

LEMON CREEK JOURNAL

INSIGHTS & IMAGES OF LIFE ON THE LAST FRONTIER

LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER

JUNEAU, ALASKA



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Volume XXIII, Back to School Issue

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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

FALL

FORWARD TO VOLUME XXIII

We are accustomed to thinking of prisons as places of confinement, where inmates are deprived of freedom and staff members are challenged to work long hours in a high-vigilance environment. While no two correctional institutions are exactly alike, these are fairly accurate depictions and necessarily so for the protection of the public, staff members, and inmates. But that tells only half the story, because an institution that fosters a healthy work environment and functions at its fullest rehabilitative potential is also a place of learning, for inmates and staff alike.

In this “Back to School” issue of the Lemon Creek Journal, we throw open the schoolhouse doors and invite you to share a professional educator’s experience, helping a native Alaskan inmate earn his GED; a Training Sergeant’s perspective on providing professional training to staff; a Shift Sergeant’s views on mentoring as an element of leadership; and more. As always, we hope you enjoy this issue of the Journal and welcome your comments at daryl.webster@alaska.gov.



Good C.O.s Know How - Great Ones Know Why

By

Training Sergeant Mitch Cook

I have served as the training sergeant at Lemon Creek Correctional Center for roughly two years now. I really enjoy my position in the field of training. I believe that there are two primary goals as a trainer, first to train and second to educate. These terms are often interchanged but I believe they have very different meanings. I believe that we train people how to perform skills or tasks. Then we educate them on why those skills and tasks work the way they do. This leads to an understanding that is very important and meaningful. It is this depth of understanding that can be seen as the work continues to be performed long after training has been completed.

I believe there are two constant truths in educating. No two people learn exactly the same way, and not every teaching

style works with every student. When educating someone on a subject, I believe we must meet a person where they are and move forward from their point of understanding. It has been my experience that presenting problem-solving based education, while integrating a hands-on approach, aids in learning a skill and knowing why it works. This style of education actively engages the student in the learning process, while thinking and doing, instead of sitting down and trying to memorize details.

Once a person realizes that they can complete the task that's being taught, they develop a deeper understanding of why it works. A certain confidence is instilled within them to utilize this skill when needed in real time. This confidence and deeper understanding of

skills and how to utilize them, bridges the gap between training and educating. As a trainer, instilling confidence and understanding is the goal that I attempt to achieve with every student.

This profession is dynamic. Everything can and will change in a moment. We are required to anticipate, think and quickly adapt to these changes. No one knows everything, but collectively, with shared knowledge and experience to draw from, we all become stronger and smarter. This helps us do our jobs better. I encourage you to share your knowledge and experience with fellow staff and remember that we are all trainers and educators. Stay curious. Always seek to know why. The more tools you keep in your toolbox the better decisions you will make.



CALLING ALL HEROES!

The honor of your attendance is requested at the 2024 LCCC Holiday Awards Banquet.

December 21st, 6 – 9 pm

Thunder Mountain Middle School

Join the LCCC Team to celebrate Christmas and courageous colleagues with great food, games, prizes, and the ever-popular silent auction.

Tickets go on sale shortly



Leadership & Mentoring

by

SSgt. Jen-Raye Pavageau

In the often-intense environment of a prison, where security and discipline are paramount, my role as a Shift Supervisor can be both challenging and rewarding. Amongst the many responsibilities I undertake, one of the most impactful is teaching and mentoring a team of employees. This aspect of the leadership role is crucial not only for staff development, but also for the overall success of the facility.

As a Shift Sergeant I wear many hats, from overseeing daily operations to ensuring safety and compliance with policies and procedures. However, teaching and mentoring employees introduces a different dimension to my role as a Shift Sergeant. This responsibility involves guiding both new and seasoned staff through the complexities of working in a correctional facility, helping them develop the skills needed to manage difficult situations, and fostering a positive work environment. Not only do staff interact with unruly offenders but they must interact with fellow officers

and the public. We all work a lot of hours and that can be taxing on us all, which can negatively affect the moods of individual officers. It is extremely important to me to maintain a positive attitude amongst my peers and team members, no matter what the situation is. I believe that staying positive in the more stressful situations can have a trickle-down effect on my team.

One of the key aspects of a supervisor's teaching role is the development and implementation of training programs. These programs are designed to equip employees with the necessary skills to handle the unique challenges of the prison environment. Training might cover a range of topics, from de-escalation techniques and crisis management to understanding inmate behavior and legal procedures. We have a designated Training Sergeant for the majority of our training programs, but it is up to Shift Sergeants to train Officers on a more personal level. I am more of a visual, hands-on type of learner and that is the way I like to train. I have learned a lot from my

previous Sergeants, and I have taken a few pieces of knowledge from each of them and developed my own way of training and communication.

Effective training programs are not static; they evolve based on emerging trends, feedback, and new challenges. Things here at LCCC can change on a day-to-day basis. That's why I believe it is important for me to be proactive and continuously update my training methods to ensure that staff are well-prepared for their roles. This is especially true in the Booking area. I think that my approach with my team members not only enhances the effectiveness of the training but also demonstrates my commitment to staff development. There is nothing better than seeing one of my officers achieve their goals, whether that be becoming a Sgt., Booking Officer, PTO, FTO, Range Officer etc. Mentorship goes beyond formal training. It involves offering ongoing support and guidance to employees as they navigate their roles. Being a good mentor helps staff build confidence, understand their strengths and areas for improvement, and develop strategies for personal and professional growth.

For many employees, especially those new to Corrections, working in a prison can be overwhelming. Part of my job is to provide reassurance and practical advice, helping staff to handle stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain their well-being. This support is crucial for job satisfaction and retention, contributing to a more stable and effective team. I believe it is extremely important to create a positive work culture. My influence extends to shaping the work culture within the prison. By fostering an environment of respect, collaboration, and open communication, I can significantly impact staff morale and performance. Encouraging teamwork and recognizing achievements can motivate a team and build a sense of

community and shared purpose. I consider my team not only as fellow officers but family. A lot of us spend more time here at work than we do at home with our loved ones. It's important to me that my team knows I have their back as I know they have mine. Trust like that is not given but earned and goes a long way in shaping future leaders of this facility.

Moreover, a positive work culture is essential for reducing burnout and turnover rates. In the high-pressure environment of a prison, maintaining mental health and job satisfaction is crucial for both the employees and the facility's overall operation. We work a LOT of hours and that can be detrimental to our mental and physical state. I strive to be a supportive Supervisor and think it plays a key role in ensuring that staff feel valued and equipped to perform their duties effectively. If I show up to work every day with a bad attitude, that will affect my team negatively and have a "trickle down" affect. That can ultimately affect the entire team and normal operations of the facility. A positive work culture starts with me but takes all of us to keep it going.

Teaching and mentoring in a prison setting comes with its own set of challenges. I must navigate the complexities of individual personalities, varying levels of experience, and the inherent stress of the environment. Balancing these factors while maintaining a focus on professional development requires a high level of skill and dedication. I am not saying, nor do I think I am the best at it, but I give it my best. We are never done learning, and I learn something from my teammates every day.

Despite these challenges, the rewards are significant. Seeing employees grow and succeed, contributing to a more efficient and harmonious workplace, and ultimately aiding in the facility's mission of rehabilitation and safety can be immensely fulfilling. I am

blessed to have the opportunity to have a positive impact on my team and the broader correctional system. Knowing that I have helped mold some of our current leaders, as well as future leaders, is a powerful motivator.

In the demanding world of prison management, my role as a Shift Supervisor in teaching and mentoring a team of employees is both challenging and crucial. By providing effective training, offering ongoing support, and fostering a positive work environment, I not only strive to enhance the performance and well-being of my team but also contribute to the overall success of LCCC. I hope that my efforts in mentoring and developing my team help to ensure that the prison operates smoothly and effectively, ultimately supporting the broader goals of rehabilitation and public safety. I truly appreciate my role as a leader and look forward to working with my team every day.

LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

P.I. Manager Kevin Dumont



P.I. Production Manager Kevin Dumont has been selected as the Lemon Creek Employee of the Quarter for his superb management skills and can-do attitude. Since becoming P.I. Manager in 2017, LCCC has faced many challenges, including COVID, staffing shortages, and construction issues. No matter what has been asked of him and his crew, Kevin's answer has always been, "We can get it done." Under Kevin's leadership, P.I. smoothly and efficiently processes over 10,000 pounds of laundry a week. His positivity and excellent leadership skills make him a pleasure to work with and LCCC is honored to name him Employee of the Quarter.



Helping an Alaska Native Inmate Earn His GED at Lemon Creek Learning Center

By

Paul McCarthy
Education Coordinator

The first time I met Jim, I had called him up to the learning center in response to his “copout” (now called an RFI). Jim was Tlingit, the main Alaska Native tribe in Southeast Alaska, and in his mid-thirties; he was in the Juneau prison learning center with the goal of getting his GED. His demeanor was guarded but he seemed to relax when I made it clear that I’m here to help students learn enough to pass their tests.

Jim had a rugged appearance, with calloused hands and a weathered face that spoke of hardship. Despite his tough exterior, there was a look of determination in his eyes. It was clear that despite his past problems he saw his GED as a key to unlocking a new chapter in his life, one that could help him get a fresh start.

Our first few sessions were a challenge. Jim struggled with basic concepts in math and reading, which is true of many students I’ve

worked with. It was especially understandable for Jim given his tumultuous past and the interruptions in his education. Plus, although he would sometimes come to the learning center deprived of sleep from the suboptimal reality of prison life such as UAs at all hours or inconsiderate guys in his unit making popcorn at 4am, his resolve never wavered. I admired his perseverance and made it a point to tailor my teaching to fit his needs and provide extra support when necessary. Jim made a point to tell me he appreciated my doing that.

One particularly poignant moment came one morning when we were the only ones in the learning center and Jim opened up about his personal life. He spoke of growing up in a remote Alaskan village with scarce educational resources. His family experienced economic hardship, and the pressures of survival overshadowed their pursuit of academic success. Jim described

how he dropped out of school in the ninth grade to help support his family, a decision that led him down a difficult path. He talked about his regrets due to missed opportunities from not graduating. He also spoke of his determination to succeed.

Inspired by Jim's story, I incorporated more hands-on practice and used real-life examples to make learning more relevant and engaging. We spent time working through practice tests and breaking down challenging concepts into manageable steps. Ultimately, it was not just about preparing him for the tests, it was about rebuilding his confidence and reaffirming his belief in his own potential.

As the months progressed, Jim's hard work began to pay off. He progressed to more complex problems in both math and language, and he started to approach his studies with confidence. His classmates noticed the change too, often seeking his help with their own assignments. Jim had transformed from a quiet observer into a leader within the classroom, embodying the grit he had always admired when he saw it in his own community.

When the day of his final test arrived, the GED math test, which is experienced by most as their hardest subject, Jim was nervous but hopeful. He approached it with the same good attitude he had shown throughout our sessions. Weeks later, when the results came in, I could barely contain my excitement—Jim had passed his GED with flying colors! The news was met with cheers and congratulations from the rest of the guys. I was happy for him.

Jim's achievement was about more than just graduating; it was a testament to his strength and a symbol of a commitment to changing

his life. We celebrated with an extra ration of candy in the learning center, and Jim thanked everyone who had supported him, including those who were not there. When he spoke, his words reflected both pride in his accomplishment and his aspirations for the future.

Jim's journey to earning his GED at the Lemon Creek learning center was a profound reminder of the transformative power of education and the hoped-for effect of dedicated teaching. It reaffirmed my belief in the potential for positive change in every individual, regardless of their past. For Jim, it was not just about earning a diploma; it was about reclaiming his future and taking a significant step toward making a difference in his community. His success was a shared victory, and it remains one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching career.

But as inspirational and uplifting as Jim's story is to me (as I hope it is to my readers!), it's not always a walk in the park around here. In fact, there are plenty of challenges to overcome when teaching in a prison learning center. Educators must navigate logistical constraints such as limited resources and restrictive environments while maintaining a focus on delivering effective instruction. Security concerns demand adherence to protocols that can restrict the flexibility of teaching methods. Additionally, the challenge of working with an academically diverse group of individuals with complicated backgrounds requires balancing professional detachment with genuine compassion. Despite these hurdles, I try to connect on a human level with students, tailor my approaches to meet their varied needs, and leverage the transformative power of education to foster

personal growth and rehabilitation. By embracing these challenges with a solution-oriented mindset, prison educators such as myself, Scott McAdams, and others in the prisons throughout the state can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students, helping them build a foundation for a better future.

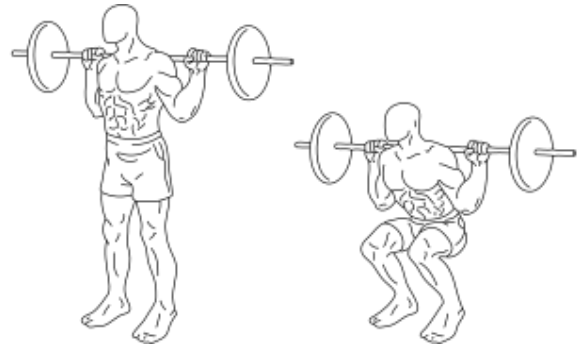
Coda: A recent DOC survey asking about programming was conducted with both inmates and staff. There was a question for staff asking about their attitudes on the importance of educational programs; the overwhelming majority of respondents at Lemon Creek (a ratio of five of every six, or eighty three percent) reported a positive perception of programming and appreciate its importance. The 5/6 ratio isn't unanimous but it is still a strong endorsement of educational programming. That is fortunate because reformative programming is one of three specified core values in the Department's Mission Statement. There's no guarantee that getting a GED will keep someone from returning to prison, but when compared with most other programming offered to inmates it's statistically associated with a better chance of staying out. The challenge is on for institutional leaders at Lemon Creek to work on getting the holdouts to come around on the issue. I'm confident they will be as successful at that as Jim was at getting his G



FITNESS CHALLENGES

By

SSgt. Kyle Schramm



In today's health focused world, fitness challenges represent a fun way for people to become active and improve their health. These challenges commonly range from 30 day workout plans to friendly competitions and social media challenges. Let's take a look at what fitness challenges are, how they can boost motivation, some potential downsides, and how they can help build lasting healthy habits.

What Are Fitness Challenges?

Fitness challenges are programs with rules and parameters that encourage participants to reach specific goals within a set timeframe. You may have heard of popular challenges like the "30 Day Squat Challenge" or "10,000 Step Challenge." These challenges usually pop up on social media, where people can connect and share their progress.

Fitness challenges are designed to be fun, with game-like structures, making exercise feel exciting and rewarding and more like play than hard work. Fitness challenges provide clear goals and deadlines, designed to motivate people to jump in and get started.

Boosting Motivation

One of the biggest benefits of fitness challenges is their potential to boost motivation. Having a clear goal, like completing a certain number of workouts or steps, gives participants something to aim at and work toward. It can be easier to commit to fitness, knowing that you're working toward something specific and what the end goal is.

Accountability plays a huge part too. Many challenges encourage people to share their progress online, in challenge groups and with friends. They create a network of support and encouragement. Knowing that others support you can make a real difference when you're struggling to stay committed on those hard days.

Building a Community

Fitness challenges create a sense of community. They bring people together who share the same fitness challenges, which can make the experience more fun. Whether in person or online, these challenges create new connections and build friendships as people support each other.

Competition can also be a huge motivator. While competition is nerve wracking for some, it can push you to do better than you thought you could. *Friendly* rivalry usually involves a good deal of mutual support as well, with everyone encouraging each other to do their best.

Downsides

Despite the many benefits, fitness challenges do have some drawbacks. One major concern is the risk of injury. People who are new to fitness can be eager to meet their goals and may overdo it or push themselves too hard, leading to injuries. That's why it is important to prioritize correct form and listen to your body.

Another drawback is that focusing on short term goals, as fitness challenges do, can sometimes cause you to overlook the importance of making lasting lifestyle changes. For example, if someone sees a challenge as just a way to lose weight for a specific event, they might go back to unhealthy habits once the challenge is over. Short term orientation can interfere with long term health and fitness habits.

Creating Lasting Habits

To make the most of fitness challenges, it is essential to start them with the mindset of creating long-lasting and sustainable habits. These challenges should encourage you to set realistic goals. They should also help create plans for maintaining progress after the challenge ends.

Also, incorporating new learning on nutrition, recovery, and overall fitness can boost the impact of these challenges. When people learn how to support their health, they're more likely to stick with it after the challenge is over.

Conclusion

Fitness challenges can be a great way to boost motivation, build relationships, and promote a healthy lifestyle. Even though they come with some risks, approaching them with a long-term mindset can help create lasting habits. By focusing on good form and long-term goals, fitness challenges can evolve into complete lifestyle changes.



A School Noir Tale

By

Daryl Webster

A lot of time has flown since my 7th grade year. Looking back, I have only vague impressions of most of my classmates. But I vividly remember gangly Ricky Winters, the monkey boy, his ill-fitting clothing, the chalkboard-scratching screech of his voice. I knew him for only a year, but the impression he left on my conscience still stings like a fresh burn.

Ricky was the shade at every gathering, present but disregarded until he made himself impossible to ignore. His was the loudest voice in the room, his shrill cackle the most grating. He was the recess bandit who darted onto the field from nowhere, grabbed the kickball and threw it onto the roof; the one who snatched the homework from your hand and took off at a dead run, just daring you to pursue. And he did these things every day.

I don't like to think that I was a particularly mean boy. I have no idea what finally set me off, but at some point, I started chasing him down. Ricky would flee the scene of

his latest caper in his awkward, crazy-legged sprint, laughing at the top of his lungs, zig-zagging in and around the playground equipment until I brought him down in a cloud of dust, like a leopard snagging a clumsy, young gazelle. Then the pummeling would begin, with near-unanimous approval of the student body. I lost track of how many times we played out this bizarre ritual. Each and every time, he would laugh and laugh ... until his laughter turned to cries of pain, subsiding into muffled sobs. Only then was it enough. Only then would I relent. Until the next time.

I had to grow up and endure many awkward moments of my own before I understood that apart from radiating chaos, Ricky was utterly harmless. He craved healthy attention, just like anyone else, but sought it in unhealthy ways. His lack of social skills, his unkempt appearance, and probably a lousy home life prevented him from interacting normally with the rest of us, so he seized the spotlight the only way he knew

how, by being provocative. For a precious few seconds, he could be the center of attention, racing like the wind, elation supercharged with fear. Because when I caught up with him, I made him pay in spades for every ounce of his exhilaration. I often wonder what would have happened if just once Ricky had punched me a good one, right in the snot box. Might we have locked eyes in a moment of revelation and recognized something of ourselves in the other's pain?

Ricky only wanted to fit in with the rest of us, to find acceptance in our company, but his limitations prevented him from joining our tribe and *our* limitations prevented us from recognizing his need. We denied him the simple comfort of friendship, focusing instead on his impulsive behavior, and applied a handy rationale to explain it in such a way that we could heap blame on him and absolve ourselves of guilt. We chose to accept as truth the flawed logic that painted him as unworthy of patience and condemned him for his intrusions. We were so very wrong. Ricky Winters was not an evil boy. He may have been the least evil of us all.

This dystopian school days tale is dedicated to all of you who deal professionally with difficult people, to the *Good Guys* who hold their tempers in check in the face of extreme affronts. It is a reminder that responding appropriately to provocation comes more naturally when we understand just what it is that provokes us, because provocation only works when it zeroes in on our weaknesses and insecurities. We should give it only the attention it deserves, dismissing or learning from it, but never surrendering our moral judgment to indulge it.

I became a police officer, and later came to work at Lemon Creek out of an ingrained sense of outrage over people who hurt those weaker than themselves. That passion has always been easy for me to channel because while I matured beyond the boy I used to be, that sometimes-mean child is still a part of my past. I still own the consequences of everything I did when that boy was me, because somewhere there lives a grown man named Ricky Winters who remembers me, and I am a living, breathing scar on the memory of his childhood.

So, whenever I seem patient, it is because I know that I have been intolerant. To the extent that I am merciful, it is because I have also been cruel. While still young, I learned the hardest lesson, that we are not always the people we aspire to be, the people we want our children to be. We are something...else. And it falls to us to salvage our self-image and our battered virtue, dust them off, and attempt to live up to them.

In spite of the unsettling contradictions that underlie my character, or perhaps *because* of them, I come to the office every morning with both humility and hope. Why? Because I work in an institution staffed by people whom I consider to be finer than myself. People who, as a group, draw strength from one another's resolve, kindness, and restraint. I admire you all and I'm fortunate to be able to go to school on you every day.

Back To School Photo Contest

Check out the following school-age photographs. You know these people because they all work at Lemon Creek Correctional Center. They've just grown a little. Identify them correctly and win a free door prize ticket, doubling your odds of being drawn for one of the many prizes to be awarded at the Holiday Awards Banquet on December 21. One winner will be selected from each floor shift and one from administrative day shift. To win, be the first in your group to email Superintendent Webster with all 5 kids correctly identified (or be the first in your group to identify the most). Contest closes October 11.



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5

Lemon Creek Correctional Center Wants YOU!



Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau, Alaska employs Correctional Officers, Food Service & Maintenance Specialists, Nurses, and Administrative & Clerical Staff. Check out [Governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/) for job opportunities DOC's Juneau facility.

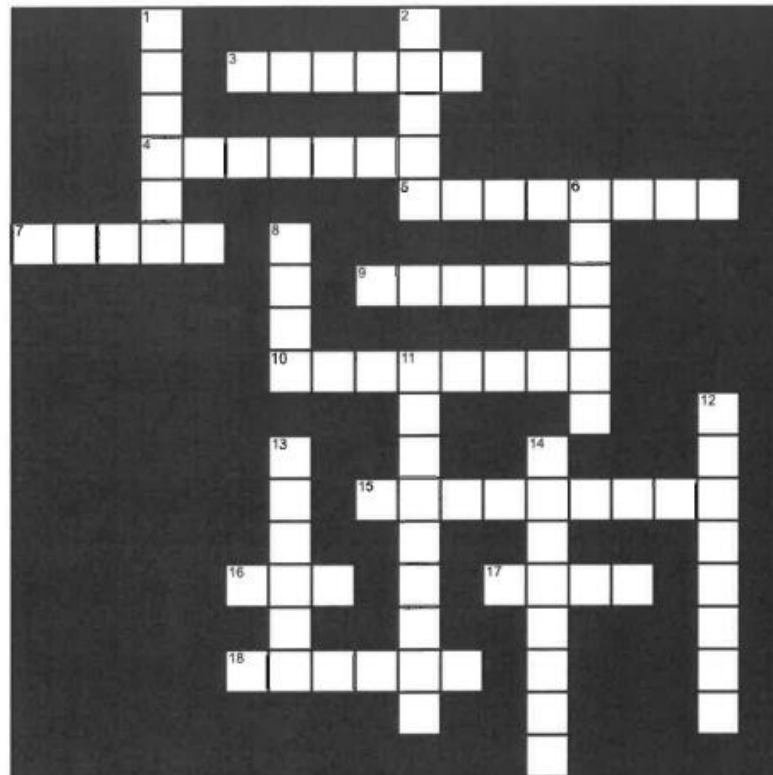
Employees at LCCC Enjoy:

- Competitive Pay & Benefits
- Training & career advancement opportunities
- Generous vacation leave
- Living & working in America's most beautiful capital city
- A supportive & team-oriented work environment

For information, contact Lt. McCracken at (907)465-6288. We look forward to working with you.



School Days



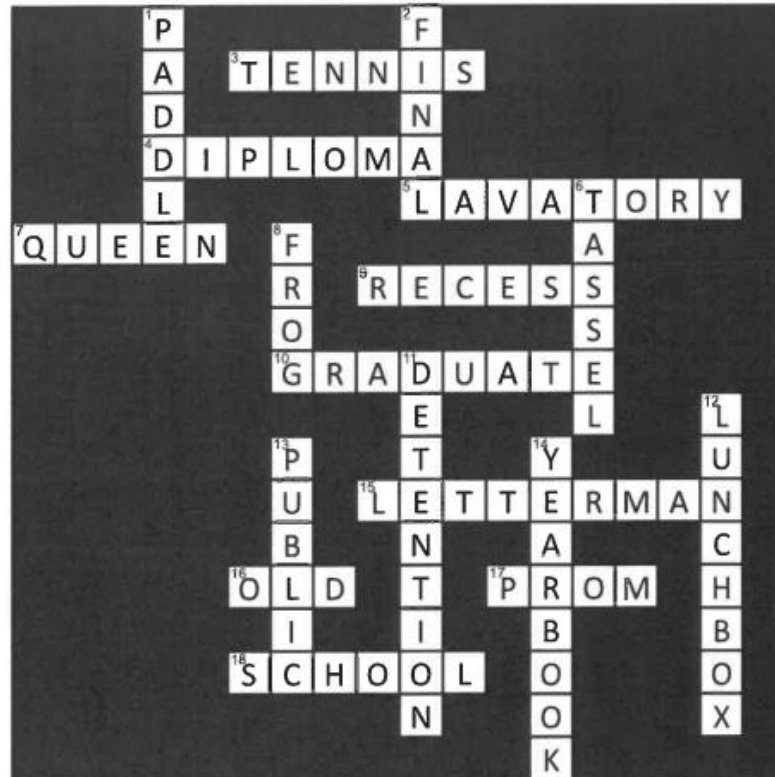
Across

- 3 This sport is played in court
- 4 The old sheepskin
- 5 H.S. smoking room
- 7 She rules Homecoming
- 9 Temporary break from class
- 10 Earner of a diploma
- 15 Owner of a varsity jacket
- 16 Steely Dan's 1973 school was...
- 17 Junior & Senior banquet
- 18 Where fish learn to swim

Down

- 1 Principal's weapon of choice
- 2 Last test of the year
- 6 Graduation cap dangler
- 8 Voted Most Likely to be Dissected
- 11 PunSeg for kids
- 12 PBJ Carrier
- 13 This school isn't private
- 14 Book most autographed in H.S.

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