



# The GATEWAY

*A Quarterly Newsletter from Fellowship Hall*

## 'No One Will Leave Disappointed' From 2013 Annual Conference

*By Ogi Overman*

As alumni of Fellowship Hall have come to expect, the annual conference brings in five of the most in-demand speakers in the country from the three sister programs of recovery. This 63rd renewal (it was a biannual event at first), to be held August 2-4, will be no different, but there will be a couple of added attractions that have nothing to do with the speakers and, in fact, won't even take place at the home base of the event, the Downtown Marriott.



For starters, the much-anticipated Serenity Fountain that will grace the front entrance to the Hall will have its official dedication August 3rd, the Saturday of the conference, at

1:30 p.m., followed by the picnic and gratitude sharing. Obviously, the fountain will be fully operational by then, but one final piece of the structure will be put in place that day.

"We decided to put a time capsule in it," revealed Director of Development Murphy Sullivan. "It will be embedded in there, and contain items, such as *Gateways* and other mementoes that illuminate this era. It will then be sealed, not to be opened for 50 years."

Last year the E. Raymond Alexander Memorial Golf Tournament, which ends the Fellowship Hall Financial

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## Dreams Now Taking Flight for This Year's Voice

*By Ogi Overman*

There is a rather informal method that the Fellowship Hall Council uses to select its speakers for the annual conference. Typically, the Voice of the Conference gathers the speaker committee together, and they begin passing around CDs, gradually winnowing down the list before reaching a consensus. But this year's Voice, Chip Wells, had a bit of an advantage. Of the five chosen, he has heard three of them speak at conferences and gotten to know them personally.

"CDs are great, and we couldn't do this without them," he said, "but when you hear somebody live and see the impact they have on a room, that takes the guesswork completely out of it."

It so happens that Chip is able to go to conferences up and down the East Coast and avails himself of the opportunity quite frequently. And the reason? He is a licensed pilot and owns his own airplane, a Piper Cherokee six-seater.

"I've been flying since 2001," he disclosed, "and since I got



*Voice for the 2013 Conference  
Chip Wells*

sober (January 2, 2007) I realized I could just hop in an airplane and go to retreats and conventions all over the place. It's been a great source of joy for me and a big part of my recovery, but when I got tapped to be the Voice, it took on a whole new meaning. Then I had a reason other than just to go — not that there's anything wrong with that."

The fact that Chip is a pilot is but one tipoff that he would be considered a high-functioning alcoholic. He was an Eagle Scout, college grad (UNC Greensboro, B.S. in Business) held the same job in the commercial tire business for 23 years, and has been married for 27 years.

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## Just In Time, Missy Found Her Purpose

By Ogi Overman

The rooms of 12-step programs are rife with success stories, incredible tales of redemption and testimonials of people who have turned their life around. That is, after all, the core mission — the primary purpose, if you will — of recovery. And if the evidence of lives transformed is to be found in the rooms, then the smile on Missy Reed's face is the proof in the pudding.

By her own admission, Missy was not a very happy person when she first gave recovery a try. And then another try, and yet another. She stopped counting the start-over chips when they reached double digits.

"I was just very sad," she revealed. "I didn't talk to anybody. I hated myself. Women would come up to me after meetings and tell me they were praying for me — it must've really been obvious. I just couldn't stay clean and sober."

But she did follow the timeworn admonition to "keep coming back," and eventually the seeds that had been planted started taking root. But not before she became addicted to crack — after having gone through treatment and back and forth through the revolving door of the rooms. Then one night while high on crack, she finally hit bottom.

"I was in a crack hotel with prostitutes and crack addicts," she explained, "and the cops were called on me. They searched my car and saw my car seat and asked if I had a child. That's when I had my moment of clarity."

Missy would not fit your typical profile (if there is such a thing) of a crack addict. Her father is a Harvard grad and successful entrepreneur; she comes from a well-to-do home; there was never any abuse or neglect in her household, and no alcoholism in her immediate family. Her younger brother is a medical doctor ("He got accepted to med school and I got accepted to rehab," she quipped.) and she herself has two bachelor's degrees, in classical studies and archaeology, from UNC Greensboro.

"Nope, I can't blame any of this on my family or upbringing," she said. "I came from a good home, had a pool out back, everything. I started drinking when I was 13, took advantage of my parents and treated them poorly, but had no consequences. I partied all through high school and joined a

sorority in college and drank four or five nights a week. But I thought everyone partied as much as I did."

She graduated in 2005, had her daughter, Ava, in 2006, and went into severe post-partum depression, which included a suicide attempt.

"I'm not supposed to be alive," she said. "Every day I was using concoctions that could've killed me. But I didn't die, I still functioned, but I never had a purpose. The only reason I'm here is because I reached out for help and found a spiritual program of recovery. This gave me a purpose."



Missy Reed

And that purpose brings us to the present and explains why Missy is where she is today, a therapy assistant at Fellowship Hall.

"My purpose is to help others who are struggling," she said, that lovely smile creasing her face. "There is no doubt; this is what I'm supposed to be doing. This is why God intervened and spared me."

Missy joined the Hall staff in July 2011. When Extended Treatment, a 90-day program for men and women, was launched four months later, she became one of the pioneer therapy assistants there. Recently, Missy has moved back to the main building, working with residential guests.

Contrasting the two, she noted, "Residential Inpatient Treatment is fast-paced, you're giving a lot of guidance. You get to know a lot of people and see them come in deathly ill and

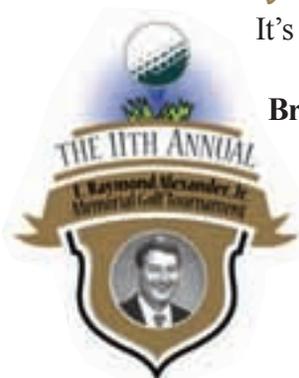
turn it around. But in Extended Treatment you're hanging out with people already in recovery. You feel more like a temporary sponsor. You really get close to them and they get close to you. Someone said to me once, 'Just knowing that you were there helped.'"

Still, at age 30, Missy knows that this is not the last stop in her career. She is currently studying for the GRE and plans to go back to college in the fall to get her master's in social work.

*"There is no doubt; this is what I'm supposed to be doing. This is why God intervened and spared me."*

"I plan to continue working at the Hall while in school," Missy said. "I love it here, love what I'm doing, and plan on doing it in some capacity from now on. I know my purpose in life, and it is to help addicts and alcoholics."

# The 12th Annual E. Raymond Alexander, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament Friday, August 2, 2013



It's not too late to sponsor or register for our golf tournament held at **Bryan Park**. 100% of the proceeds go to help our guests in need!

Please see our website at:  
**fellowshiphall.com**  
or call Murphy Sullivan,  
**336.621.3381** by July 29  
for more information.

Name of Sponsor/Player:

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Contact Person:

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Address/Phone/Email:

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### Type of sponsorship:

- Platinum - \$5000
- Gold - \$2500
- Hole in One - \$1000
- Silver - \$750
- Bronze - \$350
- Friends of Ray - \$100
- Cost per player - \$90

**Amount enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to:

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

**Or register online at [fellowshiphall.com](http://fellowshiphall.com)  
or by calling 800.659.3381**



## 63RD FELLOWSHIP HALL CONFERENCE ON ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTION



# Fellowship Hall

**August 2, 3 & 4, 2013**

Marriott-Downtown Greensboro

Pre-register online until noon, July 29 at [fellowshiphall.com](http://fellowshiphall.com) or complete the form on the back and send it with your check to Fellowship Hall. For more information, please call Fellowship Hall at 800.659.3381

## Conference Agenda

### Friday, August 2

**8:00 p.m.** Opening Remarks -  
Southern Crescent Ballroom  
**Speaker:** Clif L. - Register, GA

### Saturday, August 3

**9:00 a.m. Speaker:** Deb H. - New Orleans, LA  
Southern Crescent Ballroom

**10:30 a.m. Speaker:** Michelle B. - Dingman's Ferry, PA  
Southern Crescent Ballroom

**12:00 p.m.** Picnic - Fellowship Hall

**1:30 p.m.** Serenity Fountain Dedication Ceremony  
The front entrance at Fellowship Hall

**2:00 p.m.** Gratitude Meeting  
The Old Big Room at Fellowship Hall

**8:00 p.m. Speaker:** Joe C. - Palm Coast, FL  
Southern Crescent Ballroom

**9:30 p.m.** Ice Cream Social -  
Southern Crescent Ballroom

### Sunday, August 4

**10:00 a.m. Speaker:** Mike A. - Nashville, TN  
Southern Crescent Ballroom

## Gratitude



Jim Fenley

*By Jim Fenley, FH Clinical Director*

Early in my recovery, I seemed to hear the word gratitude a lot, or it would be the topic at a discussion meeting and inside I would say to myself, “no, not again.” At the moment, I really didn’t take the time to analyze where my reaction was coming from. Looking back, I think I didn’t believe people when

they said how grateful they were. I thought they were riding the “pink cloud” and just hadn’t come down to earth yet. I was almost resentful at how good they felt and appeared. I think I know now what was going on with me back then. There was a longing in me to feel the way they did followed by a sadness that it may not be possible for me and an even deeper fear that I may never get there. Typical in these situations, for me and maybe for you, is that the first feeling that we experience is typically not the “real” feeling at the core of the situation. For many people, especially men, the first feeling we access is anger and irritability because there is a certain comfort level and familiarity with it and it is easier for us to go there than it

is for us to acknowledge our pain. But it is the feeling underneath, hidden a little bit, that we are having difficulty acknowledging and expressing. So, for me, when presented with another person’s gratitude, sadness and fear rose up in me. So, my first relationship with gratitude was very shaky. Gratitude was not a feeling that I wanted to embrace. What made it even worse, at the time, and while I was going through it, was that I believed I was the only one having these thoughts.

So what is gratitude? Well, gratitude can be many things to many people. It is appreciation; it’s being happy with what you have; it’s thanking someone in your life; it’s

thanking your Higher Power; it’s “counting your blessings; it’s not taking things for granted; it’s living life on life’s terms.” A favorite quote of mine, from Bill W., is “this experience may be turned to benefit.” I have this quote hanging by my computer at work. When we look at the wreckage of our past, and when we use it as a tool for change, there is no greater benefit. So, Bill was referring to, I think, that no matter how difficult the situation, or how painful it is, there will come a benefit for us and, as a result, this benefit will help others.

Another aspect that I believe is important is when I heard someone say that the more expectations you have, the less gratitude you will have. If you get what you expect, you will not be grateful for getting it. If you lower expectations, especially when dealing with circumstances beyond our control, this will make gratitude more of a reality for you.



*Can gratitude help us? Do we need an attitude of gratitude? Does the relapse process start when we stop being grateful? I believe all of this is true.*

Can gratitude help us? Do we need an attitude of gratitude? Does the relapse process start when we stop being grateful? I believe all of this is true. When my sponsor recognized that I was in a self-centered place and I had a case of the “poor me” or recovery had not delivered the promises that I felt I was entitled to, he

would say, “write a gratitude list.” So I would find a quiet place and write the list. Every time, I mean every time, a miracle would happen. A shift would occur in my outlook which I can only describe as a wave coming over me that resulted in me feeling happy. So in moments, I shifted from unhappiness, poor me, it’s all about me to feelings of happiness and gratitude. It dawned on me that this was another gift of recovery.

*“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is “thank you,” it will be enough.”*

– Meister Eckhart

## The Legacy of Addiction



Ogi Overman

By Ogi Overman

There have been two constants in my life: baseball and booze. The first remains dear to me, while, mercifully, I've been granted a daily reprieve from the second.

Like most kids growing up in the '50s, baseball was an important part of my childhood. Some of my fondest memories (and best stories) have been about hanging out at the local minor league park,

playing in little league and on the sandlots, collecting cards, and my adoration of Ted Williams and Stan Musial. Everything about the game — the time-stands-still aspect, the lore, the stats, the symmetry, the cross-generational appeal — lends itself to waxing philosophical.

But baseball also lends itself to drinking. From its genesis, breweries have been intertwined with the game. Several, then as now, own teams. Having a beer or two at the old ballyard is as accepted as peanuts and Crackerjacks, which is why it became the perfect pastime for me.

But there was a tiny problem, though. I never had a beer or two.

When minor league baseball returned to Greensboro in 1979, I was a regular from day one. Actually, make that day minus one, because when I found out they would be selling beer at batting practice the day before the season opener, yours truly was there for the first crack of the bat and pop of the top.

That remained my routine summer after summer, making as many games as possible. But, although I was far from admitting it, I was also using baseball as an excuse for getting drunker than normal. Because, everybody drinks at baseball games, right?

My preferred seat was the first row, end of aisle, behind the first base dugout, as that afforded me the most convenient access to the beer concession. During beer innings, meaning, if the home team scored a run, beer became half price, I would be first in line the nanosecond the runner crossed home plate.

But not only would I drink, often I would gamble. My crowd would set a stack of quarters on the bleachers and bet on every conceivable situation, ball or strike, hit or out, grounder or fly, fastball or curve, etc. Even worse, we were obnoxious. Leather-lunged loud and venomously vulgar, we would actually boo our own fans who couldn't come up with insults more creative than "You suck!"

## Ogi & The Old-Timers

On more than one occasion, I can remember mothers, upon seeing us saunter up to our seats, grab their children and move. And I don't mean a few rows away, I mean all the way to the third base side. Something to be proud of, eh?

Now, here's how things have changed since then. I got sober in 1989, and the next spring I was asked to be the official scorer for the team. From 1990-2003 I held that post, ironically, determining hits and errors in the same situations I'd been gambling on years prior. How comical that I used to boo the official scorer as routinely as the umps or opposing players, and now here I was on the receiving end.

For several years I also put together the club's game programs, including a special souvenir edition the year Greensboro hosted the league all-star game.

During that era, the local nine was a farm club of the New York Yankees. I was privileged to see up close such future greats as Derek Jeter, Andy Pettitte, Jorge Posada and Mariano Rivera pass through here. I have been quoted in three books about my experiences during that span, most recently in *The Captain*, a book chronicling Jeter's Hall of Fame career.

One year the club found itself with extra airline tickets and flew my wife and me to spring training in Tampa to see the Yankees play in Legends Field. While there we took day trips to Clearwater (Phillies), Winter Haven (Indians) and Ft. Myers (Red Sox).

And what has happened in the ensuing years is equally gratifying. I have covered the team continually for several publications, as well as, the neighboring Winston-Salem and Burlington clubs. Since the team moved to its

new downtown ballpark seven years ago, I have put together the game program for a local publication, as well as scoring a game every now and then.

But perhaps most satisfying of all is something that has nothing to do with my media or scoring duties. These days I have three friends, single mothers all, who block out several dates each season for me to accompany them and their kids to games. I get the honor of sitting with three different moms and seven different youngsters, laughing, eating hot dogs, posing for pictures, showing them the nuances of the game, talking to them about their hopes and dreams, enjoying life.

This, mind you, is the same guy from whom mothers and daughters used to run.

This is what sobriety has given me. The Promises do come true, and this is my Field of Dreams that proves it.

*How comical that I used to boo the official scorer as routinely as the umps or opposing players, and now here I was on the receiving end.*



## Attention State Employees!

Fellowship Hall has been approved to participate in the 2013 State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC)!

If you are a state employee and would like the opportunity to contribute to Fellowship Hall through the SECC, please see [www.ncsecc.org](http://www.ncsecc.org) or call Murphy for more information at: 336.621.3381.

Many thanks to the 2012 SECC Campaign and the employees who helped to provide answers, hope and a new life for those who suffer from the disease of addiction to alcohol or other drugs.

## Employee Anniversaries

### First and Second Quarters 2012

Sandra Barclay	18 years	Connor McLean	1 year
Pone Bautsady	2 years	Lisa Morgan	10 years
Joy Bechtold	28 years	Pamela Murray	2 years
Kelly Bowman	12 years	Kay Nance	1 year
Ruth Brown	12 years	Rosemarie Palazzolo	6 years
Pat Corry	2 years	Linda Phillips	4 years
Will Doster	1 year	Robert Poteat	15 years
Jim Fenley	26 years	Joyce Rakes	2 years
Carole Fleming	3 years	Richard Shaver	5 years
Lauren Haarlow	14 years	Wayne Smith	13 years
Jennifer Harrison	3 years	Terri Spears	2 years
Laura Haynes	1 year	Cynthia Stinson	1 year
Jennie La Valley	4 years	Rhonda Walker	1 year
Reid Martin	10 years	Billy Wyrick	10 years
Bernard McEachern	7 years	Mike Yow	20 years

### Continued from Page 1: Annual Conference

Assistance Fund, moved to the prestigious Bryan Park golf course. Not only will the tournament return there this year, but the post-round picnic will move from Fellowship Hall to the Bryan Park clubhouse, as well. The “Spirit of Ray” award, which was instituted last year to honor someone who has been involved in the tournament and the Hall, and embodies the attitude that recovery is a fun-filled pursuit, will be given out Friday evening at the conference.

No other major logistical or structural changes are planned for the 2013 event. The ice cream social will again be held immediately after the Saturday evening session, and ham and sausage biscuits will be served Saturday and Sunday mornings.

“Those have become institutions in themselves,” smiled Sullivan. “I found out we’ve been serving ham biscuits since 1979, and if we ever stopped the ice cream social, we’d have a lot of disappointed people on our hands.”

“The Hall Mall,” as it has become affectionately known, will be selling a variety of T-shirts, hats, cups and other memorabilia, and Lee’s Tapes will return, selling CDs of both the weekend’s speakers and other CDs from speakers and conferences internationally.

As for the speakers themselves, Voice of the Conference, Chip Wells, assures that no one will leave the conference disappointed. “I have heard three speakers at other conferences, and, trust me, they are as spellbinding as anyone you will ever hear,” he said. “I got to know our Friday night’s speaker, Ryan, from last year, and he is wonderful. And one of Saturday’s speakers is hilarious. Her tape was so good, I listened to it three times!”

The 2013 speakers are: Brenda B., from Tacoma, WA; Michelle B., from Dingman’s Ferry, PA; Mike A., from Nashville, TN; Clif L., from Register, GA; and Joe C., from Palm Coast, FL. Brenda B. will kick off the conference at the 8 p.m. Friday evening session. Saturday morning will feature Clif L. at 9 a.m. and Michelle B. at 10:30 a.m., followed by the picnic at the Hall. Saturday evening’s session will begin with Joe C. at 8 p.m. and the weekend will conclude Sunday morning with Mike A. at 10 a.m.

**The conference will again be held at the Greensboro Marriott Downtown, 304 N. Greene St. 336-379-8000 or 336-387-8007.**

*Continued from Page 1: The Voice of the Confernce*

But, as is generally the case with alcoholics and addicts, appearances can be deceiving.

“My father was the highest functioning alcoholic I’ve ever seen,” he recalled, “so I guess I learned from him. He had the highest security clearance you can have from the State Department, and we lived all over the world; but I never felt like I fit in anywhere. I barely got out of college — my major said business, but it was really dope smoking, goofing off, playing Frisbee, skipping class, talking to girls and, of course, drinking — and when I got out, the only business that would have me was the fast-food business. And, as for my marriage, no one is more amazed than me that we are still married. I don’t know how she put up with me.”

Actually, she almost didn’t, and that is what led him to Fellowship Hall.

“A lifelong friend who was a graduate of the ‘charm school’ did a sort of intervention on me,” Chip revealed. “He told me that my wife was sick and tired of this and wasn’t going to put up with it much longer. That threat was bad enough, so I said, ‘OK, I’ll go.’”

Although Chip has been sober continuously since that second day of 2007, the first few years were quite a bit rockier than he’d anticipated.

“I lost two jobs my first two and a half years in recovery and only worked a year in three and a half years,” he admitted, “so my dream didn’t go exactly like I’d planned. Trying to live and walk among ‘earth people’ was a lot more challenging than I thought it would be.”

Yet again as is generally the case, life eventually smoothed out, he found a gratifying job in a growing industry (as operations manager for a water purification company), and the promises began coming true.

“I always tried to respond to anything I was asked to do, and that’s probably what kept me sober,” he reflected. “While I was out of work, I had no excuse not to volunteer at the Hall, or go speak at the prisons, or do any kind of service work. I’m just so grateful for all the people who’ve been put in my path. This (being the Voice) is a great honor, but I’m sure there will be many other opportunities to serve as long as I stay on the path.”

Thank you to those  
who have supported

# *The* *Serenity* FOUNTAIN

to help current and future guests in need!



To See Your Message of Hope  
at the Annual Conference,  
**Please purchase your brick  
by Friday, July 5th!**

For more information or to order your brick online,  
please see [www.fellowshiphall.com](http://www.fellowshiphall.com) or  
call the Development Department at:  
**336.621.3381.**





# *Fellowship Hall*

## CONFERENCE ON ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTION

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Marriott-Downtown Greensboro

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**10:00 a.m.** **Speaker:** Mike A. - Nashville, TN  
Southern Crescent Ballroom



# *Fellowship Hall*

## CONFERENCE ON ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTION

**August 2, 3 & 4, 2013**

Marriott-Downtown Greensboro  
336.379.8000 or 336.387.8007

### Registration Form

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

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

Name(s), city and state to be printed on badge(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

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