



Winter

It's hard for him to believe, but for Mark this is year 25 in "camp ministry". When sharing about "camp", a question frequently asked is "What do you do all winter?" The short answer is "Plenty!" The longer answer is that camp doesn't just suddenly happen when summer rolls around. Rather it is the culmination of much **planning and preparation**, recruiting, training, marketing and fundraising during the fall, winter and spring. Buildings, grounds, activity areas and general infrastructure (and the railroad) also need **maintenance** and there are regular improvement **projects**. And then there's finally taking some vacation!

During this time DRG also hosts **guest groups**, providing lodging, meals, activities and meeting space, as a **partner in ministry** to churches and other ministry groups holding their own events. Some community and business groups also choose to hold events here. This isn't directly ministry, but still forms connections with the local community and awareness of our presence and mission while also generating income which subsidizes our own programs. DRG also offers several of it's own programs and events in the fall, after camp season.

For Mark, nearly everything mentioned at least occasionally, if not regularly involves him. Much of the regular business flow utilizes various parts of the **IT** infrastructure. Both DRG and guest events utilize the **Audio/Visual** resources in our meeting spaces, with planning and setup for each. And of course a scenic ride on the **railroad** is a popular guest activity, as well as part of most DRG programs. Each RR operation needs to be staffed and both the track and equipment require regular maintenance.

One particular item this winter was Mark's search for a tie-inserter machine. These are difficult to find, but an older, derelict unit was finally located and he made a trip to Indiana for it in mid February. It is now being refurbished with the goal of being ready for annual spring trackwork in April and May. Previously all RR ties were replaced by hand!

So yes, for Mark and the rest of the DRG staff, there is "plenty" to "do all winter".

Christmas Train

And if we weren't busy enough already, for the past several years DRG has been working towards a major expansion of the railroad and facilities to implement *The Christmas Train*. This program will **share the Gospel** and the true meaning of Christmas with thousands each year as well as generate additional income during an otherwise quiet part of our business cycle. The project was mostly "sidetracked" during COVID, but in the past several months, fundraising has made exciting progress with enough now in hand to kick off major items, resulting in a flurry of activity to settle details and get them going. Mark was closely involved in planning the route for the **new track** and confirming the engineering work which was recently completed. So by the time you read this, the surveyors should have it staked out! The goal is to launch this program for the 2023 Christmas season.

Family News

As hinted as pending in our last newsletter, **Kate** is now officially **engaged to Garrett Daniels!** Wedding plans are moving forward for May 28th, here at DRG. Kate continues to enjoy barber school and expects to finish up in mid May.

Jon has been having a good first year at **UT Chattanooga** and we just enjoyed having him home and 3 roommates/friends visit over spring break.

In December, it was finally **Nancy's** turn for **COVID** (Mark had it the prior December). But she recovered by Christmas and just in time to pass the travel clearance test for **St. Thomas**. We were **VERY** blessed to celebrate our **30th anniversary** there, thanks to donated lodging and other special gifts, and had a lovely time.



Prayer and Praise

- Spring is always "crunch time" for summer camp. DRG staff needs God's wisdom, energy and provision to complete preparations and recruit a full team of summer staff. Additional full-time staff are also needed.
- Please pray for full camps and open hearts for the Gospel.
- Praise for progress on Christmas Train and prayer for God's wisdom and provision on each aspect as it is implemented.

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