellowship Hall now has directional signage on U.S Highway 29 exit at Hicone Road; additional signage is posted on Hicone Road.



Fellowship Hall leads the way.

Angels Among Us *Continued from pg. 6*

He went on to tell me he'd been in and out many times over the years, but had four years this time and felt like this was going to be the keeper. I told him I only had a little over six months, but didn't confess that moments before, that streak was about to come to an end. Clutching my blue chip in one hand and shaking his hand with the other, I wished him luck and hit the highway.

The trip home felt like the blink of an eye. Now my car ran and was paid for; my home was warm and cozy, the rent was paid, and I had a wife who adored me waiting with a hot meal; I was fulfilling my dream of being able to make a

living writing about my twin passions, music and sports. And, best of all, I hadn't had a drink in over six months. Life is beautiful.

Of course, none of the circumstances had changed from a half hour ago when I was borderline suicidal — only my perception of them.

Well, there was that angel in a pickup truck.


(Ogi's not sure if he's an old-timer or not, but he does hang around a lot of them.)

Fellowship Hall 2010 Annual Fund

Fall marks the beginning of Fellowship Hall's second Annual Fund Campaign. A donation to the Annual Fund may be the single most important gift that our Board, staff, former guests and friends can make. Our collective participation insures that the mission of Fellowship Hall to help addicts and alcoholics begin recovery in a safe, cost-effective program, is realized. The Board of Directors of Fellowship Hall has the flexibility to direct these funds to whichever areas of the program are most beneficial to the guests. These programs include:

- Inpatient Residential Program
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Group Therapy
- Family Program
- The Gateway House
- Staff Training
- Scholarship Endowment
- The Meditation Trail

Gordon Rayle, long-time counselor, and his wife Jo, a former family counselor, will be serving as Honorary Chairmen of the 2010 Annual Fund. Gordon and Jo understand the importance of this effort to help maintain the high level of treatment for which Fellowship Hall is known. We are counting on our friends and supporters to send a strong message of support to the community and to assist our guests, past, present and future, who are so deserving of our support. Every gift, no matter the amount, is an opportunity for everyone to share in the miracles that happen at Fellowship Hall.

		Fellowship Hall Pledge Card	
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Email suggestions, submissions for The Gateway, and requests to be placed on our mailing list to connyep@fellowshiphall.com

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Permit No. 264

The Gateway is published by Fellowship Hall, Inc.
P.O. Box 13890 • Greensboro • NC 27415

