

# LEMON CREEK JOURNAL



INSIGHTS & IMAGES OF LIFE ON THE LIFE ON THE LAST FRONTIER  
LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER  
JUNEAU, ALASKA

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

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VOLUME XXV





## Volume XXV: The Elephant in the Room

### In this issue:

Forward to Volume XXV	1
From the Superintendent, by Supt. Bob Cordle	2
Defining Moments, by Supt. Daryl Webster	5
The Well-Traveled Lieutenant	9
Employee of the Quarter	11
Employee Profiles – Jona Valdeconza & Elvie Howell	12
Dueling Recipes – Mitch Cook & Cherie Wolfe	15
And I Quote...	20
Recruitment	22

### 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](mailto:daryl.webster@alaska.gov)

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## Forward to Volume XXV

As we began planning this issue of the Lemon Creek Journal, we expected to feature content celebrating the end of Winter and the promise of Spring. But then the DOC budget news and rumors of a possible DOC institutional closure broke, and suddenly, musing about the change of seasons seemed pretty trivial compared to the dark clouds on our horizon. Having recently met with most of our staff to discuss the issue and our plans to respond to it, I hope you understand that Superintendent Cordle and I are keenly aware of the dreadful uncertainty that many of you feel, because we feel much the same. The difference is that we older types have faced this threat before, and we're still employed. But the threat is real, and your anxiety is natural. Until we manage to survive this fiscal year and begin the new one in July, **which we will**, this crisis represents the elephant in the room and this elephant can't be ignored.

I believe, and I think you'll agree, that people enter Public Safety professions for a variety of reasons, but largely out of a willingness to trade the wealth we'll never earn in Corrections for the opportunity to spend our working lives doing significant things, which for us boils down to dealing with some of society's most difficult people, in an unenviable prison setting, so that average folks won't have to. Perhaps we naively assume that because our work is risky and essential, public service will earn us respect and gratitude. Maybe we trust too much in the stability of our careers and take for granted a measure of job and financial security that was never guaranteed. But it sure is disillusioning when each of us inevitably discovers that earned gratitude has little cash value, and that the best intentions won't pay the bills if your personhood is reduced to a digit on a budget line and someone decides to draw a big, red, X through it.

Here is *The Secret*. Note that it has everything to do with attitude and very little to do with gratitude.

- No matter how threatening a situation may appear, the worst-case scenario is seldom the way life's dramas eventually play out. We worry about the awful things that can happen to us, but with faith in God and the help and support of those who are on our side, we take countermeasures and those measures typically render our crises more manageable.
- Stop assuming that people like, admire, or feel grateful to you. If they feel that way, they'll eventually show it. If they don't, then they're not people who are essential to your well-being. Look to the people you depend upon every day and who depend on you. Even they don't owe you admiration, but if you earn it, they'll give it and so should you.
- Fretting over your place of business closing is similar to worrying about being eaten by a bear. It really *could* happen, though probably won't. Every reasonable measure should be taken to avoid it. But if it happens, don't let it be for lack of fighting to prove our worth with every ounce of strength and resolve.

Keep reading for more on this topic...



# Our Fiscal Responsibility

By

**Bob Cordle**

**I**t is no secret that the budget for the Alaska Department of Corrections is being carefully examined due to massive financial challenges across the division. The Alaska Senate Corrections Committee has been given the difficult task of addressing and devising a solid solution for our current budget crisis. This is a major undertaking and with the next fiscal year being just around the corner a successful resolution is essential, not just for the remainder of fiscal year 2025, but to sustain and support the Department's operating budgets and needs for years to come. By now, we are all aware that the committee has not ruled out the closure of an institution to help reduce the Department's overall funding for future budget approvals.

All facilities have been called upon to help in a collective effort to reduce or stop spending where possible. Here is what Lemon Creek has done so far to assist with budget cost savings.

## **Deferred Expenditures:**

We took it upon ourselves to reduce spending for this fiscal year by determining what were immediate needs and what could be deferred to the next fiscal year. This proved to be an effective means to decrease spending through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Our total estimated savings came to \$635,200.00. However, the deferred items are still essential for LCCC's future operational needs and we will be in discussion with the executive team and facilities personnel on how to proceed in Fiscal Year 2026.

## **Training Savings:**

For years, Lemon Creek has made it a practice to help reduce spending on overtime for mandatory training by relying upon our administrative correctional officers to assist with coverage during training sessions. We arrange (as much as possible) to conduct these trainings during regular working hours, Monday through Friday. The results from two recent trainings are 63 hours saved on CPR re-certifications, and 30 hours saved on weapon re-quals.

### **Use of Administrative Correctional Officers to Reduce Short Notice Overtime Needs:**

During the pandemic, LCCC administrative sergeants and administrative correctional officers selflessly stepped up to cover posts or to assist with transports when there were not enough shift officers reporting for duty, due to attrition or officers being symptomatic. The normal duties of these administrative correctional officers were often put on hold so that minimum manning standards could be met. There was little monetary gain for them as they were already on duty when the needs arose. The cost of their selfless actions was that they often fell behind with their required responsibilities and duties in order to keep us in staffing compliance. Not one ever complained. By the time DOC Chief Medical Officer Robert Lawrence announced the pandemic was over, we were grossly understaffed by more than an entire shift. The practice of admin CO's covering for the needs of their brothers and sisters in blue is still being practiced to this day. Each time one of them volunteers to cover a post or assist with a transport, it reduces our overtime costs. With our current financial circumstances, we are leaning on them even more, until the 2025 fiscal year is closed out.

Since mid-December of 2024 I have been tracking the savings realized by using administrative correctional officer coverage vs calling in overtime to cover short notice needs. Over the period of almost three months, we reduced overtime needs by 130 hours, saving the State of Alaska approximately \$12,000.00 in wages. However, as already stated, these saving measures come at a cost. Each time an administrative correctional officer steps up to fill a post, go on a transport, or assist elsewhere as needed, their work suffers. This practice cannot be sustained long-term.

### **Informing Staff of the Crisis and Enlisting Them in the Fight to Prevent a Facility Closure:**

To date, we have met with most all staff to explain the Alaska Department of Corrections quandary over its current financial instability. During these meetings we have stressed the importance of "we verses me" and have spoken of our collective and individual fiscal responsibilities as state employees working together within these walls. We stressed the absolute need to do our part to reduce spending while the Alaska Senate Corrections Committee and Executive members of the Department of Corrections attempt to navigate through this dilemma.

Here are some worthy mentions of changes implemented since being put on notice by state legislators:

- Overtime usage/needs will be forwarded to facility leadership for review and approval.
- We have 120 to 150 days' worth of food storage. We will be relying on our food storage vs ordering more and rotating stock. We will replenish what is needed after July 1st.
- We will use current stock of all paper products and only purchase what is needed to get us through to June 30th vs having many months' worth of stock on hand.
- All preventative maintenance projects that can wait until after the close of this fiscal year will be put off. This does not include the Post 4 rebuild. The funds for this project do not come out of Lemon Creek's budget.
- We asked staff to consider holding off on taking leave that they haven't planned for yet, if possible, so as to avoid overtime during their absence. Our message was presented as something to consider and is strictly voluntary of course.

We are still in the process of identifying ways to reduce spending and welcome any ideas or suggestions.

As Superintendent Webster, Lieutenant McCracken and I met with groups and individuals to discuss the monumental struggles that lie before us, we were continually amazed at staffs' willingness to accept and embrace the challenges that the next four months will certainly bring. Several individuals came forward in private and offered to make enormous personal sacrifices. One officer offered to give up his signing bonus to assist with helping the DOC to reverse its financial crisis. Others offered to work overtime without compensation. We were beyond grateful for their extremely

generous offers but of course could not accept them. Many came forward with suggestions or ideas to help ease the pressure that we are all feeling and will continue to feel for some time. And of course, some expressed great concern to make ends meet if Lemon Creek should be selected for closure. Though we cannot predict the final outcome, I am confident, that come what may, Lemon Creek will continue to protect the public by remaining steadfast and dutifully firm against the base of Thunder Mountain for many years to come. Let us continue to think fiscally responsible thoughts and turn those thoughts into fiscally responsible actions. We are grateful to you all and want you to know that you are valued!



# Defining Moments

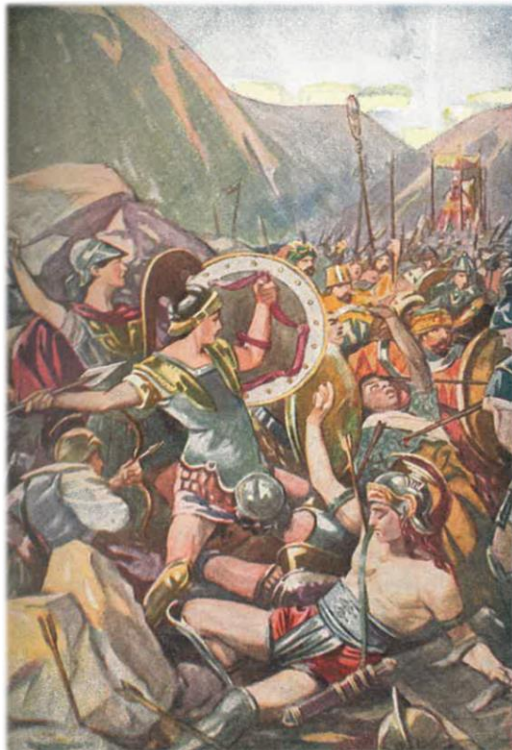
by

Daryl Webster

*We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.*

**Benjamin Franklin**

I'm a sucker for long shots and lost causes. Among my earliest memories and most prized possessions is an illustrated 19<sup>th</sup> century short story by English author Charlotte M. Yonge, *The Pass of Thermopylae*. I first came across it in my childhood, in a dusty old book in our family library and was instantly enthralled by the tale of 300 Spartans and a small force of



Boeotian allies, who fought to the death to hold a narrow pass against a Persian army of 180,000. The story's archaic language made it a challenging read for a small boy, but the cover illustration burned itself into my imagination. In it, a Spartan hoplite stands surrounded by a surging mass of Persian infantry at Thermopylae, his round "Hoplion" shield gripped in his left hand, a bronze-tipped spear drawn back in his right. All about him, comrades and foes lie dead or dying, as soon will he. But in that moment, he blazes like the sun. The caption read,

*The small desperate band stood side by side, fighting to the last.*

Back then, I was way too young to understand the significance of death, particularly the violent variety, but God help me, I wanted to know who that man was. He was the man I wanted to become.

**The Pass of Thermopylae**



I feel much the same whenever I visit the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas. The city has grown and enveloped small Mission San Antonio de Valero, that 200 Texian defenders turned into a fortress and held against overwhelming odds for 13 days in 1836. All but one of them would die there. There's a sacred feel to the place, bought and paid for through the embrace of great suffering and sacrifice. One can easily imagine Colonel William Barrett Travis, near the end of the siege, drawing his iconic line in the sand with his saber and inviting the men of the small garrison to cross the line and join him in fighting to the death.



*The Fall of the Alamo* by Robert Jenkins Onderdonk

I can't explain the magnetism of these stories and the emotions they evoke. I won't say that I wouldn't die for a cause, but I certainly have no plans to. If I could beam myself back in time to join the Spartans or Texians in their final moments, I'm pretty sure I'd beam myself right back out again before getting skewered by a Persian sword or Mexican Army bayonet. But from the safety of my favorite reading chair, I'm inspired by the knowledge that there are people in this world who will band together and fight to the last heartbeat, even in the most desperate circumstances. Their commitment to a cause, an imperative, or just to one another, even unto death, speaks powerfully to the idealist in all of us.

Right now at Lemon Creek, we find ourselves in a difficult circumstance, not a fatal one nor one that is certain, but the present budget crisis and the implied threat of an institutional closure imperils our professional and financial future, our capacity to provide for our families, our ability



to pay for our homes, and the very existence of Lemon Creek Correctional Center, where generations of Correctional personnel have served before us. How should we respond?

Unlike the Spartans at Thermopylae or the Texians at the Alamo, our fate is not sealed. Given that there are other DOC institutions in Alaska that might be closed instead of us, the fate we face is still speculative, rather than certain. But the threat is real, and we are called upon to encourage one another and learn from others, whose conduct in desperate circumstances still inspires. The lesson of the Spartans and Texians is not that they died or even that they did so for transcendent principles, but that they seized a defining moment. In the face of danger, they could have withdrawn and continued their lives elsewhere. They could have panicked or sunk into apathy, leaving themselves at the mercy of others. Instead, they joined together and did everything possible to influence their future, rather than having the future dictated to them. We can too. In fact, we must.



**Benjamin Franklin**

For our purposes, I especially appreciate the example of John Hancock and Benjamin Franklin. In 1776, the most prominent political figures and intellectual lights of the American Colonies came together to draft a Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. Each of them knew that once the Declaration was finalized and presented to the British Government, the small and tenuous American “States” would soon feel the full weight of the world’s most lethal army and navy, not in distant theaters of war, but in the streets of American villages and cities, farms and waterways. Each of the 56 signers knew that once they signed the Declaration, their homes and wealth could be stripped from them and if captured, they would be executed. As the story goes, John Hancock addressed members of the new Congress as they prepared to sign (or not sign) saying, “We must be unanimous, there must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together.”

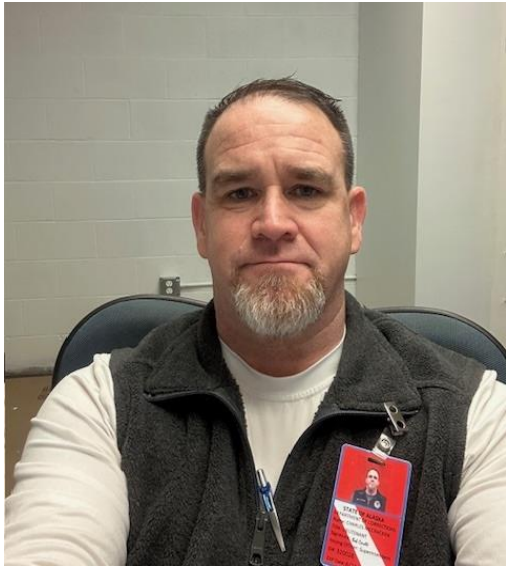
To which, Franklin responded with graveyard humor, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

We have come to a defining moment at Lemon Creek. In sharing with you the extent of the budget crisis confronting DOC and the real, if ill-defined possibility that a DOC institution might have to be closed to reduce the budgetary short-fall, I recognize that each of you must do as you see best to provide for your families and safeguard your future. No one could blame you if you chose to seek more secure employment elsewhere, though we hope you will not. Most anyone would understand if your faith in public service as a career has been shaken by the news. But I implore you to understand that we will always blame ourselves if we duck our heads in fear or

helplessness, hoping that the blow falls elsewhere. We can influence our future, and in the process define ourselves by hanging together and working to get through this as a powerful team.

Every dollar we save by deferring the purchase of items that are needed, but just not at this instant, gives us an inch more traction. Every hour of overtime we save by putting off leave or temporarily filling vacant posts or assignments from alternate sources is another day of institutional life for Lemon Creek. When we look at one another and see not just a co-worker, but someone who has chosen to stay and to sacrifice, just as we have, we forever define ourselves by the company we've kept and the choices we've made. Trust me on this. Seize this defining moment and you'll always remember it with pride.

*I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well. - Theodore Roosevelt*



## **The Well-Traveled Lieutenant**

**By**

**Lt. Chuck McCracken**

**H**aving been born with a curious mind and a passion for law enforcement, I have spent my life chasing ideas, stories, and experiences that shaped who I am today. As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a Police Officer. In California, where I grew up, applicants had to be a minimum of 21 years of age to serve in any law enforcement agency. So, I chose to join the Army after graduating High School, to pass the time until I could apply for the California Highway Patrol (CHP). After serving in the Army for five years I decided to take my shot at CHP. This did not go as planned. I did not get passed the written test. So, in six months I tried again, and was shut down again. I then set my sights on the Bakersfield Police Department and again fell short.

At this point I was feeling a bit discouraged, when a friend suggested I throw in my hat on the Corrections side of the house. I applied and was accepted into the process for the California Department of Corrections (CDC). This process was nine months long, in which time I decided that I really could not work in a prison, so I pulled my application. Feeling the Army was probably my calling in life I re-enlisted, but this time it was the Army National Guard as a recruiter. This opportunity brought me to Alaska, where I was deployed on my first combat tour in Iraq and met two fellow enlisted members who suggested I apply with the Alaska Department of Corrections. Fast forward 13 years and I find myself in a career that I feel I was always meant to be in.

Television would have the public believe that working in a prison is like being in a constant state of war, with riots happening every other day, going hands on with inmates all the time, and fights between inmates using home-made weapons. While all these things can and do happen, the fact is that most of our work as Correctional Officers involves conducting diplomacy between inmates, staff and the public. Correctional Officers suffer the stigma of being knuckle dragging “Guards” who are always looking to put an inmate in their place. But in truth, CO’s spend more



time de-escalating situations verbally rather than physically. They are first responders when inmates are hurt, sick, or mentally unstable. When an inmate dies from suicide, it hits the front page and makes Correctional Staff look incompetent or uncaring. What news reports fail to convey are all the other times when staff save the lives of inmates' who attempt self-harm.

I have been a Correctional Officer, Training Sergeant, Probation Officer and now the current Correctional Supervisor (LT). As the LT, I am a liaison between the floor staff and the administrative staff. For me, the biggest challenge of this position involves dealing with allegations of staff misconduct. It is disheartening to have to investigate people I have worked with for years, especially on occasions when I must correct or reprimand them. However, even this cannot diminish the rewarding aspects of the job. I find it so amazing to watch personnel grow from brand new officers with little to no life experience to highly seasoned officers and mentors themselves. Not to mention the thrill when an officer takes my advice and moves up the ranks to become a leader to be proud of. Even the difficult things about this career play a role in making it all worthwhile.

It has been said that Correctional officers walk the toughest beat, and with good reason. You deal with the same offenders as the police do, but with half of the tools and a quarter of the backup. My advice to anyone considering a career in Corrections is don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and don't limit yourself to one aspect of the bigger picture. The more you learn from the entire experience, the more well-rounded you will become, as well as being a greater asset to the team. And as William Edward Hickson said "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

*If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward. – Martin Luther King Jr.*

**LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER**  
**EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER**  
**Maintenance II, Jerome Co**



Jerome Co has been essential to the Maintenance team at Lemon Creek Correctional Center since joining DOC on October 28, 2021. Over the course of his four years with the Department, he has consistently displayed a positive and uplifting attitude, which has greatly contributed to fostering a collaborative and motivating work environment. Jerome consistently goes above and beyond in the completion of his duties. He is a highly skilled problem solver, comfortable operating outside the box, displaying the attributes that permit him to handle tasks efficiently and with great expertise. As a Maintenance II, Jerome's competence and professionalism are evident in the quality of his work. His dedication and exceptional performance make him a highly valued asset to the team.



## EMPLOYEE PROFILE:

### Officer Jona Valdeconza

Becoming a correctional officer at Lemon Creek Correctional Center has been a journey fueled by my military background and a deep passion for challenges. At first, my family didn't approve of my decision to join the Correctional field. They were concerned about the risks and the unknowns that came with it. But I've always been drawn to pushing myself beyond limits and embracing tough situations. My time in the military taught me discipline, leadership, and how to handle pressure, which gave me the confidence to take the leap into a career in Corrections.

Though I didn't have a formal law enforcement background, my military experience provided me with the skills needed to adapt quickly to the unique demands of this job. Working here at Lemon Creek has been eye-opening. It has made me realize that this isn't just a job. This is a career that I'm truly passionate about. The responsibility of maintaining security and order is a challenge I embrace

daily, and it has given me a sense of purpose I didn't expect. I'm proud to be part of a team that ensures safety and security, and I'm excited to continue growing in this field, knowing that this is the career I want to dedicate myself to.

One of the most misunderstood aspects of working at a prison is the belief that it's all about enforcing rules and dealing with conflict. While maintaining order and security is crucial, the reality is that being a Correctional Officer involves a lot more than just controlling situations. It is about being vigilant, but also understanding the dynamics of human behavior, building relationships with both inmates and fellow officers, and navigating complex, often emotional situations. There's a misconception that working in Corrections is purely about authority, which isn't entirely true. It is also about communication, patience, and making a difference in ways that might not be immediately visible. The job requires balancing firmness with empathy and understanding, which is not



something many people realize when they think of prison life.

The most challenging aspect of my job as a Correctional Officer is managing the constant balance between maintaining strict security and building trust with inmates. Every day, I must stay alert and be ready to handle any security threat that might arise. But at the same time, I need to remain approachable and fair, to foster an environment where communication can happen. It's a delicate balance, as the need to enforce rules can sometimes make it difficult to connect with inmates on a human level. The emotional toll of this balancing act, coupled with the unpredictability of the job, can be exhausting. However, it's also what makes the role so rewarding, knowing that maintaining that balance plays a big part in ensuring safety and order within the facility.

The most rewarding aspect of being a Correctional Officer is the ability to have a real impact, not just in maintaining safety, but in shaping the environment within the facility. Every day, I am able to be a stabilizing presence, ensuring security while also offering a level of respect and fairness that fosters trust with the inmates. It's incredibly fulfilling when you see how small actions, like listening, staying calm in tense situations, or being consistent with rules, can positively influence the dynamics within the facility. But beyond that, the bonds formed with my fellow officers are truly special. In this line of work, we become more than just coworkers; we become a family, supporting

each other through challenges we face every day. Knowing that my role helps create a safer, more organized environment where everyone can feel secure, alongside a tight-knit team that has each other's backs, is what makes this job so rewarding.

If you're considering a career in Corrections, my advice is to approach it with the mindset that it's more than just a job. It is a commitment to making a real difference. I remember what my drill sergeant told me during basic training when I was struggling to finish my 2-mile run. I was exhausted and ready to give up, but he yelled at me, "Don't stop, stop when you're done." At that moment, I realized he wasn't just telling me to finish the run. He was teaching me a powerful lesson: Keep pushing through challenges, even when you're tired or discouraged, and only stop once you've fully accomplished your goal. That mentality has stayed with me throughout my career in Corrections, along with the Army values that guide me: Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values are crucial in this line of work. The job can be physically and emotionally demanding, but by living these values, you can stay grounded and focused. Build strong communication skills, be firm but fair, and remember that the bonds you form with your fellow officers will help you navigate tough days. If you're ready to face challenges head-on and honor the mission, Corrections can be one of the most rewarding and fulfilling careers out there.



## Employee Profile:

### Elvie Howell, Food Service Lead

**M**y name is Elvira Howell, but I go by Elvie. I'm married to Officer Cody Howell, who works as a Correctional Officer at Lemon Creek. Prior to coming to Juneau, we lived in Texas, where Cody was a Correctional Officer in Beaumont.

Before coming to Texas, I spent several years living and working in the United Arab Emirates. I worked for three years in the food industry at Abu Dhabi Cooperative Society Department Store in Abu Dhabi, handling food services and assisting with preparing bulk orders for consumers. We also provided in-person services, preparing fresh food items according to daily needs. Looking for better opportunities, I secured a position as a Multitasking Customer Service Representative at Majid AL Futtaim Vox Cinemas in Dubai. In this role, I had more extensive responsibilities, interacting with customers, communicating via telephone, and handling food services. Eventually, I came to Alaska, eager to experience new challenges.

Upon arriving in Alaska, I considered transitioning to a new profession, leveraging my customer service skills. My husband suggested applying for a Food Service Steward position at Lemon Creek Correctional Center, where he works. I was concerned about safety, but he assured me of my safety before I entered the prison environment.

During my first week of orientation at Lemon Creek, I met supportive colleagues who provided valuable information and ensured my safety before I began my duties. Upon entering the kitchen, I began interacting with inmate workers and met people with widely diverse personalities. I understood the need to establish authority through voice, demeanor, and professionalism. At LCCC, I have encountered professionals who are well-trained, well-mannered, and committed to providing a safe working environment. I appreciate the friendly and approachable colleagues I have met. As a Kitchen Steward, I face challenges in maintaining professionalism and respect, particularly when dealing with inmates' emotional struggles. My personal philosophy emphasizes respect, and I strive to provide inmates with opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities and work ethic.

The most rewarding aspect of my job is witnessing inmates' growth and earning their respect. To succeed as a Kitchen Steward in a prison environment, one must possess dignity, leadership skills, and the ability to stand firm while guiding and supporting inmates. If anyone is considering a career in Corrections, I recommend conducting thorough research, as this field can be unfamiliar and challenging. Our facility provides training and academy programs for those willing to learn. It is reassuring to know that LCCC has a strong support system, with colleagues who are always willing to help each other.

# Memories of Easter

By

**SSgt. Mitch Cook**

My fondest memories of childhood revolve around family gatherings. I come from a very large Southern family and the holidays were a time when we all got together and enjoyed each other's company. Easter was the first holiday of the year and the most important holiday in Southern Christian homes.

My Mee-maw and Paw-paw lived across the street from Springhill Baptist Church, the family church that we all grew up in. Every holiday we would gather after church at their house and have the most amazing meals together. Each holiday had a unique menu: Thanksgiving was always Turkey and stuffing; New Year's Day would be pork chops, Black Eyed Peas, and corn bread; and Easter was always ham with mashed potatoes & gravy. Desserts also matched the holiday, pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving, divinity and fudge for Christmas, and my favorite, peach cobbler, for Easter.

All of the women in my family were amazing cooks and I believe this is where I developed my love of cooking. As hard as I try to replicate the dishes served at these gatherings, I find it difficult to get them to taste the way they did back then. Due to the lack of fresh fruit here in Alaska, I have provided you a recipe for Peach cobbler with all the ingredients readily available, regardless of the supermarket you use. This is an easy recipe to follow and as close as I can get to the real thing. I hope you enjoy.

## **Disclaimer:**

**This is by no means a match for Mee-maw's famous peach cobbler.**

## Super Easy Peach Cobbler





## Ingredients

Two 15 oz cans sliced peaches in syrup

1 stick real butter (1/2 cup)

1 cup self-rising flour

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup milk

1tbs cinnamon (more if you like)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Drain 1 can of peaches & keep the syrup from the other can to flavor batter

Place butter in a 9 x 12 inch baking dish

Heat butter on the stove or in the oven until melted

In a medium bowl, mix flour, sugar, & cinnamon

Stir in milk and reserved syrup

Pour batter over the melted butter in the baking dish

Place peaches on top of batter

Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees

Cobbler is done when the batter rises around the peaches & crust is thick & golden brown

Serve warm with ice-cream (I recommend butter pecan)



**Ssgt. Mitch Cook serves as Training Sergeant at Lemon Creek Correctional Center, where he cooks for staff on a regular basis. His Southern dishes are workplace favorites.**

# Italian Ricotta Cake

By  
Cherie Wolfe



For as long as I can remember, Italian Ricotta Cake was served after the Easter Sunday meal for dessert. It's a dessert that everyone looks forward to, making a grand, once-a-year appearance. Why not make it all year round, though?

Like any holiday, we eat food until we feel like we are going to pop, then we are asked the magic question by our host, "Are you ready for dessert?" Cue the groans and chuckles as we say, "Give me about a half hour," hoping we have room for a slice of that sweet ricotta goodness.

Italian ricotta cake comes from traditional Italian cooking and ricotta cheese has been pulling its weight in desserts since forever. It started in places like Sicily and Campania, where ricotta was common.

Ricotta cheese makes cakes rich and creamy. It adds moisture, making the cake light and fluffy, *just fluffy enough* that you can venture to have a second piece and still feel like you're being healthy.



My family recipe uses vanilla and a little almond extract for that warm cozy vibe, but if you want to get a fancy, classic Italian Ricotta Cake is often made with lemon extract, lemon zest, or orange zest as well. You can also try chocolate ricotta cake; this version uses cocoa powder.

Serve Italian ricotta cake plain or with powdered sugar on top. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, pair it with fresh berries, honey, or whipped cream. If you're looking for a grand finale for your holiday guests, try it with chocolate or fruit sauce. YUM!

So, whether you're making it for Easter or just because you deserve a treat, this Italian Ricotta Cake is the kind of dessert that turns any meal into a celebration. It's light, creamy, and just a little bit fancy—perfect for impressing your guests, or, you know, just treating yourself. It's the kind of cake that makes you wonder why we don't have it once a week. After all, if cake can make you feel this good, why wait for a holiday?

When we take a bite of Italian Ricotta Cake our taste buds are giving us a high five!

### **Ingredients & directions**

#### **Dough**

2 Eggs

½ cup Sugar

½ melted Margarine

1 Tbsp. Baking Powder

Pinch Salt

1 tsp. Vanilla

3 cups Flour

1. Cream eggs, sugar, and margarine together.
2. Mix dry ingredients together separately.
3. Add dry ingredients and vanilla to egg mixture and mix until dough is formed.

### **Filling**

1 lb. Ricotta

¼ cup Sugar

1 tsp. Vanilla

¼ tsp. Almond Extract

1 Egg

1. Mix all ingredients together for filling.

### **Egg Wash**

1 Egg

1 Tbsp Water

1. Mix together for brushing on top before baking.

### **Assembly**

1. Divide dough into two even balls.
2. Roll one dough ball out to fit the bottom of an 8x11 baking dish for bottom layer.
3. Spread all the filling over the bottom dough layer.
4. Roll out the other dough ball and place over the filling layer.
5. Brush with egg wash and bake at 300 degrees for 35 minutes.
6. Sprinkle with powdered sugar after completely cooled



Cherie Wolfe grew up in the rolling hills of Pennsylvania, where she spent 30 years running a gourmet popcorn shop that expanded to serve breakfast and lunch, soups, salads, and baked goods. She served for two years supervising 50-60 inmate kitchen workers at Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution – Fayette, before coming to Lemon Creek Correctional Center as Food Services Supervisor. Cherie believes that home cooking should be healthy and adventurous. "Sure, I'm all about salads and nutrient-packed meals," she says, "But I believe in balance. Life's too short not to sneak in that extra cookie or indulge in a bowl of pasta now and then. After all, a cookie in hand makes everything better, don't you think?"



# And I Quote....

Every crisis presents opportunities, even if only to say just the right thing at the most opportune time. Try these on for size.

- In December 1944, American General Anthony McAuliffe and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division found themselves outnumbered and surrounded by German forces at Bastogne, Belgium. The German ultimatum demanded surrender or annihilation. General McAuliffe's one word response read:

*To the German Commander,*

*NUTS!*

*The American Commander*

- When Philip of Macedon, in the process of conquering Greece in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC, sent a surrender demand to Laconia (Sparta), he received a one-word response:

Philip's Demand: *If once I enter into your territories, I will destroy you all.*

Sparta's Response: *If*

- **Will Rogers:** *Diplomacy is the art of saying 'Nice doggie' until you can find a rock.*
- **George Carlin:** *Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.*
- **Unknown:** *Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.*
- **General George Patton:** *A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week.*
- **Mark Twain:** *It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.*

# 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.

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- A supportive & team-oriented work environment

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