

RC Newsletter . . .

CHANCE & CHANGE I

Are you a planner?

Oh, I don't mean in the normal everyday sense of orchestrating dinner plans or having a to-do list.

I mean, are you a planner in the "this is how things must be accomplished and this is the time frame that is acceptable," compulsive, somewhat fanatical, litigious way..

I am. Comes with the territory of being the oldest sibling of four, a desire to have everything "just so," and the innate heart of an educator.

You see, I always wanted to be a teacher. That was my plan.

Ask my parents. I was always playing school. Much to my friends' dismay, I was very particular about everything... from the setup of the classroom in our basement, to the correct way to arrange the papers and supplies. See? A planner.

Thirty years ago this month, I was a junior at Susquehanna University. I was just about to turn 22. (To put things in perspective, Tirus, our bass singer of 4 years, just turned 22... man, seems so young!)

I was on the fast track to be graduated with my degree in English/Communication and start my teaching career...my dream, my plan.

But in that February of 1985, I did something pretty reckless, fairly brazen and certainly not part of the plan...

I auditioned for Re-Creation!

I had met the cast members the year before as they were students at SU. They'd been endeavoring in their first full-time year of mission to the VA Medical Centers and the 10th edition was rounding the corner into the 11th.

After our freshman year, a very good friend had joined the cast. And I spent the next two years following the group, catching programs in churches, fairs and the like.

And I thought, "Well, now it's my turn."

The high tenor for the group (some guy named Jim Worthing!) was ready to transition to his next career phase and Re-Creation would need a replacement.

I contacted the office, prepared my song selections and readied myself for a long day of interviews, dance routines and vocal exercises in Weber Chapel Auditorium.

Now I had performed on this stage countless times. And my familiarity led me to be a bit more comfortable than I may have been otherwise. Also, I had struck up casual friendships with the other members in the cast, who had

been students, and I felt at ease. Nervous. But excited.

Along with the other auditionees, I learned choreography to the RC 10 opener, "Magic." We were then placed with current cast members and we presented the song, as a group, complete with microphones, lights and staging!

I thought that part went pretty well.

Then I sang my two selections for everyone present...I thought those went well, too! So far so good.

At the end of the evening, in the basement rehearsal hall, after some further vocal exercises, more review and yet another full dance presentation...I was given the news...

I didn't make it.

I was disappointed. Crushed, really. But not entirely surprised.

Another young man there that day had an incredible, high range and a vocal quality that much more matched up to Jimmy's. The choice made perfect sense.

My first professional audition had been a bust! Back to the original plan.

I recovered quickly enough and finished out my junior year of school, moved to central Missouri (my home state) and did what every other college kid did during the summer...I worked!

I kept my Re-Creation 10 "Magic" cassette tape(!) handy and listened to it quite a bit.

At some point during the middle of that summer of '85, I received, out-of-the-blue, a call from Hugh Brooks.

"Why on earth is he calling?"
 "What could he possibly want?"
 "How did he find me?"

I don't recall the particulars of the conversation, but I know that I had a quick realization that the other young man initially picked would not be remaining with the group and that there would be an opening for me.

"When can you get here?" asked Brooks.
 "Tomorrow." I said.

I hung up the phone, drove to the restaurant where I had been working to collect my final check and a few choice words of disapproval from the owners...meh, what did they know...I was going to be in Re-Creation!

I flew to Baltimore the next day. My parents picked me up. Joani Patterson took over transit from near Harrisburg and drove me to a camp in northern PA

where the 11th edition was training. I was in rehearsal that night.

And onstage 3 days later!

I had some catching up to do. Some expectations to meet. And some to defy.

But it was a glorious 2 years! I count those people, still, as my best of friends. My family.

I keep in touch with most of them. And when we do get together in the same space, there is an energy, a familiarity, that is unequalled.

After my stint in RC 11 & 12, I returned to SU, finished out two more years of school and earned two degrees. One in English, one in Spanish. I was set. On with the plan!

My first full-time teaching position was for a school system in central Illinois. I got to set up my own room and arrange everything "just so." It was heaven. Mary and I started a show choir which conspicuously looked a LOT like Re-Creation and which soon became the toast of the area!

Re-Creation had impacted my plan in profound ways. My being a cast member colored my teaching in the classroom, informed my directing of high school show choirs, musicals and dance troupes and even improved my professional interviews.

Another glorious 3 years! The plan was working! I was set!

Or so I thought!

In February of 1993, I contacted Hugh Brooks to wish him Happy Birthday. Some of you are aware that his and my birthday are one day apart.

I hadn't talked to him in a while, but I was motivated that February of 1993 to give him a shout. We talked, made plans to visit when I came back east and cordially said goodbye.

And as you well know now, my plan eventually changed, leading Mary and I to come along in the fall of 1993 to take over the day-to-day operations of Re-Creation.

Now we're in February of 2015. And we are auditioning the young people who will represent us in the 41st edition starting this summer...

and we are in the midst of some major changes!

The call to mission is stronger than ever. And we are experiencing His hand as the nature of implementing the service changes and grows.

Throughout my life God has brought me to a wonderful place of realization that plans can be fluid. And every now and then He allows me to see how it all works together.

How training in school, RC and the professional world all draw together to equip us to foster His people.

You see, my having been IN the group aids me so much in LEADING the group. I know what it's like to travel the country and serve veterans every day. I recall being sick and still having to do the show. I remember what it's like to be stuck in the van with people you love, but who, after 10 hours, get on your very last nerve! Ha-ha!

I know what it's like to have a director prod you to be your best, to correct and guide you when necessary and how amazing it is when everything clicks and you're recognized for your effort!

I have carried that knowledge through teaching, directing and parenting! Invaluable!

I am also FULLY aware of what it means to be involved in something so much bigger than I am.

My story is one that demonstrates God's dynamic hand in this entire mission.

The kid who didn't make the team came back to coach a whole new generation.

"Coach." Cast member Jeff Habecker used to call me that in RC 27. It never caught on...but I like it.

Good coaches inspire, motivate, discipline and push. And all coaches have played the game...they love the game. I love the game still. And all good coaches teach.

Guess I'm in my original plan after all, huh?

Thank you for the privilege to shape your young ambassadors into a team of service. Thank you for enabling them to honor the heroes who have freed and secured our nation! Thank you for your dedication to America and her heroes!

YOU are His hands of providence. YOU have been in His plan all along as well! As you continue reading, you'll find snippets and stories that tell and re-tell of the miraculous hand of God in this mission.

Now, I'm not saying it was God's plan to have the trailer stolen 3 years ago, or to have some group members quit mid-year as they have on occasion, or for us to suffer some of the losses or drama we have endured.

I gave up trying to reconcile those things years ago.

I look for God in the 'going forward' from trial and tragedy. I think taking something seemingly terrible and bringing through it some sort of blessing is His nature...His plan. So, I'm not complaining or raising an alarm. I'm sharing. With you.

Some may dismiss these events as coincidence. As chance. But we know better, don't we?

In true appreciation,

Jay



Jay Muller, Director
Re-Creation USA, Inc.

CHANCE & CHANGE II

We can't count the number of times the vehicles have broken down in remote areas of the country when there 'just happened to be' a garage nearby, or even a garage owned by a veteran or an Elk who especially wanted to help us after they'd discovered the group's mission. Thank you for angels of mercy on the road!



I also could not adequately relate the number of times, in the midst of a financial concern, a surprise check has blessed us. An extra donation from BVL one year. The funds to purchase a new trailer from Florida Elks another. And of course, when the truck and trailer were stolen 2 1/2 years ago YOU were the ones who stepped in and helped fill the need! Thank you for the response of concerned friends!

Just this past year, we needed to cast 9 new members. In 22 years, we had only at one other time needed that many people. We were sure we'd be searching and panicking. No! God brought them right to us. And this group has been an exemplary one in their desire to cooperate and learn from each other and pass that fellowship on to the veterans! Thank you for these marvelous ambassadors!

After a dramatic cut in funding about 13 years ago, the program was indeed in danger of being severely diminished, if not cut entirely. The very week I received the news of the crippling budget cuts, I met the director of HHV at a show in Indianapolis. We talked and HHV stepped in to help sustain the shows in the VA for the next 10 years! Thank you for patriots willing to answer the call of service!



We have revolved music arrangers, cast members, staff members, technicians, administrators, board members and the like over the years, for myriad reasons. Some of this restructuring has been quite dramatic. Some has been part of the normal flow of a life in the business world. In each case, though, God has provided the means to recoup and regroup. I've always equated seasons of change to an ever-challenging game of chess. The pieces may

move around a lot, but you're still playing! Thank you for rearranging the board to continue the game!



Through the years we "just so happened"

to be serving in a veterans facility ... a few days before folks passed on. Re-Creation young people were the last non-medical people these folks saw at the end of their journey. And your RC ambassadors filled their time with joy, laughter and respect.

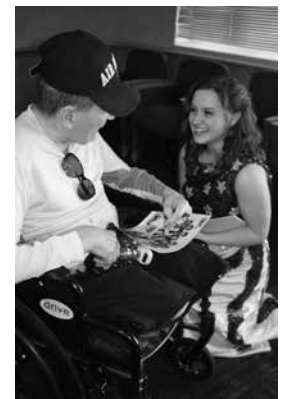
when there was a particular anniversary or celebration. Re-Creation young people cap the festivities with their own brand of tribute and service. Why, we recently met a man 103 years old!

when a younger vet, about the same age as your performers, paralyzed from the neck down, smiled for the first time in a very long time. His peers, through your support, brought him cheer and hope in a way no one else could have. "You'll never know how thrilled I am that you visited. His spirits have been so low. So sad. To see all of you, around his age...well, it just meant the world to him....thank you!

when families of veteran residents have been visiting, sorrowful and burdened by their loved one's struggle for recovery or rehabilitation. "We just happen to be here today. We are so grateful, our father just loved the program and so did we! Can we know when you're coming back?"

when a younger vet, despondent and unwilling to come to the show, came anyway when invited by one of our young ladies. She sang to him and he erupted in laughter and tears. He was beside himself. I remember him saying, "I wasn't even going to come, but she seemed really genuine, nice and she said she'd come escort me! I'm so glad I came!"

when American heroes tired and weary from years of the emotional burden of their service and return, feel, for the first time, that they have been recognized. "I didn't know you were going to be here. I just happened to be walking by the auditorium on my way to see the doc. I heard the music. I stayed for as long as I could. I gotta tell you, when I came home, I was treated pretty badly. This is the first time in a very long time, years, that I have felt thanked or appreciated. I simply don't know how to tell you how much that means to me! Thank you." Just happened to be walking by....indeed.



CHANCE & CHANGE III

as a faithful supporter, you should be aware of some 'change'...

MARY REICH is the Tour Manager for Re-Creation. She implements all contracts, plans all tours and takes care of absolutely every point surrounding the Veteran, Church and Commercial programs. Her 4-years experience as a performing cast member gives her an edge in working with folks nationwide!

JEN KRATZER is our Office Manager. She oversees all communication and financial matters. Her 10 years experience in commercial banking have proved invaluable. She just helped complete the audit for the State of Pennsylvania. Jen is the front-line of contact in the office.

LEE WINEHOLT is the current President of the Board of Directors for Re-Creation USA, Inc. Senior board member Betsy Boyer serves on other professional non-profit boards in the State College area and has extensive knowledge of the ever-changing protocols necessary to keep our Board of Directors current and proper. I stepped down as President and couldn't agree more with the change!

PC to MAC is the change we're making in the entire office. For the sake of our music catalogue and databases we severely needed to upgrade our office tech. The programs we've been using are antiquated and in very real danger of crashing or becoming incompatible with today's modern office. We purchased 4 iMac's and are in the process of transferring everything! And I mean EVERYTHING! (extra prayers for Jen, please!)

If you would like to help us offset the cost of this substantial but very necessary upgrade, feel free to donate online at re-creationusa.org or by mail and simply label your donation "for new computers." THANK YOU!

COMMUNITY DAY at Hegins Park has seen its final performance. There will be no concert this summer in Hegins, PA. We are sad but understanding as this 36-year tradition comes to an end. Our special thanks to the Eshelman family for their years of spirited support and enthusiasm! You all are treasured in our hearts!

NEWSLETTERS & EMAIL UPDATES will evolve in the coming months. Our goal is to publish a physical newsletter quarterly, but email you bi-monthly with any important schedule updates and words of inspiration from the mission field.

The Facebook and Twitter feeds are for your young ambassadors to share. The printed newsletters and new twice-a-month emails are to provide up-to-the-minute access and information.

If you're not on our email list, you need to be! Let Mary know at info@re-creationusa.com and she will make sure you never miss a beat!

CHANCE & CHANGE IV

by Tirus Twyne

Mr. Muller and I were talking at a show recently, and



he told me that the next newsletter would be about change. That got me thinking about how Re-Creation has changed my life and how grateful I am for this journey. When I was a senior in high school I was struggling to find out what God's will was for my life. Should I go to college? Should I start auditioning? I didn't know what I should do.

I wasn't financially equipped to attend college just to 'try it out.' And while I had developed a love for music and a knack for performance, I knew I wasn't ready for commercial auditions. God had brought me from some very troubling circumstances by the time I discovered music in high school, so I knew I needed to prayerfully consider His direction for my next step.

I found out about Re-Creation and everything changed! I believed it to be God's will that I join. Even though the idea of just packing my stuff and living on the road was a huge step of faith, I've never regretted a single moment.

My life truly has been changed. I'm stronger, wiser, and have a deeper love for veterans than I ever did before. The veterans have paid for the freedom we enjoy in this country. So the 4 years I have been here to thank them for what they have done, I consider a small thing.

I don't consider it chance that my teacher, Mrs. Styer, gave me that Re-Creation brochure my senior year. Or that I 'surprised' Mr. Muller at a local church to audition when he had no idea I was coming! (I should tell you that story sometime.) No, I consider that God's providence.

And I have grown so much. My first year, I needed quite a bit of help to learn the parts and record the album. Now, I'm the one helping the new guys. And more of a blessing, I've been able to walk through my own struggles to try and be a mentor of sorts to the other cast members. What a change!

Now I'm heading into my 5 years of service with RC and Mr. Muller has given me the opportunity to make an album of my own. I have decided that I should take this as a chance to share the gospel with people through song and show them that God can make a change in their hearts if they trust in Him.

RC SCHEDULE 2015

March

- 13 Selingsgrove Middle School
- 13 **Selingsgrove Middle School Carnival...Entertainment!**
- Selingsgrove, PA
- 15 **Emmanuel United Church of Christ... Worship!**
- New Berlin, PA 570-966-2880
- 15 **Bloomsburg Christian Church... Worship!**
- Bloomsburg, PA 570-784-3740
- 22 **Montandon United Methodist Church... Worship!**
- Montandon, PA 570-524-4031
- 22 **Hepburn Baptist Church...Worship!**
- Cogan Station, PA 570-988-2070
- 24 St. Louis, MO VAMC...Entertainment!
- 25 Cape Girardeau, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 26 Poplar Bluff, MO VAMC...Entertainment!
- 27 Mt. Vernon, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 30 Fayetteville, AR VAMC...Entertainment!
- 31 North Little Rock, AR VAMC...Entertainment!

- Private
- 7 PM
- 9 AM
- 6 PM
- 10:30 AM
- 6:30 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM

April

- 1 Bossier City, LA SVH...Entertainment!
- 1 Shreveport Elks Lodge
- Shreveport, LA
- 2 Alexandria, LA VAMC...Entertainment!
- 4 Reserve, LA SVH...Entertainment!
- 6 Jennings, LA SVH...Entertainment!
- 7 Jackson, LA SVH...Entertainment!
- 8 Floresville, TX SVH...Entertainment!
- 9 Kerrville, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 10 San Antonio, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 12 Houston, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 13 Temple, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 14 Waco, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 15 Big Spring, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 15 VAMC Voluntary Service
- Big Spring, TX
- 16 Dallas, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 17 Bonham, TX VAMC...Entertainment!
- 18 Ardmore, OK SVH...Entertainment!
- 20 Muskogee, OK VAMC...Entertainment!
- 21 Oklahoma City, OK VAMC...Entertainment!
- 22 Lawton, OK SVH...Entertainment!
- 23 Clinton, OK SVH...Entertainment!
- 24 Wichita, KS VAMC...Entertainment!
- 25 VAMC Voluntary Service
- Wichita, KS
- 27 Topeka, KS VAMC...Entertainment!
- 28 Leavenworth, KS VAMC...Entertainment!
- 29 USBC Convention
- Omaha, NE

- 2 PM
- Private
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 10:30 AM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 7 PM
- 7 PM
- 2 PM
- 1 PM
- Private
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- Private
- 10:30 AM
- 7 PM
- Private

VAMC: Veterans Affairs Medical Center
SVH: State Veterans Home

* Performances open to the public are in **BOLD!**
 * Use the phone number listed for more information.
 * Please contact any VAMC or SVH prior to the show for permission to attend.
 * 40 Years of...
 Entertainment!: RC 40 variety show
 Worship!: RC 40 worship service

For up-to-date show information, or to book Re-Creation, please access our website:

May

- 2 Mexico, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- Cameron, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 3 Kansas City, MO VAMC...Entertainment!
- 4 Warrensburg MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 6 Columbia, MO VAMC...Entertainment!
- 7 St. James, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 8 St. Louis, MO SVH...Entertainment!
- 9 **Lighthouse UM Church...Entertainment!**
- Lorain, OH 440-282-2383
- 10 **Lighthouse UM Church...Worship!**
- Lorain, OH 440-282-2383
- 12 Grand Rapids, MI SVH...Entertainment!
- 13 Saginaw, MI VAMC...Entertainment!
- 14 Battle Creek MI VAMC...Entertainment!
- 15 Ann Arbor, MI VAMC...Entertainment!
- 17 **Central UM Church...Worship!**
- Beaver Falls, PA 724-846-3474
- 18 Cleveland, OH VAMC...Entertainment!
- 19 Sandusky, OH SVH...Entertainment!
- 22 Paradise Elementary School
- Paradise, PA
- 30 **Howland UM Church...Entertainment!**
- Warren, OH 330-856-3463
- 31 **Howland UM Church...Worship!**
- Warren, OH 330-856-3463
- 31 **Windham UM Church... Worship!**
- Windham, OH 330-326-2287

- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 10:30 AM
- 2 PM
- 10:30 AM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 7 PM
- 10 AM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- TBA
- 7 PM
- 10:30 AM
- Private
- 7 PM
- 10 AM
- 7 PM

June

- 3 North Chicago, IL VAMC...Entertainment!
- 5 Union Grove, WI SVH...Entertainment!
- 8 Tomah, WI VAMC...Entertainment!
- 10 Iron Mountain, MI VAMC...Entertainment!
- 11 Marquette, MI SVH...Entertainment!
- 12 Silver Bay, MN SVH...Entertainment!
- 15 Minneapolis, MN VAMC...Entertainment!
- 16 Minneapolis, MN SVH...Entertainment!
- 17 St. Cloud, MN VAMC...Entertainment!
- 18 VAMC Voluntary Service
- Minneapolis, MN
- 24 **Country Cupboard...Entertainment!**
- Lewisburg, PA...for ticket info, call 570-523-3211
- 25 **Country Cupboard...Entertainment!**
- Lewisburg, PA...for ticket info, call 570-523-3211
- 27 **Union County 4th of July Celebration...Entertainment!**
- Lewisburg, PA
- 28 **Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church...Worship!**
- Glen Rock, PA 717-235-1523
- 29 **Pineknoffer Days...Entertainment!**
- Northumberland, PA 570-473-1990

- 6:30 PM
- 2 PM
- 10 AM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- 2 PM
- Private
- 7 PM
- 7 PM
- 1 PM
- 10 AM
- 7 PM & 8:15PM

www.Re-CreationUSA.org