



LEMON CREEK

JOURNAL

INSIGHTS & IMAGES OF CORRECTIONS ON THE LAST FRONTIER

LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER, JUNEAU ALASKA

THIRD ANNUAL

LEMON CREEK HOLIDAY &

AWARDS BANQUET

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To our readers:

The Lemon Creek Journal is a quarterly e-Publication of Lemon Creek Correctional Center, Juneau, Alaska. The Journal's mission is to inform, engage, and challenge Corrections professionals and the public to think critically about the challenges facing Alaska's correctional system. So that we can be more responsive to our readers, please share with us your impressions and suggestions by emailing the Editor at daryl.webster@alaska.gov.

Photography: Sgt. Bo Pierce

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

employment, and again they painfully had to ask a local church for assistance to provide food, rent, and money to cover the utilities.

He stood in his kitchen in despair, reflecting on the young father and mother who would awake Christmas morning to the sight of their children finding nothing under their decorated tree, and emotion began to overtake him.

One Christmas Eve, many years ago in the little town of Stevensville Montana, a young father returned home to his small farm after visiting a family in great need. As he stepped into his home, the traditional spirit of his family Christmas wrapped around him like a warm blanket. He stopped for a minute to take it all in, the well decorated home, the aroma of Christmas goodies that permeated the air, and the sound of his sweet children running and playing throughout the house touched his heart.

Though he was enjoying the moment his thoughts were still at the home of the family he had just left, only 20 minutes earlier. The parents were unemployed and unable to provide for the basic necessities to sustain their young family. An unforgiving economy showed no signs at all of gainful

Then a thought came to him and he reflected on it, not thinking it would go over well, but decided to act upon it anyway. He asked his wife and his six children to come to the living room. Once they were all seated, he shared the story of where he had just come from and spoke of the circumstances of a struggling family that could not provide for themselves, and how it saddened his heart.

He said, “We have been blessed with so much, I have a great job that allows us to live in this warm home. Your mother and I are able to provide food, clothing, and so much more for all of you wonderful children.” He then asked his family to look at their Christmas tree surrounded with presents. As they all stared at the glowing tree encircled with wrapped gifts, he continued, “This is the season of giving, the season of hope, of

love, and of joy.” Being a religious man, he proclaimed, “This is a time set aside by the world to reflect upon the birth of our Savior. It is a time for each of us to reflect upon what he has done for us, but also a time for us to reflect with what we are doing with the gifts He has given to us.” He again paused, unsure of how his family was going to respond to what he was about to suggest, and then spoke, “I am going to ask something of you that you may not like, and may not want to do, and that’s okay. I am not going to make you do it. As a family we have been blessed with so much.” He fell silent for a brief moment and then said, “I would like us to give all our presents in secret to the family that is in need. This would mean that your stockings are all you will wake up to on Christmas morning. We don’t have any more money to buy presents to replace the ones we would give.” The young family sat in complete silence, all still staring at the tree, and he began to fear he had asked too much of them. Before he could continue, one of his youngest sons stood up and walked over to the tree. He bent down, picked up one of his presents, and while removing the nametag, carried it to the kitchen table. He returned to take another, and then another, and soon all the children began removing presents one by one until the tree stood empty. He and his wife were in awe as their children selflessly forfeited the presents that were to be theirs on Christmas morning. “How will this be done secretly?” asked one of the older children. The father stood up and said, “Well, it is dark, and that will help, but we will need to park the car far enough

away that they won’t be able to see us. We will then need to take all the presents and place them on their doorstep, but we will need to remain very quiet. Once we have everyone back in the car someone will need to ring the doorbell and then run away. If we do this right, they won’t have any idea who did this for them, and it will be our secret.”

As the children loaded up the last of the presents into the back of the station wagon, they began to giggle with excitement at the sneaky adventure they were about to embark on, and they all piled in and drove into town.

The siblings could barely contain themselves as they ran back and forth from the parked car to the doorstep, until all the gifts were stacked awkwardly into a colorful pile. One of the older children volunteered to ring and run, while all the other five kids climbed into the back of the station wagon and pressed their faces up against the glass. They watched as their brother rang the doorbell and ran as fast as he could through the dark, and back to the running car. In a moment the door opened, and they all looked on, in secret, as the family slowly brought all the presents into their home.

To this day that young father, who isn’t so young anymore, will tell you it was and still is the best Christmas his family ever had.

No matter what our circumstances, there always seems to be someone who has a greater need, and it makes me proud when I hear of the service that so many

of you so freely give to each other, to your families, to your neighbors, and to the community. For our work family here at the Creek, 2019 was filled with mostly happy moments, but indeed some heartbreaking, sorrowful ones as well. I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude for you all, and to sincerely thank you for setting such a good example by how you live.

It does my heart good to know that you look after one another, not just at work but beyond the fences as well. Though your selfless acts may be the norm for how you live your lives, they are often life changing and even

lifesaving for those you so freely serve, assist, and care for. I am sure many of you are completely unaware of how many people your kind deeds impacted in 2019. What a great place to work! Life is what we make of it, and it is our positive attitudes, accompanied with our thoughtful actions that make this the best place to work in DOC, period!

Thank you indeed for all you do!

Bob Cordle
Superintendent II



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER OFFICER FRED DOUGDALE

We are proud to announce Officer Fred Dugdale as Lemon Creek's Employee of the Quarter. Fred started his career with Department of Corrections in 2011 and has proved to be a key player on his team at Lemon Creek. He is a prodigious worker, always available to come in on his time off when a shift is short-handed. His dependability and positive attitude lifts the spirits of those around him. We appreciate all that Fred does for the Department and for his team. Congratulations Officer Dugdale!



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

PO Katie Sullivan

Lemon Creek is proud to announce that PO Katie Sullivan is our 2019 Employee of the Year. PO Sullivan began her career at Lemon Creek in 2008. Since then, she has busied herself with countless projects and special activities, including Shop With a Cop, Special Olympics and the Salvation Army's Inmate Christmas program. PO Sullivan was a major donor to the 2019 Lemon Creek Holiday & Awards Banquet.

During a critical period in 2019, PO Sullivan was the only Institutional PO serving Lemon Creek in an office normally staffed by three PO's. This is characteristic of the way she always picks up the slack in the Probation Department and carries on in the most difficult of times. She has built a solid rapport with inmates with a genuine but "No nonsense" approach that resonates with inmates. PO Sullivan is a cheerful mentor to less experienced PO's in her unit, sharing a wealth of knowledge and inspiration. She always makes time to take advantage of learning moments that make everyone's jobs easier. We are all proud to have Katie Sullivan on our team.



It's Only A Banquet

By Daryl Webster



Notice that January's edition of the Lemon Creek Journal is a little light this time around. We normally cram each issue with as much thoughtful content as the market will bear, but the editorial staff recognized some time ago that there was only so much creative energy to go around and as Christmas approached, that energy was disproportionately directed toward pulling off the Third Annual Lemon Creek Holiday & Awards Banquet. That event is the sole focus of this issue.

We Corrections Professionals administer justice 24/7 to the hundreds of inmates and pre-trial prisoners who pass through our gates every year. It isn't a very imaginative process, but it is a difficult one. DOC has painstakingly developed a boatload of procedures and routines that have proven successful, and our task is to focus on following them to the letter. This permits us to



perform our mission, humanely and securely housing inmates within the limits of space, staff and funding.

But we are also Alaskans, living in a narrow sliver of a frontier town, perched between an enormous swath of mountain wilderness on the one hand and a chilly ocean wilderness on the other. Most of us are outdoor adventure addicts and scarcely one of us hasn't, within recent memory, nearly drowned, frozen, fallen down a mountain, wrecked a boat, or been eaten by a large beast. We do difficult work out of principle but also in order to live unorthodox lifestyles that satisfy our drive to live free on our own terms, playing hard, and repudiating in our personal lives the rule-bound nature of our professional personae. There's something a little schizophrenic about that but maybe a little psychosis is healthy.

Our entire workforce is parceled into small subgroups; administrative staff, institutional probation officers, maintenance personnel, and medical staff. Most of our correctional officers' work in separate teams on alternating shifts, so while they interact very closely with the handful of officers who comprise their team, they only see the bulk of their colleagues in passing. These realities make for an environment that isolates us, rather than bringing us together, diminishes our professional significance, threatens to reduce our profession to a hobby-supporting job, and robs us of the benefits of belonging to a larger professional family. All of which brings us back to the banquet.

How did this annual event become such a big deal, justifying the mammoth effort that goes into organizing, fundraising, finding a venue, dealing with caterers, preparing the banquet site, and providing meals, gifts and prizes for 125 adults and children? Why is it so important? The answer is entirely due to Superintendent Cordle and his leadership team's determination to demonstrate sincere gratitude for a workforce we respect and appreciate and the belief that celebrating together, outside the workplace, enables us to reconnect and appreciate each other.

Many of you will remember last year's wonderful banquet at Peratrovich Hall, catered by the Prospector Restaurant. Unfortunately, we were unable to reach an agreement for the same venue this time around, so the few days of site negotiations we expected, turned into a months-long ordeal. We stumbled onto the Thunder Mountain High School Commons almost by accident, just weeks before the banquet but the site seemed to have a lot of potential and the staff there were so helpful that within days, we had a commitment. Rachael Coady and Kevin Dumont volunteered to handle room decoration and just ran with the project. If you agree with me that the banquet area looked really nice, you know who to thank. We did almost the entire the room prep ourselves up two hours early and then stayed late to take it all apart.



The Prospector, now the Ramada at the Wyndham, gave us a great deal on a banquet menu, including a prime rib option that we were anxious to offer and did it at a very reasonable price. We could not have hoped for a better caterer.

You may have noticed an absence of children at this year's banquet. We kept the kids' menu and encouraged everyone to bring the little ones, but Mike Schramm and Jessie Behrends suggested using a bouncy house in the gym to keep them occupied. My wife knew someone who knew someone and presto! An enormous bouncy house appeared for free, (though as an old guy, I have to confess that Superintendent Cordle and I nearly ruptured ourselves loading it onto the trailer and toting it into the gym). Thanks to Jessie, Mike and all their helpers for taking turns overseeing the bouncy house operation and getting it deflated and reloaded without embarrassing injuries.



Santa joined us once again, but he was so stealthy that a lot of parents didn't know he was in the gym distributing children's gifts until the deed was done. Making this annual gathering a child-friendly event has been our aim from day one, though this was the first year we were able to offer the kids a separate room, with great distractions, so parents were able to focus on adult fun. Every child got to visit with Santa and each received two age-specific gifts. I'd love to have more kid-feedback but I'm betting they had a great time.

We hope you enjoyed the games, hosted by Superintendent Cordle; the door prizes, with much thanks to PO Katie Sullivan and Chef Stef for their contributions; and hope that the silent auction was as enjoyable as we intended. We are grateful for the support of Juneau merchants and the generosity of folks like Superintendent Cordle, Ed Irizarry, Chuck McCracken, Rachael Coady,



Katie Sullivan, Brian Weed, Derek Johnson, Steve and Jane Johnson, Ken and Shelly Patten, Cathy Mahnke, Bo and Jana Pierce, and Bonnie Webster. Thanks to you all.



The auction deserves special attention. While the silent auction helps defray banquet and Easter celebration expenses, it is primarily designed to entertain. Our goal all along has been to make the auction bigger and better every year and to provide an opportunity for everyone to enjoy the fun and excitement of bidding for treasures and hopefully walking away knowing that they got a bargain on something special. We think we succeeded. Which reminds me, if you brought a



chocolate chip cookie and lemon bar combo for the dessert auction, you won a prize but didn't leave your name, so please contact me.

The last and most significant shout-out goes to all of you who attended and supported this great event. No matter how attractive the setting or tasty the food, it is your presence, making the room burst at the seams, that makes the banquet worth attending. Thank you all for participating in countless Taco Tuesdays, Chili Wednesdays, and fried PBJ feeds. Your contributions enabled us to offer you a memorable experience. You may not be aware but all of the groceries that went into every one of those lunches was paid for, out of pocket, by Superintendent Cordle, Lt. Irizarry, PO Marnon, Sgt. Pierce, and one or two others, all so that we could maximize the proceeds and hopefully give them back to you in the form of a wonderful banquet and Easter celebration. As the banquet date drew near and we really began to worry whether anyone would show up, you bought tickets in a rush and filled the venue. We were so glad to see you and we so hope to see you again next year.



Now that its all over and the banquet committee's collective blood pressure has returned to near normal, we have a month or two before beginning to plan for next year. We hope you enjoyed the Third Annual Holiday & Awards Banquet as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you. If you did, and should you pass Superintendent Cordle, Lt. Irizarry, Sergeants Pierce and Johnson, Rachael Coady or Kevin Dumont in the halls, I know they would appreciate a pat on the back for a job well done.

Lemon Creek Correctional Center wants YOU!!



Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau, Alaska is currently recruiting Correctional Officers. To apply go to Governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/ and look for the Correctional Officer I position in Juneau, AK.



Why be a Correctional Officer at LCCC:

- Great Pay/Benefits
- Career advancement opportunities
- Premium schedule (7 days on/ 7 days off)
- Generous vacation leave
- Excellent training
- Great community to raise a family



If you have any questions contact Lt. Irizarry at (907)465-6288 or Sgt. Headings at (907)465-6205. We are looking forward to talking to you.