

# TRACK MINISTRY NEWS

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pennsylvania Division, Inc.

*"Sharing God's Love at Philadelphia Park"*

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## IN THIS ISSUE

**Santa and Barbaro Came to the Annual Children's Christmas Party**

**Second Annual "Heroes of the Track" Award Presented to Bob Bliss**

**Churches Toured the Track**

**Chapel 'n Chow Nights**

**God Things at the Track**

**Contributors to the Annual Christmas Events**



Two of Santa's helpers from Girl Scout Cadette Troop 996 had an adventure making the children happy at the Annual Christmas Party. They are wearing "Chaplain Volunteer" tee shirts provided for each one who came to assist at the party.

## **Santa and Barbaro Came to the Children's Christmas Party**

The big day arrived on Saturday, December 16. Santa was all set to arrive, the kids were all registered, the Country Store was in place, the volunteers eagerly awaited their charges, the trio began to sing, Elwood's camera was ready to snap away and Molly and Joe Shallcross steadied themselves at the registration tables. But someone else would please the children on that day – Barbaro. Yes, Barbaro would attend the party! Well, not exactly the real Barbaro, but the famous horse in the form of a beanie baby would thrill the kids. Thanks to Linda Shepulefski of the Small Mall of Blossburg, PA, children three years and older got their very own Barbaro!

This year Molly was blessed to have the services of many volunteers for the party, including members of Cadette Troop 996 and several teens from the Excite Group (teens in training) from the Building a

Better Bensalem Today Committee. The two groups have outstanding adult leaders, and they work extremely well with the children. We thank God for their labor of love for the racetrack kids.

In addition, we thank all of the churches and individuals who sent checks, boxes loaded with toys for the kids and toiletries for the dorm residents to enable them to have a Merry Christmas.

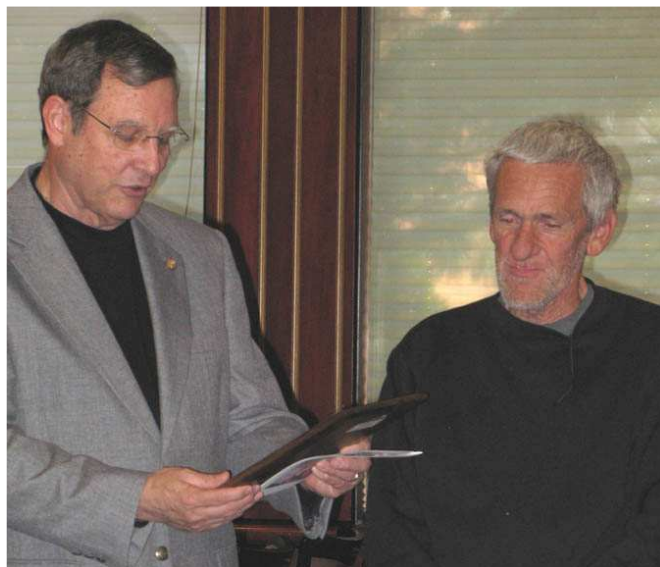
## **Second Annual "Heroes of the Track" Award Presented to Bob Bliss**

Monday, December 6, was a memorable day for Bob Bliss as well as the Council of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America's Pennsylvania Division. On that day we presented to stable employee, Bob Bliss, our second annual "Heroes of the Track" award. Not only has Bob worked for many years on the backstretch, he served his country in Viet Nam as a Navy SEAL.

Because of his devotion to the people of the track, Bob gives numerous hours of his time each week to distribute clothing, bedding, and other items to the backstretch workers. In addition to those distributions, Bob organized children's Christmas gifts by age and gender as they arrived during the fall. Day after day Bob hauled the boxes to our storage rooms, then separated and organized the items.

Bob has faithfully given his time and effort to our office for the six years that Chaplain Cordell has been at the track. Because of his selfless devotion, we were happy to present the award to Bob. Dr. J. Val Hastings, Sr., gladly presented Bob a lovely plaque and a check in recognition of his service to the people of the racetrack. Present to see Bob receive the award were his niece Kathy Piluso and her husband, Ted, an exercise rider at the track.

Bob was totally surprised and deeply moved by the presentation. Again, we congratulate Bob!



Bob Bliss (Right) listens as Chaplain Cordell reads the words from the plaque given to him as recipient of the annual "Heroes of the Track" award.



Walt Hughes, Gary Allgood and Jody King made the Christmas Party even more enjoyable with their lively music.

### ***Churches Toured the Track***

From October through December, we were pleased to conduct track tours for the following groups: Oxford Circle Baptist Church of Philadelphia; members of the Building a Better Bensalem Today committee; and, Westgate Baptist Church, Lancaster, PA. These churches and the committee have shown genuine interest in the work at the racetrack.

### ***Chapel 'n Chow Nights***

In October, the people enjoyed delicious meals provided by the Building a Better Bensalem Today Diversity Committee (4<sup>th</sup>), the Youth Group of St. Bede Roman Catholic Church, Langhorne PA, (18<sup>th</sup>) and First Baptist Church, Levittown-Fairless Hills PA (25<sup>th</sup>).

In November and December, several members of Harriman United Methodist Church, Bristol PA, brought fantastic meals for everyone. Despite the very busy schedules during those months, the church very kindly and generously provided the food, which we all enjoyed.

### ***God Things at the Track***

One morning I was walking through the Administration Building and someone stopped me and asked if I were the Chaplain. After saying, "Yes" to him, the gentleman said, "I just want to thank you for all you do around here. I hear things from people, and you do a lot of good." That statement could be said to all the Chaplains across the nation who daily serve God. It was not just about this Chaplain.

"George" is in my AA/NA program, having been forced to come if he wishes to have a license to work on the track. After a few weeks of meeting with him, he looked at me and said, "Chaplain, I know God has put you into my life at this time. I know he has." George is showing real progress, and God is indeed working in his life in some special ways.

God wonderfully blessed us during November and December with the arrival of so many boxes of toys and toiletries for the children and for the dorm residents, who so very deeply appreciate your loving concern for them. We were able to help some families who had very serious needs for their children this year. It was because you cared. God is good!

### ***Thanks to Churches, Individuals and Organizations who Gave Christmas Gifts***

The following gave generously toward our Annual Christmas Party and events:

**Churches (Total - 47):** Baptist Church of West Chester, West Chester PA; Bensalem Presbyterian Church, Bensalem PA; Chapel Road Baptist Church, Coatesville PA; Crossroads Community Baptist Church, Erie PA; Cunard Baptist Church, Fayetteville WV; Federated Church, Livingston NJ; Federated Church, East Smithfield PA; Echo Lake Baptist Church, West Milford NJ; Greenfield Baptist Church, North East PA; Greenwood Baptist Church, Hewitt NJ; Gypsum Baptist Church, Gypsum KS; Ledgewood Baptist Church,

Ledgewood NJ; Logan's Valley Baptist Church, Bellwood PA; Memorial Baptist Church, Yardville NJ; Osburn Community Baptist Church, Osborn ID; Parkesburg Baptist Church, Parkesburg PA; Parkway Baptist Church, Willingboro NJ; Point Pleasant Baptist Church, Point Pleasant PA; Preakness Baptist Church, Wayne NJ; Scotch Plains Baptist Church, Scotch Plains NJ; Seaview Baptist Church, Linwood NJ; Third Baptist Church, Center Strafford NH; Trinity Baptist Church, Scranton PA; Wesleyville Baptist Church, Erie PA; West Exeter Baptist Church, Exeter RI; Westgate Baptist Church, Lancaster PA.

#### **First Baptist Church(s):**

**In Illinois --** Blenidere;

**In New Jersey --** Browns Mills; New Brunswick; Passaic; Patterson; Princeton; Swedesboro; Westfield; Wildwood.

**In Pennsylvania --** Emporium; Lansdale; Lewistown; New Milford; Levittown-Fairless Hills; Oxford; Manayunk (Philadelphia); Reading; Tioga; Union City; Wellsboro;

**In West Virginia --** Burnsville.

**Individuals, Businesses/Organizations:** Ms. Susan McBride; Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Reynolds of Reynolds Hay and Feed Co.; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sandel; Rev. and Mrs. Linda Shepulefski of The Small Mall of Blossburg PA.

As they do each year, the Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (Mr. Mike Ballezzi, Executive Director) contributed very generously to the Christmas events.

We thank God for his kindness through you to the lives of those served by your generosity.



Lynn, Larry and Pat worked hard as they assembled the gifts for the dorm residents.



**Council Members of RTCA, PA Division, Inc.**

(Seated L to R) Dr. J. Val Hastings, Sr., President; Rev. Linda Haughton, Vice-President; Donald Hogeland, Treasurer; Hilda Garcia, Secretary;

(Standing L to R) Rev. Thomas Brooks; Rev. Nelson Krute; Rev. Jack Cordell; Dan Sourwine; Rey Roque



