

TRACK MINISTRY NEWS

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pennsylvania Division, Inc.

"Sharing God's Love at Philadelphia Park"

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Mom and her children enjoyed the manger scene at the Christmas Party.

Christmas Party Fun 2005

Once again Molly Shallcross and her team presented a fabulous Christmas Party for the 132 children who were registered for the event. Each child received two gifts and a bag of goodies to take home. The bag included a beautifully illustrated story of Christmas in English and Spanish. From the manger scene craft, to the gifts from Santa to the pizza and cake, the day was a good memory for the kids and the parents.

We were glad that several of our Council members came to help in the effort, too. Rev. Linda Haughton, Vice-President; Don Hogeland, Treasurer; Hilda Garcia, Secretary, and Rey Roque were there to help the gift-giving to go smoothly and the pizza and cake to go quickly!

Walt Hughes and Gary Allgood again provided the entertainment. They even helped us to sing "Happy Birthday, Jesus."

A quote that we recently shared in the jockey room: "In a world that could not care less, let us be people who could not care more." –From Our Daily Bread devotional booklet

RTCA of PA Presents First Annual "Heroes of the Track" Award

The racetrack has many heroes—those who unselfishly give of their time and efforts to help people. The Council decided to honor one of those people this year. His name is Bob Valentine, a beloved Rec Hall Supervisor who has made an unforgettable impact on many lives of the stable employees.

On Monday, December 5, the Council held a luncheon to which it invited Bob, his wife Ellen, and the current Rec Hall Supervisors. We met in the Cotillion Room for delicious food and warm fellowship. Council President, Dr. Val Hastings, Sr., presented a plaque to Bob, which included the wording – ". . . Presented to Bob Valentine in recognition of his many years of devoted service to the Stable Employees at Philadelphia Park Racetrack." The Council also gave Bob a gift certificate to a local restaurant known to be one of Bob's favorites.

Despite suffering from Parkinson's Disease, Bob continues to work part-time as a Rec Hall Supervisor, and on his free time drives hundreds of miles each year transporting track workers to various appointments. As Bob always says, "I try to give them Jesus." This humble, kind and generous man is indeed an unforgettable person.



Mr. Bob Valentine (R), Rec Hall Supervisor, receives plaque and gift certificate from Council President, Rev. Dr. Val Hastings, for his outstanding service to the backstretch employees.

With the Churches

Our privilege was to speak at churches this fall as well as conduct tours for them at the track. On Sunday, October 2, the Chaplain led the Sunday communion service at First Baptist Church, Levittown-Fairless Hills, PA (New Pastor: Rev. Christine Holcomb). On October 16, he spoke for morning worship at First Baptist Church, Manayunk, in Philadelphia. On Sunday, November 13, we had a wonderful time teaching Sunday School and speaking at First Baptist Church, Pottstown, PA (Dr. Marvin Marsh, Pastor). The AB Women presented us with toys and toiletries for the track. Then,

Chaplain Cordell spoke at the AB Women's meeting at First Baptist Church, Lansdale, PA on Tuesday evening, December 6. Dave and Carolyn Gordon were gracious hosts for a delicious dinner before the gathering. An enthusiastic group of men and women attended. Not only did they present us with White Cross items for Christmas gifts to the stable employees, they also sent a very generous check for the ministry at the track.

We conducted track tours for two churches, this fall, including First Baptist Church, Lansdale, PA on Tuesday, November 15, and a quick tour for a group from Lewistown, PA, First Baptist, when they brought Christmas gifts to the track on December 5.



Chaplain Cordell knows that the horses at the Pony Barn love peppermint candy.

Chapel 'n Chow Nights

The folks on the backstretch love having occasional "Chapel 'n Chow" nights. A couple who work at the track provided a great meal for us on October 12. First Baptist Church, Levittown, PA, brought a meal on October 26. Then, the YWCA Board, Staff and volunteers were most kind to bring wonderful meals in November and December. Their interest in the track has been a real bright spot in this past year. On December 14, the women of Harriman United Methodist Church pitched in with the YWCA Board to provide the meal. We enjoyed soup and hoagies on December 21, thanks to the Christmas funds from PTHA.

God Things at the Track

◆◆"Chaplain, I have to talk with you as soon as possible." These anxious words came in a phone call from "Bob," who is in recovery. When he arrived at the office he said, "I'm hanging from my fingernails to keep from going to the bar." Situations around him had brought him to his desperation. Thank God, "Bob" stayed sober for one more day because we were available.

◆◆This did not happen at the track, but one of our Rec Hall Supervisors had a wonderful experience. Mr. Guy Purnell works in a hospital on weekends in Philadelphia. A few weeks ago the mother of a young man approached Guy, asking him to visit her son who had fallen four stories from a building. Of course, he was very seriously injured. The man had been an atheist until the accident, and was very open to the gospel when Guy went to see him. In fact, Guy led the man to faith in Christ. We thank God for Guy's deep faith commitment.

◆◆As I began to give my devotional at the Jockey Room group recently, a valet interrupted me, indicating that he wanted to say something. He then

said, "Chaplain, these worship times mean so much to me. Because of them I have gotten God back into my life, and I am so glad for that." Indeed, his words made my day!

COUNCIL MEMBERS

RTCA, PA Division, Inc.

Rev. Dr. J. Val Hastings, Sr., President

Rev. Linda Haughton, Vice-President

Mrs. Hilda Garcia, Secretary

Mr. Donald Hogeland, Treasurer

Rev. Thomas Brooks

Rev. Dr. Jack Cordell, Chaplain

Rev. Nelson Krute

Mr. Rey Roque

Chaplain Emeritus: Rev. Nick Salios

Thanks to the Churches

Because of the faithful commitment of the American Baptist Churches participating in the Overland White Cross project and other churches, we were able to offer a Merry Christmas to nearly 150 children and their parents, plus about 180 single adults who live in the dorms at Philadelphia Park. Your contributions mean far more than we can express. Listed are the 46 churches who so generously gave: Baptist Temple, Blue Bell, PA; Belmont Baptist, Broomall, PA; Bensalem Presbyterian, Bensalem, PA; Brandywine Baptist, Chads Ford, PA; Chapel Road Baptist, Coatesville, PA; Community Church, Barrington, IL; Crossroads Community Baptist, Erie, PA; Cunard Baptist, Fayetteville, WV; Federated Church, East Smithfield, PA; Grace Baptist, Germantown (Philadelphia), PA; Greenfield Baptist, North East, PA; Hatboro Baptist, Hatboro, PA; Lansdowne Baptist, Lansdowne, PA; Logan Valley Baptist, Bellwood, PA; Lower Merion Baptist, Bryn Mawr, PA; Lower Providence Baptist, Eagleville, PA; Mayfair-Cornwell Baptist, Philadelphia, PA; Middletown Baptist, Media, PA; Osburn Community Baptist, Osburn, ID; Parkesburg Baptist, Parkesburg, PA; Phoenixville Baptist, Phoenixville, PA; Point Pleasant Baptist, Point Pleasant, PA; Prospect Hill Baptist, Prospect Park, PA; Third Baptist, Strafford, NH; Ulysses Baptist, Ulysses, PA; Upland Baptist, Upland, PA; Upper Merion Baptist, King of Prussia, PA; Victoria Baptist Church, Springfield, PA; Wesleyville Baptist, Erie, PA; West Exeter Baptist, Exeter, RI; Windsor Baptist, Chester Springs, PA; Windsor Baptist, Uwchland, PA

First Baptist Churches of – Bellvedere, IL; Emporium, PA; Gypsum, KS; Hotch Kiss, CO; Kennett Square, PA; Lansdale, PA; Leavenworth, KS; Levittown-Fairless Hills, PA; Lewistown, PA; Manayunk (Philadelphia), PA; New Milford, PA; Oxford, PA; Pottstown, PA; Pottsville, PA; Reading, PA and Tioga, PA.

In addition to the churches, numerous individuals provided gifts and volunteered many hours of their time and energy in order to make Christmas 2005 a memorable event in the lives of the people of the racetrack.

Scenes from the Chaplain's 2005 Christmas Activities



This delivery crew made lots of the dorm residents happy.



These sisters were having a great time enjoying the music at the Christmas Party.



Even Santa Claus found time to gallop around the track a few times before heading out with his sleigh and reindeer.



Molly, Sharon and Hilda spent lots of time filling laundry bags with goodies for the people.



Trainer Carlos Guerrero (L) gladly accepts Santa from Chaplain Cordell. The prize was from a PTHA sponsored benefit, which helped a seriously injured exercise rider.



The "Country Store" is always a big hit with the children. Each child received three coupons to "buy" three gently used items.

Special Events Scheduled for 2006

- Easter Egg Hunt – Sat., April 8
- Independence Day Picnic – Fri., June 30
- Pig Roast – Fri., September 1
- Costume Party – Sat., October 28
- Christmas Party – Sat., December 16

