

The GATEWAY

A Quarterly Newsletter from Fellowship Hall

A Few Changes In Store At This Year's Annual Conference

By Ogi Overman

Somewhere between 600 and 800 recovering alcoholics, addicts and their families are going to be pleasantly surprised when they walk into the Greensboro Marriott Downtown on or about Friday, August 1. Oh, the outside of the hotel will look the same, but once they get inside, the difference will be striking. For the first time in the decade Fellowship Hall has been holding its annual conference at the facility, it has undergone a total facelift and interior makeover.

"I think people are going to really like the new look," says this year's Voice of the Conference, Michelle Thompson, after seeing the makeover for the first time. "It has new carpet, paint scheme, décor, everything. Both the Southern Crescent Room (where the meetings are held) and the lobby outside have been totally redone. It has such a fresh, updated look, it almost looks like a different place."

And once attendees walk into the meeting room itself, they will notice some additional alterations. The podium has been moved 90 degrees so that the entrances to the rectangular room are in the rear rather than to one side. This setup has several advantages, according to Michelle.

"Those in the back have been so far from the speaker, but now they'll be much closer," she notes. "Also, by having the doors in back, it won't be so disruptive. I've been to a number of confer-

ences this year, and it seems almost all of them set up their rooms this way. The total number of chairs will be the same; they'll just be configured differently."

One thing, however, will not change, and that is the quality of speakers on this year's agenda. The slate for the 64th annual conference consists of (in order of appearance): Laura M., from Seattle, WA (NA); Carla R., from Tujunga, CA (AA); Debbie G., from Des Moines, IA (Alanon); Doug R., from Tujunga, CA (AA); and Paul Mc. from New York, NY (AA).

"I am really excited about every one of the speakers we've picked out this year," raves Michelle. "Each of them is in high demand, and we were lucky to be able to get a couple of them who are booked up years in advance."

She seems particularly excited about the Saturday night speaker, Doug R. She prefers not to disclose too much, but does give a hint: "Not only is he hilarious, but he weaves music into his talk. You're going to love it."

Attendees are encouraged to register in advance (although walk-ups will be accepted), either by mailing in the form in this issue or online at www.fellowshiphall.com. For room reservations, call the Marriott at 336-379-8000.

See you there.

Groundbreaking – Saturday, August 2

The picnic after the Saturday morning sessions of the Fellowship Hall Annual Conference is one of the special times of the weekend, in that it gives attendees time to catch up on old times at the place that gave them their new start in life, the Hall itself. This year it will be even more special, because in addition to the food and fellowship, it will include a ceremonial groundbreaking for the biggest expansion project in the Hall's history — a \$6 million project to build two new extended treatment lodges and a multi-purpose/outpatient building.

After welcoming remarks by President Brad Marino and Board Chair Tom Smith, the board will don hard hats and proceed to turn the first shovelfuls of dirt in the field beside the Hall. The picnic will start at noon, followed by the groundbreaking at approximately 1:30 p.m., and then the Gratitude Sharing at 2 p.m. Cost for the picnic is \$5.00.

For more information, contact Director of Development and Grants, Mary Kay Snyder at 336-621-3381 or marykays@fellowshiphall.com.

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The 2014 Voice Is Not Afraid to Use Hers



*Voice for the 2014 Conference
Michelle Thompson*

By Ogi Overman

One of the blessings of sobriety for Michelle Thompson is that it has given her a voice — and the courage to use that voice for the betterment of her fellows. Last year, when the community well that served her neighborhood in Oak Ridge for all its water needs ran dry, it was Michelle who organized the neighborhood, alerted the media, and became the spokesperson who brought attention to their plight. As a result of the media atten-

tion, the state dug a deeper well that would serve the influx of families who'd moved there.

And now she is using her voice in another capacity, only this time it has a capital "V," as in the Voice of the Conference. Specifically, Michelle will preside over the 64th Annual Fellowship Hall Conference on Alcoholism and Addiction, to be held August 1-3 at the Greensboro Marriott Downtown.

"This is such an extreme honor to be asked," she says with a smile. "I feel like this has helped me grow spiritually this past year. The process of listening to all the speaker tapes and attending conferences has really kept me close to the program, particularly since my job keeps me on the road a lot."

That job is as a project manager for an IT company that sells computer upgrades to hospital pharmacies. She offers onsite support, training, trouble-shooting and oversees the transition when they go live.

"Believe it or not, it's the same job I had when I got sober," she discloses. "I don't know how I managed not to get fired; that in itself is a miracle. There had been a lot of partying on the road."

In late October 2008, she was so drunk when she got home from an out-of-state job that her older son, then 10, called her father, who promptly hired a professional interventionist to organize an intervention. One of the people called to attend was her

first husband, the father of her two sons. That would soon play a major role in her recovery.

Michelle agreed to go to Fellowship Hall, and during her second week there she got a letter saying that her ex had gotten an emergency order from a judge to get custody of their kids.

"That was the lowest point of my life," she recalls. "But the irony is that that's what saved my life, because it forced my hand in getting sober. The court said that I had to wear a bracelet for six months, and if I did so without incident they would put back in place the order giving me back custody. The Hall put me on the path, and I was determined to stay sober no matter what.

"I got the gift of desperation. I followed suggestions and became willing, and by doing the work, good things started to happen. I got the miracle."

Michelle, a 1993 graduate of Guilford College with a degree in economics and sociology, also credits the fellowship with helping her balance her career and the responsibilities of being a single mother, both of which at times can be quite demanding.

"Being able to make good sober decisions as a businessperson and as a mom is such a gift," she remarks. "I am so grateful for the options and the freedom of choice that sobriety has given me."

Then there is the recent added demand of being the Voice, and she gives much of the credit to her sponsor, Corinne T., for helping her maintain that delicate balance. They often travel to conferences together, and in June spent a weekend in Atlanta for the popular all-women recovery conference, Girlstock. The Voice of that conference was Carla R., who just happens to be one of the AA speakers at this year's Fellowship Hall Conference. And if that weren't enough of a cosmic convergence, her husband Doug was helping out at Lee's Tapes, which is a fixture in Greensboro, as well — and Doug is Saturday night's keynote speaker here.

"Going to these conferences reinforces the point of just how big AA is," muses Michelle. "But then to actually meet two of the speakers we had handpicked for our conference also makes you realize how connected we are. It's an awesome feeling to be a part of it."

Employee Employment Anniversaries Third Quarter 2014

Paul Carter	14 yrs.	Thomas Link	4 yrs.	Rudy Murphy	8 yrs.	Mat Sandifer	11 yrs.
Demetrius Dillard	3 yrs.	Warren Lowder	2 yrs.	Connie Post	32 yrs.	Jessica Sheetz	4 yrs.
Brian Franco	3 yrs.	Brad Marino	1 yr.	Gordon Rayle	12 yrs.	Mike Smith	1 yr.
Naimy Gonzales	5 yrs.	Warren Margulies	2 yrs.	Missy Reed	3 yrs.	Christina Tucker	2 yrs.
Catherine Kempainen	2 yrs.	Dana McGuire	1 yr.	Ashley Ross	3 yrs.	Todd Williams	4 yrs.
Elizabeth Ladd	26 yrs.						

Hall Forms Alliance With Duke In Groundbreaking Hepatitis Research

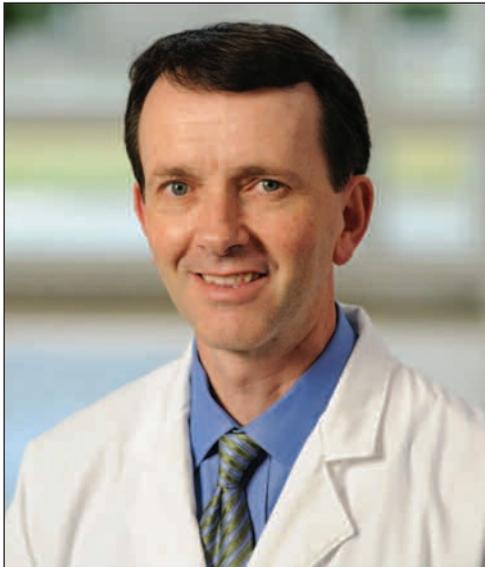
By Ogi Overman

In the 42 years since Fellowship Hall's founding, the facility has witnessed countless changes in society. Some of those — namely the dramatic rise in drug abuse — have prompted changes in its approach to treatment. Initially, the Hall's mandate was the treatment of alcoholics, but the pioneers quickly realized that substance abuse was hardly confined to alcohol and began admitting drug addicts. Today the ratio approaches 50-50.

While the recovery rate of addicts roughly parallels that of alcoholics, there is an underlying issue that some addicts, particularly intravenous drug users, must deal with, even after they get clean. And that, of course, is hepatitis C.

Until recently, the medical and therapy staff has had very little recourse in treating the liver disease other than informing guests of its seriousness and insisting they see a specialist once they leave the Hall. But when Dr. J.D. Harrison took the reins as Medical Director last year, he brought with him an acquaintance who would prove to be of great help. While doing his residency at Duke University School of Medicine, he became familiar with Dr. Andrew Muir, first professionally and then personally. Dr. Muir was and is the Director of Gastroenterology and Hepatology Research at Duke. He has since developed a relationship with Fellowship Hall whereby guests diagnosed with hepatitis C are sent to him, often while still in treatment, as well as for follow-up care.

“Dr. Harrison started referring guests, some of whom didn't know they had hepatitis until they got here, to Dr. Muir because he felt strongly that he provided a great resource for them to have the best outcome possible,” said Hall President Brad Marino. “We started getting amazing feedback from them, and many of them have kept seeing him. He is doing some really cutting-edge treatment, and all the lab results show incredible improvement. So it has developed into a very valuable and beneficial relationship for us.”



Dr. Andrew Muir

While Marino stopped short of affirming that Dr. Muir has found a cure for the sometimes-fatal disease, Muir himself said that “cure” was an appropriate word.

“Why not (use it)?” he asked rhetorically. “It is a cure. It is a powerful word and brings hope and confidence.”

Dr. Muir went on to explain the advancements in treating hep C thusly: “Treatments now are all pills, and there are no injections anymore. Most patients require treatment for 12 weeks. Some patients should wait until October/November 2014 for some new therapies coming out. The studies from these new treatments are showing cure rates over 90 percent for most patient groups. By the end of 2014, most patients will find that there are great treatments for them.”

The relationship between the doctor and the treatment center has blossomed to the point that he has invited his patients from Fellowship Hall to participate in a study he is doing for the Centers for Disease Control in Washington, D.C.

“His clinical study for the CDC is on hepatitis specific to addiction,” noted Marino, “and he has had such good results with our guests, he asked us to be a part of the study. We are honored to be included in it.”

As a gastroenterologist, Dr. Muir does not, however, confine his practice to patients with hepatitis C.

“I take care of patients with liver disease of any form,” he noted. “The most common diagnosis I see is hepatitis C, but I also care for every other type of liver condition including cirrhosis and liver cancer. Some of the patients with HCV used injection drugs, but not all.”

According to the Duke Medical School website, Dr. Muir “has led or participated in more than 50 clinical trials and has more than 80 publications. He has established an outstanding reputation in this role due to his ability to produce the clinical, logistical and regulatory support needed in a drug development program.”

And Fellowship Hall is both a participant and beneficiary of the doctor's research.

New Director Of Development Back To Her Roots

By Ogi Overman

Mary Kay Snyder's first job out of college was in the drug and alcohol treatment field. She never dreamed that applying to an employment ad listed in her local paper would lead to nearly three decades in the field. And, having the chance to return to her roots here at Fellowship Hall after eight years working in other fields, is the icing on the cake. Mary Kay is the Hall's new Director of Development and Grants, and a large part of her mission is raising the profile and increasing awareness of its many benefits to both the local community and society at large.

"I know that Fellowship Hall is considered one of the 'best-kept secrets' in Greensboro, and I understand it to a degree, because of the anonymity issues of the 12 Step programs," she said. "But, I believe there is a way to bring attention to the good work that's being done here at Fellowship Hall without violating any of the principles of its founding or those of the 12 Step programs. Fellowship Hall's story, reputation and track record are all here. We just need to build awareness and engage the greater community and alumni in our efforts."

Of course, all that ties in with her primary task of taking a leadership role in raising the \$6 million for the recently announced expansion of the extended treatment program from 17 to 40 beds and building two new lodges to accommodate them. A third multi-purpose building is planned for addition of traditional outpatient treatment, expansion of the Hall's education and training mission, and growth of the family program.

"I'm anxious to roll up my sleeves and work together with Brad (president Marino), the staff, the board, and other community leaders to help move us along the path of this huge expansion project," she smiled. "It's going to make the opportunity for recovery more available to a greater number of people. A consistent and persistent effort will be required, and we are going to make it happen."

Indeed, Mary Kay has helped make it happen before. During her years at another treatment center, she played a lead role in two capital campaigns that raised a total of \$7 million and was involved in the launch of a third campaign in the early 2000s. Moreover, in a stint with a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community as director of development and public relations, she was instrumental in the launch of an \$11 million capital campaign for program additions and construction of new facilities. Prior to relocating to North Carolina this spring, she was vice president of

development for an affiliate of an international not-for-profit disability services organization where fundraising, public relations and volunteer services were prominent in her job description.

"My whole career has been in the not-for-profit and fundraising arena, and the largest portion of that in the drug and alcohol field," she noted. "I've coordinated major communication and public relations initiatives, worked extensively with alumni and volunteers, executed successful fund raising and awareness building events and served as a volunteer for other not-for-profit organizations, in addition to experience in capital campaigns and all aspects of fund raising, so I hope I can bring something valuable to the table here."



Mary Kay Snyder

While not in recovery, Mary Kay had alcoholism in her family and feels a genuine kinship with the 12 Step programs and those battling addiction.

Not a believer in coincidences, Mary Kay shares she felt that she was led to this field. "I was supposed to apply to that job in the paper. I quickly became a believer in recovery and the 12 Steps as a way of life. I really can't explain it except to say that the drug and alcohol treatment field spoke to me somehow; it touched me and changed my life. I know I've benefited as much or more personally as I have professionally from all the years I've been involved in this field."

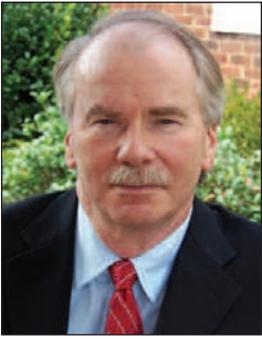
Mary Kay and her husband Steve, who works in the glass industry, have three grown children. Stephanie is a marketing specialist in medical software, Christine is a nurse at a children's hospital, and Matthew is a second-year law student. The

Snyders enjoy the beach, especially vacationing at the Outer Banks. And, although Mary Kay doesn't have much spare time, she is an avid reader, enjoys all types of music, and loves to dance.

"This is a good time of life for us," she mused. "Everything has its time, and I think this is Fellowship Hall's time, as well. I am thrilled to be back to my roots in the drug and alcohol treatment field. My career has been wonderful and I'm proud to do what I do. I'm not a clinician or a counselor, but in my own way I'd like to think I've helped pave the way to recovery for folks who came after me. I know my life was changed by watching people get well and playing a small part in it, and I'm so happy to be here at Fellowship Hall changing lives. I hope they keep me."

It's a safe bet they will.

Stewardship



Jim Fenley

By Jim Fenley, Clinical Director

I was sitting at my desk trying to think of a topic and the thought entered my mind in the form of a question: what about a paper on the heart and soul of Fellowship Hall and how that has been nurtured and protected through stewardship all these years? So, here it is.

There were two definitions of the word steward that I found and were meaningful to me:

1st: *The protector of a property*, 2nd: *the person who provides nourishment for the passengers.*

When Zander and his friends opened Fellowship Hall in 1971, I think the reward was immediate. The realization that finally there was a place to help the alcoholic and addict was probably overwhelming to them. This was their joy and their dream come true. The union of recovery and spirituality go hand and hand and one exists only because of the other. The spiritual foundation of the Hall began way before the grounds were found and the building foundation was poured. It started with the first conversations between Zander and Willard and Slick and Henry. My guess is that they prayed every day for help and guidance.

I first visited Fellowship Hall in April of 1987 when I was interviewed. I was taken to a room with a group of Board members: Clarence, Ed M, Jimmy, Hope, Mose, Bill, and Helen. I was feeling very tense and realized that this was serious business. They liked that I had credentials and experience but that was not the focus of the interview. When I told them I was sober eight years, they asked me to talk about how the 12 Steps had saved my life and they wanted to know what recovery meant to me. As I answered their questions, the room got lighter and we laughed as people with a common peril do. As it says in the *Big Book*, this is part of the powerful cement that binds us. Total strangers one moment and a closeness that just happens the next moment. It felt like home. I received the call a couple of days later and got the job. This was my first contact with the stewards of the Hall. It was clear that they all loved and felt very protective of this place.

Fellowship Hall is a spiritual place. For years, guests, family members, and visitors have remarked that there is a feeling you get when you walk into the front lobby. If you ask one of

them to describe it, invariably they say that there is a spiritual presence here and that it is clearly a place of healing. It is what I felt my first day here. When your heart is open, the feelings will and do come in. Fellowship Hall entered my heart that day and started its journey into my soul. Guests come into this place broken and empty and leave with hope and purpose. Now, I was a part of it.

I realized, as I began to work here twenty-seven years ago, that there were more stewards. When these stewards spoke of Fellowship Hall, it was more tactile, sort of like cradling, than it was words. It was as if they were holding their child. Some of you will remember their names: Wilson, Dennis, Venetia, Ann, Johann, and Carolyn. What a wonderful group of loving people.

We do life changing work here. Lives are saved. We help people recover and they build a spiritual foundation. Ponder for a moment the amount of prayer that happens on these grounds, in say, a month. We ask our HP to help us. We turn it over. We say the Serenity Prayer. We pray when we are full of fear. We pray when we are grateful. We pray for others all the time.

When your heart is open, the feelings will and do come in. Fellowship Hall entered my heart that day and started its journey into my soul. Guests come into this place broken and empty and leave with hope and purpose.

To me, there is a clear connection between these prayers and the feeling you get when you walk into the lobby.

The other day I found a very old photo album from the late 1970s. I

opened it up and there were about twenty photos of the staff at that time. I only recognized one person. I immediately welled up with emotion when I looked at those faces. These were the stewards of the Hall during that period. They embraced it, protected it, kept it safe, and passed it on to the next group. When I looked at their faces one more time there was a kinship, a spiritual connection with them that was understood even though I had never met them.

When you love this place, when you know and experience all the healing of broken lives that has occurred here, when you see people for the first time in their lives know and accept that there is a Higher Power who will help them in their daily recovery, when you see families that were shattered come together, you then get an understanding of what it is you are protecting, what is being nourished, of what it means to be a steward of the Hall.



Fellowship Hall

CONFERENCE ON ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTION

August 1, 2 & 3, 2014

Marriott-Downtown Greensboro

336.379.8000 or 336.387.8007

Pre-register online until noon, July 29 at www.fellowshiphall.com or complete the Registration Form and send it with your check to Fellowship Hall.

For more information, please call Fellowship Hall at 800.659.3381.

Conference Agenda

Friday, August 1

8:00 p.m. Opening Remarks – Southern Crescent Ballroom
Speaker: Laura M. – Seattle, WA

Saturday, August 2

9:00 a.m. Speaker: Carla R. – Tujunga, CA
Southern Crescent Ballroom

10:30 a.m. Speaker: Debbie G. – Des Moines, IA
Southern Crescent Ballroom

12:00 p.m. Picnic - Fellowship Hall

1:30 p.m. Groundbreaking Ceremony
Fellowship Hall – Side Lawn

2:00 p.m. Gratitude Meeting
Fellowship Hall – Old Big Room

8:00 p.m. Speaker: Doug R. – Tujunga, CA
Southern Crescent Ballroom

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

Sunday, August 3

10:00 a.m. Speaker: Paul Mc. – New York, NY
Southern Crescent Ballroom

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)

An Expectant Attitude

Ogi & The Old-Timers



Ogi Overman

By Ogi Overman

In writing for another publication, I recently had the great privilege of interviewing one of the most well-loved men in Greensboro, both in and out of the rooms, Mose K. Not only is the 80-year-young Mose the senior member of the Fellowship Hall Board of Directors, he is also revered by locals, old enough to know, as the person mostly responsible for

breaking the color barrier of the PGA. As General Chairman of the 1961 Greater Greensboro Open, it was he who invited Charlie Sifford to become the first black player to compete in a PGA-sanctioned tournament in the South.

During our rather lengthy chat, the question of whether to broach the subject of his alcoholism came up, and we decided that if it were germane to the thrust of the story, I would mention it. Turned out, I did not — the events leading up to, during and after the golf tournament stood on their own merit — but, as with many conversations with Mose, we did get around to chatting about his favorite day of the year, July 13. In the *Twenty-Four Hours a Day* meditations, which many groups refer to, it reads, in part: “Be expectant. Constantly expect better things. Believe that what God has in store for you is better than anything you ever had before. The way to grow old happily is to expect better things right up to the end of your life and even beyond that.”

While Mose is the perfect exemplar of those words to live by, I at times fall far short. Oh, I try, but I must admit there are times when my wife and I are very close to giving up hope. As I’ve mentioned before in this space, she suffers from chronic progressive multiple sclerosis. Since being diagnosed in 1991 (when we were a year and a half sober), her mobility has steadily been robbed from her, and for the last decade she has been wheelchair bound. There’s no way to sugarcoat it — it’s a struggle. Period.

But just when it seems there’s no light at the end of the tunnel, something happens to pull us out of the darkness. It may be mundane, as in somebody uttering some healing words at a meeting, or our receiving a check in the mail. Or it may be profound, miraculous even.

Here are two examples of the latter: Last October the townsfolk where I worked organized an all-day benefit to get Janet a new wheelchair, one that actually allows her to stand for short periods. Our insurance would only cover a portion of the cost, so they went to work and wound up raising \$10,000 to purchase this Mercedes of a wheelchair. I still get overcome with gratitude thinking about the generosity of not only friends but total strangers.

Then, just last week, a group of six men from a nearby church showed up at our house at 7 a.m. and by 11 had built us a wheelchair ramp, compliant to code and with a 90 degree turn. To backtrack, an occupational therapist had been coming by, and she told us of a church that has a ramp ministry. One of the guys came by, took some measurements, gave us the cost of materials, and, lo and behold, a week later we have this great ramp. They refused to take a dime for their labors, saying they were working for the Lord.

Now, this brings up another passage, this one from the *Big Book*, page 87, to wit: “Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.” Amen to that.

“Be expectant. Constantly expect better things. Believe that what God has in store for you is better than anything you ever had before. The way to grow old happily is to expect better things right up to the end of your life and even beyond that.”

Now, Janet and I are not regular church-goers. She was brought up Catholic and I Methodist, but we have gravitated toward the spiritual, rather than religious, end of things. Still, God is ever-present in our lives, and, clearly, here is another example of “God doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

So, what is the takeaway from all this, what is to be learned?

Perhaps it goes back to the late N.C. State basketball coach Jim Valvano’s dying admonition: “Never, ever, ever, ever, ever give up!” It obviously goes back to the Big Book suggestion to live in gratitude, trust God, clean house and help others. Plus, I think it goes back to the July 13 passage, to be expectant of good things.

But whether it is karma, or the Universe, or staying in the stream of goodness, or practicing the principles, or the Golden Rule, or simply doing the next right thing, or all of the above, what has been proven to me countless times is this: There is always hope. Always.

The 13th Annual E. Raymond Alexander, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament

Friday, August 1, 2014

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: www.fellowshiphall.com or call Connye Post 336.621.3381 by July 29 for more information.



Player Registration Form

Cost per player is \$100 and includes green fees and cart, post-tournament luncheon and awards ceremony at Bryan Park. Fill out the form and send to:

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

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: _____
 E-mail: _____
 Amount Paid: _____ Your Shirt Size: _____
 Names of other golfers on your team: Shirt Size M/W
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

*If the names of teammates are unavailable when you register, or if your team changes, please contact Connye Post at 800.659.3381, or connyep@fellowshiphall.com when you have the names. If shirt sizes are not provided, XL will be ordered. Contributions, less goods and services received, are tax-deductible as to the extent allowed by law.



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