

TRACK MINISTRY NEWS

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pennsylvania Division, Inc.

"Sharing God's Love at Philadelphia Park"

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Easter Egg Hunt 2008



These children enjoyed finding eggs!

Instead of rain we had a beautiful, but cool, day for our Annual Easter Egg Hunt. As always, the children loved scrambling to find all those eggs. They had fun making crafts, meeting the Easter Bunny and gobbling down lots of hot dogs provided by Ron Finley's Backstretch Café. Molly believes that we had the best ever Easter Party. Thanks to several volunteers from First Baptist Church, Levittown-Fairless Hills, PA, the children went home with special memories.



Rev. Linda Haughton, our Council President, served up hot dogs to the children. Check out those ears!!

Internet Access for the Workers

Thanks to the generous help of the "Smarty Jones Fund" provided by Mrs. Pat Chapman, the stable employees can now gain access to the Internet. Workers will check out a computer through the Chaplain's Office and they will be on their way to all the information provided by high speed Internet technology.

Pat Leopard (see picture below), who worked at bringing the project to life, was the first backstretch employee to use the new laptop computer to get onto the Internet.



The guys look on while Pat logs in.

SUMC Church Tours the Track

It was a blustery, cold Saturday on March 29 when a group from Swarthmore United Methodist Church visited the racetrack. Since seminarian Ethel Guy is a member of the church, they had some inside information before they stepped onto the grounds. To their great delight, the group spent several minutes asking questions of Jockey Maria Charles. They went home with a much fuller understanding of Ethel's ministry as well as a new appreciation for what goes on behind the scenes at the racetrack.



Everyone bundled up for the tour of the track by folks from Swarthmore United Methodist Church.

Update on Chaplain's Health

Thank you for praying for me during the chemotherapy and radiation treatments for non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. It was indeed an interesting "adventure." The most recent PET scan was "completely negative."

During the treatments, I had wonderful support and help from so many. My dear wife, Jan, lent such great moral support and showed true patience! The Council Members all pitched in even more in order to get us through it all. Chaplains and National Board Members have constantly sent encouraging words. Dr. Enrique Torres informed me that on the day of my first radiation session, the RTCA headquarters staff stopped to pray for me at the exact time the treatments began. Churches and individuals sent such great cards, too. Thank you for modeling Christian love!



At the end of radiation treatments, patients get to ring the bell. The Chaplain loved this ritual! (His hair is returning --- slowly.) The plaque says: "Ring, bell, ring, loud and clear, my treatment is over and I'm outa here."

Ethel's Corner

People always look so puzzled when I tell them that I work in a racetrack ministry. "What do you do," they ask, "bless the racehorses?" But they nod in understanding when I tell them that our ministry is like any other one; we tend to the spiritual needs of the people who come through our doors, we pray with them, and we teach them about God's will for us to live in harmony with His purposes. Often we help them through problems and crises in their lives, and we rejoice with them in praise for God's goodness.

Jesus did not work out of a church-type building. He walked among the people where they lived and worked on the earth, and in so doing taught the religious leaders of his day to go to where the people were in need. St. Paul traveled throughout the Middle East, making his living as a tent maker, and spreading the Gospel along the way. That's what each one of us is called to do every day.

Soon I will be leaving the track for the summer. I am going to do some engineering consulting work in the oil industry. The location will be different – oil rigs and refinery towers instead of horse barns – but I will work to keep my focus the same. I won't be preaching or leading services, but I will be walking among people where they live and work. I will be helping them learn how to live their workday life in a more productive way. Please pray that God will speak through me so I may carry a message of encouragement and personal value to everyone I meet. That is how Jesus walked upon the earth. That is truly how we are called to walk in His steps, every day, every place we go. The world is our parish and the byways of life, our cathedral.



Council Members - RTCA, PA Division, Inc.

Seated (L to R) Rey Roque, Secretary; Donald Hogeland, Treasurer; Chaplain Cordell; Rev. Tom Brooks, Vice-President; Rev. Linda Haughton, President.
New Member (Not in picture): Bobbie Enke
Standing (L to R): Rev. Christine Holcomb; Mrs. Hilda Garcia; Mr. Dan Sourwine, and Rev. Nelson Krute.
Council Member Emeritus – Rev. Dr. Nicholas Salios

Chapel 'n Chow Nights

We are blessed to have numerous churches and organizations willing and ready to bring meals to the track for our Chapel 'n Chow program. On February 13, several employees from General Electric brought a fabulous meal. On February 20, the Board of the Bensalem YWCA provided a great dinner. In March (19th) Harriman United Methodist Church again came with plenty of food for all. In April (13th) Bensalem Presbyterian Church and (23rd) First Baptist Church of Levittown-Fairless Hills, PA delivered wonderful meals for all to enjoy. God does such great things for us through the faithful, generous action of such dedicated people. We indeed thank God for them.

Council Members Attend National RTCA Meetings in Seattle

In March, our Council Treasurer, Don Hogeland and I (Linda Haughton, President) were blessed to be able to attend the RTCA Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington. The 2008 theme was "Jesus: True Vine – New Wine", emphasizing evangelism and the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus.

It was so good to celebrate and share with our good friends Chaplain Emeritus Rev. Dr. Nicholas Salios and Chaplain's Assistant Emeritus Rose Salios, as well as other RTCA staff, Chaplains, and Council members from across the U.S. and even as far away as Argentina and Australia.

We experienced the blessing of a worship service at Emerald Downs Race Track, which is set in a beautiful location overlooking majestic Mt. Rainier. Our final banquet was aboard the Royal Argosy as we cruised Puget Sound and enjoyed a beautiful view of downtown Seattle. Lovely dinner music was provided by two of our RTCA Chaplains. RTCA history was made as a new partnership between RTCA and Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky, was formalized, opening many new opportunities, including a move of our national office to Kentucky.

And then there were light moments of sharing talents, fun, and laughter: Chaplain Joe ("Joey D") DiDonato (The Meadows, Pittsburgh) donning "shades" and performing a "rap" birthday song to Rose Salios; Chaplain David Dow (Penn National, Harrisburg) singing an inspirational song; and six of us (I'm not saying who) squeezed into a compact Toyota Corolla.

Altogether, we experienced great fellowship, great inspiration, and great fun as well as conducting the business on the agenda.

By Council President, Rev. Linda Haughton

