

LISTEN

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, OFFICE OF CONSUMER RELATIONS

Robert Bentley, Governor Zelia Baugh, Commissioner Volume 15, Number 2 Summer 2011

Don't focus solely on illness—

Dr. Tim Stone emphasizes path to recovery



Dr. Timothy Stone presented the keynote address at the second plenary session of the 2011 Recovery Conference in Shocco Springs on April 6, 2011.

Dr. Stone's very engaging life and work in the Person-Centered Outpatient Program was featured in the most recent issue of *LISTEN*.

Emphasizing meditation over medication, Stone placed a poignant "Prayer for Peace" in every seat in the Chapel before his talk, saying he recites it every morning to help him get centered.

Stone began his talk by sharing the Greek myth of Procrustes. In the myth, Procrustes was a son of Poseidon with a stronghold on Mount Korydallos, on the sacred way between Athens and Eleusis. There, he had an iron bed in which he invited every passer-by to spend the night, and then he set to work on them with his smith's hammer, to stretch them to fit. In later tellings, if the guest proved too tall, Procrustes would amputate the excess length; nobody ever fit the bed exactly because secretly Procrustes had two beds.

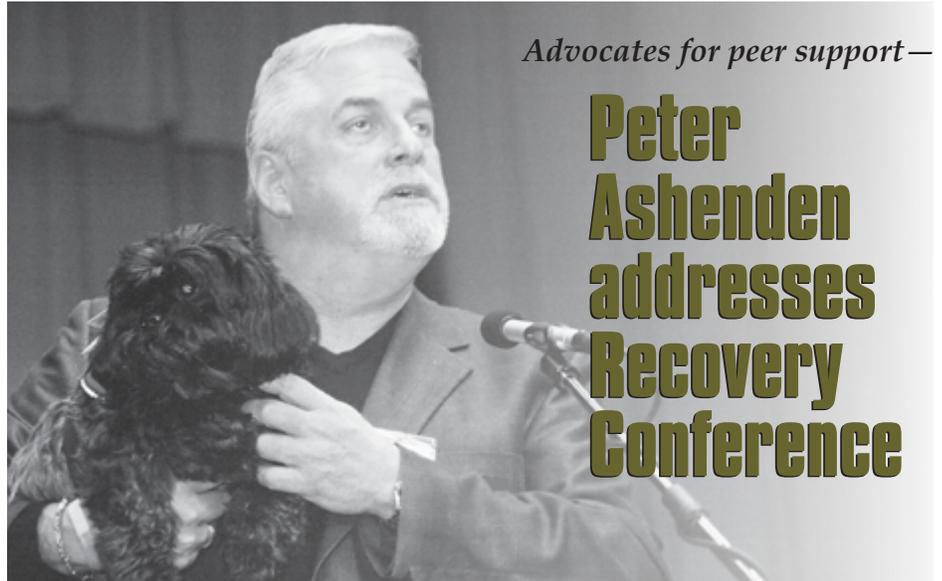
Stone's point was that psychiatry emphasizes standard treatment modules that simply are not tailored to fit individuals. In other words, there is a focus on diagnosis and medications rather than working with an individual and helping that person work in his or her best way toward recovery.

"In the hospital things are so stressful that you

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Advocates for peer support—

Peter Ashenden addresses Recovery Conference



The 2011 Alabama Recovery Conference was held April 5-7 at Shocco Springs in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains near Talladega. This welcoming spot has been home to the conference for many years.

The first full day of the conference was Wednesday, and that day began with

a keynote address from noted consumer advocate Peter Ashenden. Ashenden is a consumer/survivor and has served as director of consumer affairs at OptumHealth since April 2010. He served for two years as president/CEO for the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), after holding

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Recovery Conference 2011—

Lots to learn and fun for all



As it has been for the past several years, the most recent Alabama Recovery Conference was held April 5-7, 2011 at Shocco Springs near Talladega. The opening session on Tuesday afternoon featured greetings from several people, including new

Commissioner of Mental Health Zelia Baugh and Office of Consumer Relations director Mike Autrey. These opening remarks were followed by the presentation of RESPECT Awards to some 20 individuals.

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“But let me say it is also hard work and I do it because I feel like I am making a difference and helping to change the system. I really believe in recovery, in the power of hope, and in what I am doing. I am honored to be here, even if I am a bit nervous with this New York accent in the heart of Alabama!”

the position of executive vice president at DBSA. For 12 years he was executive director of the Mental Health Empowerment Project (MHEP), and he has provided training to consumer/survivors and mental health professionals nationally.

Ashenden has also been active in starting many self-help groups. It was these groups, he said, that helped lead him from the depths of addiction and depression to a life of hope and inspir-

ing others. In his address, Ashenden first introduced his service dog, Bella, and explained how Bella has been a real help in his ongoing recovery.

“I am someone who has worked very hard in his recovery,” Ashenden said. “I have experienced tremendous rewards and tremendous setbacks. I now travel almost constantly – three to four weeks every month, 118,000 sky miles in the last ten months – and I know that sounds

very glamorous. But let me say it is also hard work and I do it because I feel like I am making a difference and helping to change the system. I really believe in recovery, in the power of hope, and in what I am doing. I am honored to be here, even if I am a bit nervous with this New York accent in the heart of Alabama!”

Bella the service dog lets Ashenden know when his anxiety level is increasing, helps him remember to take his meds and, when he feels the effects of depression, she helps him get out of bed. How? Because he knows Bella needs him so it is a mutually-beneficial relationship with a lot of love thrown in for good measure. Ashenden explained that people in recovery from mental illness can keep a service dog as part of the Americans with Disabilities Act and he strongly advocates it.

Moving along to another of the many points he made in his presentation, Ashenden said he was not always a fan of George W. Bush as President, but that Bush’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health was very good and very important. President Bush established the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health as part of his commitment to eliminate inequality for Americans with disabilities. The President directed the Commission to identify policies that could be implemented by federal, state and local governments to maximize the utility of existing resources, improve coordination of treatments and services, and promote successful community integration for both adults and children.

Ashenden also shared the Vision Statement from the Commission:

We envision a future when everyone with a mental illness will recover, a future when mental illnesses can be prevented or cured, a future when mental illnesses are detected early, and a future when everyone with a mental illness at any stage of life has access to effective treatment and supports - essentials for living, working, learning, and participating fully in the community.

He pointed out that mental health issues are also poverty issues; consumers

“Once I was faced with my treatment team – six professionals sitting in chairs across from me, staring me down. I told them I needed to work toward getting a job and being able to look people in the eye. They told me I needed to go into their program. I asked what their program was. To make a long story short they wanted me to work all day every day putting caps on tubes of lipstick for 11 cents an hour! I explained, with my best New York attitude and vocabulary, what they could do with their program!”

often live in unsafe homes, have food insecurities, face discrimination because of a diagnosis, and really just lack basic choices in their lives.

“The service system needs to look like a buffet, instead of us being told what to do by a treatment team,” Ashenden said. “My dear friend Larry Fricks said this and it applies to all of us: ‘Hope is to recovery as oxygen is to the human body.’ We all need hope. I lived for years without hope And where did I find hope? In peer support groups.”

Ashenden briefly outlined the history of mental health care in America and explained how, of everything we have tried, peer support is the best. But within the system, Ashenden went on to say, it is

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important for consumers to work toward full partnership in treatment rather than just being told what to do.

“Let me give an example,” he said.

“Once I was faced with my treatment team – six professionals sitting in chairs across from me, staring me down. I told them I needed to work toward getting a job and being able to look people in the



Watch your thoughts, they become words.

Watch your words, they become actions.

Watch your actions, they become habits.

Watch your habits, they become your character.

Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

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day putting caps on tubes of lipstick for 11 cents an hour! I explained, with my best New York attitude and vocabulary, what they could do with their program!”

Unfortunately, as a result of that encounter, Ashenden’s treatment records went from saying he was good and cooperative to assaultive and non-compliant.

“But it doesn’t matter,” he said. “Consumer-run and consumer-centered treatment must include the right to say ‘no’ to plans that are not in your best interest. And you know yourself better than any treatment team!”

He also touched on the related issue of ‘forced services’ such as restraint and seclusion. He should know about those since he himself was once tossed into a padded cell without clothes or contact for 72 hours.

“How does this help anyone get well?” he asked. “It doesn’t!”

In summary, Ashenden encouraged those present to not only be an active part of a consumer support group, but also to take an active role in working with their care provider. This involves creating a plan with specific goals, getting real information about your illness, being provided choices instead of being told what to do, and being treated like an individual and not like a case.

“Providers must give us hope, listen carefully and deeply, and treat us like people,” he said. “Write down your questions before you see your doctor. Develop a wellness action recovery plan (WRAP). You are a person who should be recognized for what *you* bring to the table. It’s time to speak up!”

In conclusion, Ashenden encouraged those present to follow this precept:

Watch your thoughts, they become words.

Watch your words, they become actions.

Watch your actions, they become habits.

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Dr. Tim Stone

continued from page 1

develop behaviors that won't work in the outside world," Stone observed, much to the agreement of all those in the room. "Our goal isn't to mold you to a standard type of behavior, but to help you stay out of the hospital. It wasn't our patients but the staff that needed to adjust its behaviors. Unfortunately, these very simple precepts are often forgotten in a hospital setting."

Stone told everyone in the Chapel about his first encounter with mental illness and hospital settings.

"When I was five years old I went with

strict medical model). It was for this reason that psychiatrists were, early on, called "alienists." A wave of religious reform in the U.S. in the 1800s led to social concerns and Dorothea Dix brought the peaceful asylum idea to America and moral treatment seemed to really work. Over half the patients left within the first year. Dr. Peter Bryce was a leading American practitioner of moral treatment.

"Unfortunately, these asylums eventually became dumping grounds for people with long-term dementia, overcrowding ensued, and *Wyatt v. Stickney* was the ulti-

"I bounced back from that first episode and got my grades back up but I continued to feel different than my peers. By the time I was in medical school I was most attracted to the Psychiatry unit but I was only taught the medical model -- that mental illness was all about chemical imbalance. And these imbalances were said to be incurable, but the symptoms could be controlled by medications -- a lot like diabetes."

Stone lost two close friends in college and this had led him to more depressive episodes. He continued to make excellent grades but, in his words, "I was a full-blown alcoholic by the fourth year of my residency and the state medical board found out about it."

Stone was sent to detox and was actually locked up in a psychiatric ward! He was told that if he didn't drink and would take his meds everything would be fine. That was Stone's great realization that he knew himself better than anyone and that he needed to take care of himself.

"I went to AA, followed the 12 Steps, I took my Prozac," he said. "As a result of my behavior I lost everything but, fortunately, I got it all back. I continued to recover and thought maybe I didn't need the meds."

my family to visit my sister, who was at the University of Alabama and did some work at Bryce," he said. "I saw what to me were thin, gaunt ghosts, but they had real arms and fingers. One man was holding his arms up, just standing there. My sister explained that he was sick. To me he was like a human statue."

"We have had ideas about mental illness and recovery going back to the Greeks and the Middle Ages," he said. "In the 1200s in London the first hospital for the insane was started. It was called Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane but became known as Bedlam, and it was horrible. The most famous depiction of Bedlam came from Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress.'" (See inset for information on Hogarth and Bedlam.)

The next phase in this checkered history began leading to what is known as "moral treatment" when the patients themselves suggested things might work better if they were not chained like animals. Practitioners then thought it might be good to build beautiful, stress-free environments in which to treat people who were "alienated from their reason." The idea was that if they were treated well their reason would return (as opposed to a

mate result when Alabama's great federal judge Frank Minis Johnson Jr. said the 'warehouse conditions' were unconstitutional and that people had a right to treatment. This of course led to the community movement that we are now a part of."

Dr. Stone had his own bouts with depression, beginning as early as the eighth grade.

"Many mental health providers have had their own issues with mental illness, and I was one of them," he said.

"Meds don't fix anyone all by themselves. They can help you get better though. The medical model is usually good but other things must be involved as well. That's what we've learned. But you know yourself better than anyone and it is up to you to help your psychiatrist understand your recovery. You must be assertive, you must walk the walk. Know your history, know your problems, but also know that you have strengths."



ALISTEN

Is a publication of
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Charles Willis

Holistic Recovery



On the last morning of the conference, Charles Willis delivered an upbeat, fun, and informative presentation using his personal story to promote the idea that true recovery must include both mental health and physical health and the use of peer specialists. These combine to lead consumers toward holistic recovery.

Charles Willis is the Georgia Peer Support Resiliency Project Director with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, an organization that promotes recovery through advocacy, education, employment empowerment, peer support and self-help. His work in the area of Self Directed Recovery has led him to become an Advanced Level Wrap Facilitator through the Copeland Center. Mr. Willis has worked as a Senior Research Interviewer with Emory University Grace Crum Rollins School of Public Health.

Mr. Willis began his career in sec-

Well, I was wrong. That works for me and I know it's best to stick with it."

But he continues to believe in holistic healing, of which meds are only a part.

"You must know this: meds don't fix anyone all by themselves. They can help you get better though. The medical model is usually good but other things must be involved as well. That's what we've learned. But you know yourself better than anyone

ondary education and then moved into facilitation services. His experience includes program development, teaching, individual counseling, group facilitation, and funding evaluation. Mr. Willis has provided Facilitation and Educational services to organizations such as: Meriwether County, Griffin Diversion Center, United Way, GA Departments of Labor and Corrections, Emory University, and other Community-based service groups.

Mr. Willis has an undergraduate and Masters Degree from Fort Valley State University. He has completed the Georgia Certified Peer Specialist Training which is a project of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and The Department of Human Resources Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases.

We hope Charles Willis will grace us with his presence at future conferences.

and it is up to you to help your psychiatrist understand your recovery. You must be assertive, you must walk the walk. Know your history, know your problems, but also know that you have strengths."

"If you believe in yourself and in your recovery, who knows, it might even rub off on your psychiatrist. My best advice for you? Know and believe in yourself."

Meet Your Advocate!

For the past few years, the Department's Advocacy staff has set up a hospitality room and it has steadily become one of the most popular ongoing events at the conference. This year's theme was "Wild Wild West." The staff works very hard throughout the year to collect items to give away at its free "Yard Sale" as well as providing popcorn, games and refreshments. Our Advocacy staff, as most of you know, is made up of very special, caring people and we want to thank them for all they bring to the conference.





hair down and just cut a rug like there is no tomorrow.

The conference ended with a final keynote presentation by Charles Willis entitled "Holistic Recovery." Charles is the Peer Support Resiliency Project Director for the Georgia Mental Health Network. The conference concluded after this highly-educational and inspiring presentation and the awarding of several fun and sought-after door prizes.

In addition to the main scheduled events, there was an ongoing health fair, Advocacy Hospitality Room (see picture page), Wings Across Alabama drop-in center, and NAMI Birmingham Welcome Center.

Many thanks to all who helped this be another memorable week in the peaceful place called Shocco Springs!



At the Recovery Conference each year the Office of Consumer Relations presents the RESPECT Awards. RESPECT awards are presented to caregivers, whether professional, family, friend, or fellow consumers, who are consistently respectful to persons with a mental illness. The winners are selected by a panel of consumers. The RESPECT Award has become a high honor for those who are involved in mental illness activities in Alabama. The list of this year's winners is set out on page 7 of this issue.

and psychiatrist and peer support advocate Dr. Timothy Stone from JBS Mental Health Authority in Birmingham. Both keynote presentations were excellent and are summarized in this issue.

After lunch on Wednesday, attendees were able to attend any of several outstanding workshops where they could learn about and participate in the following courses: Assistive devices/services for people with hearing loss; Volunteering: Pathway to the Future; Building Bridges Across Alabama; The Substance

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Following the opening ceremonies there was time for a meet and greet for the nearly 900 consumers who were on hand for the event. Dinner came next, and at Shocco Springs every meal is a really big deal. One consistent remark about the conference down through the years has been the excellence of the food and the friendly service that goes with it.

The Talent Show ended the day (late at night), and there is a large story on that elsewhere in this issue. The next morning after breakfast attendees heard from consumer advocate Peter Ashenden

Abuse Recovery Message; Tutoring: Consumers Helping Consumers; Companion Dogs: A New Approach; and The Nature of Recovery. The interactive workshops are always a great opportunity to learn and expand our horizons.

After dinner that night was the dance and watermelon social, as well as the candlelight vigil where consumers take time to remember those who are no longer with us, and "burn away" something that may be holding us back from recovery. The dance, as always, was a blast where everyone had a chance to let their

2011 RESPECT AWARD Winners



Terry Bain, Mental Health Therapist: TLC, Huntsville

Pedahel Bell, 1920 Club, Birmingham

Jim Crego, CFO, JBS Mental Health Authority, Birmingham

Angela Cromer, Apartment Manager, Friendship Lodge, Montgomery

Amanda Evans, Home Coordinator, Eastwood Group Home, Birmingham

Nellie Fletcher, Volunteer: TLC, Huntsville

Susan Glass, Therapist, Adult Day Services, Opelika

Nadia Gowayed, Art Therapist, Adult Day Services, Opelika

Odous Hood, FT, Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility, Tuscaloosa

Malcolm Hooks, Home Coordinator, Woodlawn Transition Home, Birmingham

Juanita Lewis, Volunteer, Our Place Drop-In Center, Huntsville

Josalyn Lucas, Director of Mental Health Services, Madison County MHC, Huntsville

Sondra Phillips, Therapist, Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility, Tuscaloosa

Lynn Powell, Vice President, Revelations of Self, Auburn-Opelika

Gloria Robinson, RN III, Bryce Hospital, Tuscaloosa

Julia Terrell, NC-SHP Case Manager, JBS Mental Health Authority, Birmingham

Joan Thompson, Staff, Cedar House, Florence

Megan Thrower, Mental Health Tech, East Alabama Mental Health, Opelika

Monretta L. Vega, Activities Director, Mental Health Center of Madison County, Huntsville

Sheila J. Walker, Therapist, TLC, Mental Health Center of Madison County, Huntsville



2011 Hope Award Winner

Dr Richard Craig

With Plenty of Laughs—

TALENT SHOW

Was Lovely and Lively



When he got there he was lassoed by Hazel who declared "A Good Man nowadays is hard to find and I've done found me a Good Man!"

ing out" perennial conference-goer Steve Goodman, who came running up on stage from the large audience. When he got there he was lassoed by Hazel who declared "A Good Man nowadays is hard to find and I've done found me a Good Man!" Steve laughed along with the crowd and his good will was rewarded when Hazel gave him her straw hat for a prize.

The talent portion began when poet Joe Faught recited his original rhyming love lines entitled "Lady Of Love" as a loving tribute to his lovely lady. Twins Troy and Roy Chisam, who for years have led a rousing sing-along at the outset of the show, pitched into "Amazing Grace" to give the night a unified feeling. The crowd is always glad to see the twins, and the twins have yet to meet a spiritual standard they didn't enjoy singing.

Annette Zeigler kept the religious theme alive when, with bowed head, she recited The Lord's Prayer. Bruce Cherry came next, singing "Running for Shelter, Running for Shade."

In a moving but unique twist, poet Sara Parfait read a long letter dated July

Honky Tonk-style piano player. This year she began the show, with the able help of musician and singer Steve Sedberry, by playing and singing a song she wrote especially for this year's conference. The words are included here.

In addition to being a fine musician, Hazel is also very funny. She started out the night by "call-



14, 1861, from a Civil War soldier to his "Sara" that reflected on love of his lady as well as love of country. The writer of this letter, she explained, died a week after he wrote the moving lines.

Mary Dolberry came next, singing "Let All The Earth Rejoice." She dedicated the song "to my best friend Jesus Christ" and got some good standing support from the full house in attendance.

Margaret Arbogast came next, blowing a trio of American standards on her harmonica with her music taped to her knee. That was followed by more music, as George Higginbotham played a long slow strummer. It was a special moment for George since his parents were in the house to enjoy his special talent.

A big energy change followed, as more than two dozen souls flooded the stage for a large group sing-along of the Southern Standard "I'll Fly Away."

Jamie Austin from Camden came next, reciting the well-known prayer "Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep" before Camille Edwards from Florence came on to sing some strong a capella music but first, inspiring the gathered group with these words: "Everyone here has good potential, you're smart, and you're showing the world that we can do it!"

Singer Jackie Lowry got serious with her song "Because of You (I Am Afraid)" and then crowd favorite Melissa Wingard belted out Lone Star's "Amazed."

Helen Bishop from Huntsville got one of the biggest responses of the night when she led the audience in a rousing rendition of the Don Maclean classic "American Pie." Sing-alongs are always fun.

Jan Bush then hammed it up big with the Willie Nelson-penned song "Crazy," made famous by Patsy Cline. Jan told the crowd, "I serve my service dog 24 hours a day!" She earned a huge round of applause for her performance.



Nell Hallmark then recited her original poem entitled "We May Feel" that explains how we may feel bad at times



A big energy change followed, as more than two dozen souls flooded the stage for a large group sing-along of the Southern Standard "I'll Fly Away."

James Austin underscored her message by picking out "Amazing Grace" on his black guitar.

but that we should always remember God is there with us.

Steve Sedberry, a very accomplished



SHOCCO Recovery

2011

Written and performed by Hazel Moore

We're here at Shocco Springs for recovery
To show we've done our best.
The workshops are to encourage us
And we'll stand up proud with all the rest.

CHORUS:

Good evening campers
What a lovely day.
Let's have some fun
Hear what I say.
Gonna' lose our sorrow
And all our care.
Good evening campers
It's good to see you here!

We don't have to worry
About what we wear, or
The way we fix our hair
Cause when we get together
With all of our friends
That's when the party begins.

CHORUS:

Good evening campers
What a lovely day.
Let's have some fun
Hear what I say.
Gonna' lose our sorrow
And all our care.
Good evening campers
It's good to see you here!



Christian folksinger who helped host the entire night, followed with what has become a tradition now – singing the words to a Psalm while accompanying himself on guitar. It was pretty much

words of my heart and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight...”). There was even a sing-along at the end. Well done, Steve. Mary McPhillips of Birmingham came

told him it was right there in HEBREWS. Verdell got lots of good laughs on that one. Otis Boggs of Montgomery’s Friendship Club came next and told everyone in attendance that he was down and out and ready to quit, but when he heard this poem – “Winners Never Quit” – he knew he could begin again and he encouraged everyone in attendance to have that same attitude.

Another Friendship Club member, O’Neal Lewis, followed up with an original rap in his loud gravelly voice about the pain associated with losing his brother but that we’ve all got to carry on any way. Steve Pendergrass is another steady leader of the movement here in Alabama, and he packs a punch as a musician as



well. His great chord progressions and strumming patterns were on display at the Talent Show when he played and sang his original number “He Was Sent To Us.”

One of the most unique, original and entertaining folks in the Talent Show year in and year out is Loretta Bellucci and this year was no exception. She sang a song involving King Solomon (“Go With Him Mark Twain”) that was really kind of a musical biography of the great American author of *Huckleberry Finn*.

The “Big Group” again returned to the stage – two dozen or more this time – to belt out “When The Saints Go Marching In” before Patrician Burcham and Clarence Grayson mellowed things



out with a really nice version of the John Denver-penned song made famous by Peter, Paul and Mary entitled “Leavin’ On A Jet Plane.”

Melissa Coleman came next, dedicating her song “Just Keep Pushing On” to her grandmother, who is fighting cancer. John Allen, a member of the Recovery Conference’s deaf community, popped out a few deft magic tricks, and shared with the crowd how he learned to do these things.

Darlene Berry then brought her truly fabulous voice to the stage. Her rendition of “Savior Who Lights Our Way” sounded so much like a classic 1960s Detroit Gospel record you couldn’t be-

lieve it was “one of us” in the Shocco Chapel. Windows were shaking on the high notes. It was a whole new dimension of talent. Thank you Darlene,

Terry Waldrop had a hard act to follow but kept the Gospel line going with “Hold On To Your Faith” and Thomas Williams then lightened the mood with a great story about a cat in Heaven. If you were there, you will remember the “meals on wheels” punch line. It was excellent.

Dennis Filmon was next with a nice capella “Peace In The Valley.” He was naturally quiet but he got a lot of love and encouragement from the folks in the front row. DeAndra Garner of Huntsville followed up with an original composition entitled “Will My Love Come?” and Shirley Crockett from Demopolis (“but I live in Linden”) shared her poem about forgiveness entitled “Time.”

Next on the list was Lisa Lynch, who busted out in a deep and beautiful voice a song about eternity ... and not worrying about it. “Tall” Paul Thomas, straw hat and all, next sang in a *very* loud voice “Where The Soul Will Never Die” and that was followed up by Agetha Dodson’s poem “All Things Bright and beautiful.” Let’s go ahead and add right here that Agetha was the Alabama state runner-up in a weight-loss competition. Way to go, Agetha!



That was it for everyone who had signed up, though a few people hanging around also wanted in on the fun.

This started with Jureze Barnes on a soul song sing-along and Alvin Maul with a poem and narrative about the ways Jesus loves us all, even if we have a mental illness.

Flora Alexander from Selma then flowered in song – loud and lovely – with “Father Teach Them.”

Kylie Nealey was the last act of the night with a smile and a song before Agetha came back to join host Steve Sedberry who took everyone home on



his guitar with upbeat renditions of “Will The Circle Be Unbroken” and “Amazing Grace.”

It was by this time a near empty house, but a lot of people filled their heart on this special night.

It’s a song that needs to be recorded, and it brought out good crowd participation. We notice this every year, but sometimes you just stop in the middle of this Talent Show and shake your head in amazement at the talent out there among the people at Shocco. This was definitely one of those moments.

unbelievably good. This time it was that well-known portion of Psalm 19 (“Let the

next – inciting another sing-along – with “God Bless America.” Sheila Williams, from Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare Center followed up with a song written by a woman from her church. It was a seriously-good upbeat country Gospel number entitled “Wait Till You See My City.” It’s a song that needs to be recorded, and it brought out good crowd participation. We notice this every year, but sometimes you just stop in the middle of this Talent Show and shake your head in amazement at the talent out there among the people at Shocco. This was definitely one of those moments.

Let’s hope it turns up in your neighborhood record store!

Verdell Smith came next cracking several good jokes. Here’s one of them: A brother and sister were having a disagreement about who should get up every morning to make the coffee. She said the brother should because it’s in the Bible. He said, Oh yeah? Where? And she



Steve Sedberry, a very accomplished Christian folksinger who helped host the entire night, followed with what has become a tradition now – singing the words to a Psalm while accompanying himself on guitar.

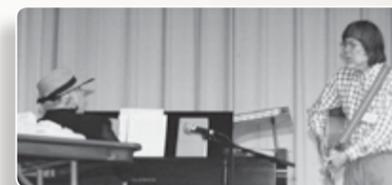
RECOVERY CONFERENCE 2011



John Zeigler, Sylvia Richie and Paul Carlson



My name is Paul Carlson. For years now I have been the conference's unofficial photographer. If you have been at the conference more than once, chances are good that I have taken your picture. I took all the photos in this issue. What I want you to know is not so much who I am or what I do, but that I am one of you. Like you, I have worked through my own diagnoses and struggles toward recovery through the years. I know right where you're coming from. But my art has helped me recover. Taking pictures, working with the Visionary Guild, developing sculptures, painting pictures, you name it. Art opens up a new world for me and helps me think about creation rather than illness. I just want to share this to encourage each of you to find something meaningful in your life rather than focusing on negative relationships or symptoms of your illness. It's a big world out there that holds something for each of us. I am so glad to have my art, and I want you to have something, too. So, until I see you again, SMILE!



Support Groups & Consumer Advocacy Organizations



Statewide

Wings Across Alabama
P.O. Box 211286
Montgomery, AL 36121
(334) 395-7616 or
Toll Free: 888-WINGSAL(946-4725)

The Visionary Guild for Mentally Ill Artists
Sylvia Richey, President
c/o Carole Eskridge, Foundress
For information Call
(334) 703-3853 OR (256) 429-8697

Alabama Minority Consumer Council
Steve Bison, President
(256) 566-3818

Alabama Peer Specialist Association (APSA)
Leigh Few, President
For information contact Leigh Few (256) 221-0229

Region I

Albertville Soul Survivors
Yvonne Jones, President
Meets last Fridays 4:00 PM
Albertville, AL 35950
(256) 293-2268

Anniston Emotions Anonymous
c/o Roy Chisam, President
Meets Monday-Thursday 9:00-10:00 AM
Calhoun-Cleburne MHC
(256) 237-3796

Anniston NAMI Connection
Contact Sara Parfait (256)276-8834 or
Hazel Moore @ 256-831-7165
Meets Thursdays 2:00 PM
The Galley in The Tyler Center
731 Leighton Ave, Anniston
Saraparfait@bellsouth.net

Athens Consumer Outreach
Steve Pendergrass, President
Meets 2nd Tuesdays at 12:00 noon
Athens-Limestone Counseling Center
1307 E. Elm St., Athens, AL
For more info call Steve at (256) 771-1613

Boaz Angels Outreach
Ann Jenkins, President
Meets 3rd Thursdays at 11:00 AM
Boaz, AL 35957
(256) 593-2374

Cullman R.E.S.T.T.
Nancy Jester, President
Meets 3rd Friday at 1521 McNabb
Cullman, AL 35055
For additional info call Nancy (256) 347-4008

Cullman Wallace Support Group
Roberta Armstrong, President
Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday at 6:30 PM
Wallace State Community College
81 Main St. NW, Hanceville, AL
Tom Bevell Building, Room 608
(256) 734-8169

Decatur DBSA Morgan County
c/o Sue Brantley
MHA in Morgan County
(256) 353-1160
Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday at 6:30 PM
MHA Office 207 Commerce Circle SW
Decatur, AL 35602

Decatur The Serenity Group
Elizabeth Volonino, President
Meets 3rd Wednesdays at 10:00 AM
North Central MHC
4110 Highway 31 S., Decatur, AL
(256) 355-5548

Florence Shoals Sharing Group
Corey Holmes, President
Meets 1st & 3rd Sundays at 2:00 PM
North Wood United Methodist Church
Florence, AL 35630
(256) 765-2081

Huntsville DBSA Huntsville
Dave Hepler, President
Meets Thursday at 6:00 PM
United Way Building
701 Andrew Jackson Way
Huntsville, AL
(256) 539-1411

Huntsville MHCA in Huntsville
Helen Bishop, President
Meets 1st Mondays at 1:00 PM
Our Place Drop-In Center
205 Max Luther Dr. Huntsville
(256) 704-9133

Moulton Hogohege Consumer Wellness Center
Doris Smith, President
Meets last Monday of each month at 6:00 PM
John's Bar-B Que
15165 Court St. Moulton, AL
(256) 566-3315

Centre NAMI Connection/Centre
Contacts: Paul & Suzanne Theis
Meets Tuesdays at 6:30 PM
First Baptist Church ROC
300 East Bypass
Centre, AL 35960
256-779-5794
ptconstruction@tds.net

Region II

Bessemer Free Spirit Consumer Group, Inc.
Paul Irvin, President
Meets Tuesdays at 10:00 AM
Board Room Suite 201
UAB West, 985 9th Avenue SW
Bessemer
(205) 481-8562
Facilitator: Lisa Burks

Birmingham The Sharing Group of Birmingham
c/o Jesse Stinson, President
(205) 592-9773; 1-800-537-3806
(205) 592-9774 FAX
Meets: Sunday 6:00 PM
South Highland Presbyterian Church
2035 Highland Ave.

The Sharing Group/Hill Crest
Friday 6:00 PM
Hill Crest Hospital
6869 5th Ave South

The Sharing Group/Wednesday
Wednesday 2:00 PM
South Highland Presbyterian Church
2035 Highland Ave.

The Sunday Club
Sunday 2:00 PM
South Highland Presbyterian Church
2035 Highland Ave.

Birmingham Recovery, Inc.
Judy Fleck, President
Meets Saturday 2:00 PM
Southside Library
11th Ave, Five Points South
Birmingham
(205) 918-0746

Birmingham Young Adult Sharing Group
Meets Wednesday 9:00 AM
Mountain Brook Community Church
3001 Highway 280 E
Birmingham, AL
(205) 886-7553
yasg@gmail.com; www.yasg.org

Birmingham NAMI Connection/Birmingham
Contacts: William Ruff, (205) 566-8681,
cosmicray3@yahoo.com
Vickey (205) 933-6955
NAMI Birmingham, (205) 327-3777

NAMI Connection/Birmingham/Group 1
Tuesday at 12:30 PM, The 1920 Club
1920 10th Ave. South

NAMI Connection/Birmingham/Group 2
Monday at 7:00 PM
700 28th St South

Eutaw NAMI Connection/Eutaw
Meets Thursdays at 10:00
West Alabama Mental Health Center
301 Prairie Ave. Eutaw
Contact: Maurika Walton
205-482-8534
mlwalton27@gmail.com

Helena Recovery International
c/o Cliff Bennett
Meets Fridays at 10:00 AM
Helena United Methodist Church
2035 Highway 38
(205) 685-0520

Selma Cahaba Consumer Affairs Committee
Meets 2nd Tuesday & 4th Thursday 6:30 PM
Cahaba Consumer Affairs Drop-in Center
302 Franklin St., Selma
(334) 875-9911 or (334) 418-6525 M-F 1:00-6:00
www.cahabaconsumeraffairs.com

Tuscaloosa Emotions Anonymous
Meets Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM
Friendship House
505 19th Ave. N.
Tuscaloosa
(205) 345-1534

Tuscaloosa The Moodies (DBSA)
Harley Sullivan, President
Meets 2nd Thursday 7:00 PM
Friendship House
505 19th Ave. N.
Tuscaloosa
(205) 657-1054
www.moodies.org

Tuscaloosa DBSA Tuscaloosa County/Pathfinders
Meets Tuesday 6:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
729 Paul W. Bryant Dr. East, Tuscaloosa
(205) 826-3642

Tuscaloosa Support for Recovery/Tuscaloosa
Meets 3rd Sunday 4:00 PM
(205) 292-5438 almom205@aol.com

Region III

Montgomery DBSA Montgomery (2 Groups)
Meets 1st Thursday 7:00 AM
Frazier United Methodist Church and
3rd Saturday 12:00 noon
Montgomery Public Library
245 High & McDonough St
For more information contact
Clairepatrese (334) 652-1431

Auburn/Opelika Revelations of Self
Kathleen Roye, President
Meets last Friday of each month 6:30 PM
Frank Brown Rec. Center
235 Opelika Rd, Auburn
(334) 741-0228

Auburn/Opelika Center of Hope
Meets 1st Mondays, 12:30 PM
2300 Center Hill Drive, Bldg. #1
Opelika, AL 36274
For more information contact
Sylvia at (334) 703-3853 or 742-2124

Region IV

Dothan NAMI Connection/Dothan
Contact: Adele Morgan
334-702-2952
Meets Thursdays at 6:30 PM
Mt. Gilead Baptist Church
2864 Brannon Stand Rd., Dothan
Groups are held in Family Life Center
334-702-2952
Milton626@aol.com

Mobile Schizophrenics Anonymous/Mobile
Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesdays 11:00 AM
Government Street United Methodist Church, Mobile
(251) 438-5928



Alabama Department of Mental Health
 Office of Consumer Relations
 RSA Union • 100 N. Union Street
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 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1410

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ALABAMA CONSUMER-RUN DROP-IN CENTER LOCATIONS



FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

505 19th Avenue
 Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
 (205) 345-1534
 Open Monday - Thursday,
 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

THE 1920 CLUB

1920 10th Avenue South
 Birmingham, AL 35205
 Open Monday - Friday, 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
 Call (205) 933-6955

CAHABA DROP-IN CENTER

302 Franklin Street
 Selma, AL
 Open 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily
 (334) 418-6525 (Clubhouse number)
 If no answer, call (334) 875-1850
www.cahabaconsumeraffairs.com

SO-MI CENTER

4351 Midmost Drive
 Mobile, AL 36609
 (251) 342-0261
 Open Monday - Friday,
 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

OUR PLACE

205 Max Luther Drive,
 Huntsville, AL
 Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and
 Fridays from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 Open Thursdays from 1:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 For more information call (256) 746-4145

CLEAR VIEW

308 Chisholm Street
 Montgomery, AL
 Open Tuesdays and Thursdays
 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.
 Call (334) 239-7448 for further information



To find out more about how to start a drop-in center in your area, call the Office of Consumer Relations at 1 (800) 832-0952.