

## Thoughts from the Spiritual Director

by *Steve Fields*

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters! New and exciting things are happening with Bluegrass REC. Father Molina has been sharing some ideas with a couple of team members, and one of his ideas is to take an REC weekend to the guys on the fourth floor. In case you're not familiar with this floor, it houses those residents who are terminally ill and rarely leave their area. This is a wonderful idea and an opportunity to share the love of Christ (even though Jesus is already there) with men who would love to see us and Christ's love through us. The tentative plans are to hold this weekend sometime in August.

Additionally, these men, with the help of one of our members who supplied them with materials, are making stuffed bears for terminally ill children in the Lexington area.

Other news is that Blackburn Walk #6 is over and it was Spirit led! The men on that walk were singers. You know how on Friday, most of the time the residents are reluctant to sing out? Well, not this bunch. They sang strong, right from the get go. One of the most moving experiences that I have had in a long time was the closing song that they sang for all of the volunteers called *Desire*. It's a song that everyone who goes through Roederer Correctional Complex learns in chapel. It was a beautiful song about God, and the passion with which the men sang was inspiring. There were not many dry eyes in the conference room, both volunteers and residents.

In closing, I would like to quote Peter Sage: "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out, screaming, 'Woo Hoo, what a ride!'"

## There's a place for you in REC ministry

by *Carolyn Bottom*

As a member of the REC board, I would like to say what a blessing it is to serve in such a Spirit-filled ministry. I have been involved with Bluegrass REC for eight years at FMC, Atwood, and Blackburn prisons. I praise God for calling me to this ministry. The opportunity to serve Christ by visiting those in prison has blessed me far more than I ever could have asked or imagined.

If you feel the Lord is calling you to become involved with Bluegrass REC or to be more involved in prison ministry, we are available to answer any questions you may have and to offer you this invitation to be a part of what God is doing in these prisons. You may feel called to be prayer warriors or would like to provide some of the special surprises (agape or wheat) the REC residents experience during the weekend. You may have a talent or gift that God has reserved for such a time as this. Or you may wish to donate a monetary gift to be used in the ministry. All donations are tax-deductible and any checks should be made out to Bluegrass REC and mailed to P.O. Box 54918, Lexington, KY 40555.

I hope you are planning to be at the gathering on May 8<sup>th</sup> where we can all get together and share stories and ideas and, of course, good food and fellowship. May God richly bless you one and all.

## Experience REC

by *Steve Ball*

In thinking about my past REC experiences, I find it so difficult to put into words what's in my heart, but here goes. When asked why I participate in REC walks, I always refer to the hope that it brings to inmates, God's children. I can't help but talk about the change I see in the people and the atmosphere as the Holy Spirit moves during the weekend. I guess I get a kick out of seeing

people's attitudes about God change as they are transformed. On Friday when we begin, things start out rather quiet or somber, but on Sundays, the excitement and atmosphere are at a level that I'm sure many of these men and women never dreamed was possible within their circumstances.

Another reason I enjoy REC so much is that I can actually feel God's love flow out of me as I participate on the weekends and the reunions that follow. I remember when a resident in the men's facility asked me why I do this. My response was that I truly want others to experience the feelings that I felt when I asked God into my heart. As I spoke, I realized that this must be the love of God flowing through me. God loves us all so much that He wants to establish a relationship with us. I feel that during these walks, God uses the team and all who participate to display His love and He touches hearts in ways you could never imagine. I'm so thankful that God uses me despite my weaknesses and failures.

For those of you who know me and have served with me, I thank you for your patience and everything you have taught me. What an awesome group of people! Please continue to pray for me, assist me and strengthen me despite my shortcomings. I am truly honored to know you and serve with you. *DeColores!*

## Wheat Keepers for Walks

by *Steve & Dionne Fields*

Greetings all! Have you ever served on the Wheat Team for an REC? The Wheat Team works behind the scenes and is in charge of things such as gift Bibles, Prayer Chapel and communion supplies, banners, wheat letters and cards, team manuals, etc. Each REC has a different Wheat Team.

There are also Wheat Keepers who oversee the storage building and the items in it all year long. Currently, this responsibility is being handled by Steve and Dionne Fields. They ensure the

availability and readiness of all supplies and materials prior to each REC, such as updated team manuals. Then the Wheat Team steps in to take over responsibility for these items during each individual walk.

Having Wheat Keepers eliminates the burden that in the past was a part of serving on the Wheat Team. Now the Wheat Team simply picks up the materials and supplies, which are organized and ready to be handed out. The system has become much more streamlined and less of a burden for anyone. If you have questions about serving on the Wheat Team, feel free to contact any REC Board member.

## Meet Carolyn Wyckoff, REC Board Chair

Isn't this resurrected newsletter a great idea? The board realized that this part of the body of Christ (REC) has not stayed as connected as we would like due to time and distance. If you have not participated in a walk in the last few years, many of the names of the people on the board are not familiar to you – including mine. So, please allow me to introduce myself.

About 13 years ago, Bob Loy and Mike Malone asked me to speak at a Thursday night class they were conducting at Atwood. At that time, I was in management at a local radio station and they wanted me to talk about what I looked for during interviews to help the women prepare for reentering the workforce. From there, I talked about being a single mother, budgeting and other challenges we face. So, as their guest, I went often enough to require a badge and to get to know more about REC. But that was the extent of it because I believed God had called me to teach the four year old Sunday School class at church. When asked to go into FMC, I declined. Even without the fence, it looked imposing and I knew I would not be comfortable there. But God didn't stop calling and refusing was what became uncomfortable. Then I went on an Emmaus Walk and my view of the world began to change. Now, not only have I served on many walks, I facilitate a class on Monday nights at Atwood, as well as one on Friday nights at FMC.

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God provided me the opportunity to serve at a cookout at Roederer and most recently as the Lay Director at Blackburn.

This year I will serve as Chair for the Bluegrass REC Board, and on behalf of the board, I thank you for your service and welcome you to contact any of us with ideas. If you haven't been on a walk recently, they are still a blessing and the harvest is still great. I look forward to meeting you soon.

## Blackburn REC Walk #6 *by Carolyn Wyckoff*

The Blackburn REC Walk this year was a blessing for everyone. Though it was a cold weekend outside, we felt the fire of the Holy Spirit everyday. Sixty men signed up to attend the walk; however, due to circumstances of work and communication, only 55 began the weekend. All seven of the alumni were dedicated and showed a true servant's heart. If you have not been to Blackburn, you may not realize the limited space that Wheat has to work in so they (and Linda Wolfe) did an exceptional job.

When I think back to the weekend, I remember the music. Having heard these songs many times before, it was a surprise—they seemed new and exciting. It was apparent all weekend that Doug Sell and Gary Altergott enjoyed their roles as music leaders. There was exceptional talent in the room with perhaps an angel or two joining us.

Blackburn is a state camp so, while still a prison, the rules were more relaxed than at many other institutions. Allen & Karen Tipton were allowed to share donuts for the Saturday morning break – a delightful conclusion for his Prodigal talk from Friday night.

The team demonstrated God's love every moment of the weekend and in turn, we each felt especially blessed to be included in this part of God's plan.

Forty nine men finished the weekend. There wasn't enough time to hear all of the testimonies, many of them tearful. We do not have a lay director for the next walk and while I agree it is work, it is also a special blessing. Please prayerfully consider your role in this ministry and how God is calling you to serve the men at Blackburn State Prison.



Bluegrass REC  
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## First ever REC VOLUNTEER FAMILY REUNION

*by Dianna Layne*

Do you know how many Bluegrass REC volunteers serve at Atwood, FMC and Blackburn? Do you know the people who were on the last three walks? Do you know the members of the Bluegrass REC Board? Chances are, you cannot say "yes" to all three of these questions.

There are over 250 REC volunteers in the Bluegrass community. The Board members wanted a way for all of us to meet and get to know each other. So on Friday, May 8th, at 6:00 p.m., we will have the first ever Bluegrass REC Family Reunion. The pot-luck reunion will take place at Grace Christian Fellowship at 1648 Lexington Road in Georgetown, KY. The Bluegrass REC Board will provide hamburgers, hotdogs and buns, and we invite each of you to bring a covered dish. Come! Enjoy the fellowship! Get to know other REC volunteers. Get reconnected with the REC family.

Let us know you are coming by sending an R.S.V.P. to [BluegrassREC@yahoo.com](mailto:BluegrassREC@yahoo.com). We hope to see everyone there! May God be blessed. DeColores!

### REC Board

**Carolyn Wyckoff**  
*Chair*

(859) 433-6317 / [reflectgodslight@yahoo.com](mailto:reflectgodslight@yahoo.com)

**Steve Ball**

(502) 316-2330 / [spottedboone@hotmail.com](mailto:spottedboone@hotmail.com)

**Carolyn Bottom**

*Vice Chair/Blackburn Liaison*

(859) 332-8244 / [cbottom@bellsouth.net](mailto:cbottom@bellsouth.net)

**Dionne Fields**

*Treasurer*

(502) 604-3076 / [dgfields@roadrunner.com](mailto:dgfields@roadrunner.com)

**Steve Fields**

*Spiritual Director*

(502) 839-4890 / [swfields@roadrunner.com](mailto:swfields@roadrunner.com)

**Dianna Layne**

*Secretary*

(859) 771-1084 / [diannal@ibc-lex.org](mailto:diannal@ibc-lex.org)

**Doug Sell**

(859) 296-1038 / [dsell@lexmark.com](mailto:dsell@lexmark.com)