

DOC staff volunteer with water rescues



C/O Milt Schmiede, West Shoreline Correctional Facility demonstrates the Muskegon County Sheriff Dive Team's underwater communication equipment at a water safety awareness event.

Baker College in Muskegon recently hosted a Water Safety Awareness day presented by Kids-N-Cops, a multi-agency program including the police, fire and emergency medical services of Muskegon County.

The idea is to provide children with the opportunity to talk and interact with police officers, fire fighters and paramedics in a non-emergency setting.

Personnel from area police, fire and rescue units were on hand for demonstrations and to answer questions about water safety. Among them were personnel from the Muskegon County Sheriff's Dive Team.

This all-volunteer team of scuba divers also includes some corrections personnel. The team is on call to assist area police and fire departments.

The dive team demonstrated an underwater communication system using a 5,000 gallon water tank with windows. A diver inside the tank, C/O Milt Schmiede of the West Shoreline Correctional Facility, was able to talk to the children on the outside.

The team assists law enforcement and rescue services by recovering evidence of crimes, removing obstructions from waterways such as vehicles, boats, or planes and recovering drowning victims.

The program has been active for at least 10 years with the dive team averaging between 15 and 20 calls a year. Training takes place six times per year and may include additional specialized instruction as needed.

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Water rescues

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“The team just acquired an underwater sonar unit that takes three days of training for certification,” explained Sgt. Mike Hiles, Earnest C. Brooks Facility and dive team member.

Also volunteering on the dive team are RUO Greg Dahl, West Shoreline Correctional Facility and Sgt. Vicki Warber, Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility. *F.Y.J.*

A member of the dive team explains how the communications system is used while a child talks with an underwater Officer Schmiede.

Filing fraudulent UCC statements becomes felony

Individuals who file false or fraudulent Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) financing statements in an attempt to harass or financially harm others will face tough new penalties under new legislation recently signed into law by the governor.

UCC governs commercial transactions such as sales, loans, bank deposits, investments and securities.

Individuals have been known to abuse UCC law by filing fraudulent financing statements against public officials, such as judges and law enforcement and corrections officers, wrongly naming them as debtors to harass them or ruin credit records.

The damage done by a false UCC financing statement is sobering, explained Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land. For example, individuals with a grudge file a financing statement, naming their unsuspecting target as the debtor and listing collateral worth millions of dollars. In essence, they perpetrate the fraud that a loan agreement exists between the two parties.

“These bogus filings can wreak havoc with victims’ credit records and reputations, adversely affecting their ability to enter into legitimate financial transactions,” Land said.

Under UCC, the Secretary of State is required to give public notice that an individual or business has pledged certain items or services as collateral against a loan. Upon entering into a loan agreement, the lender files a UCC financing statement with the department. If a loan is defaulted on and a bankruptcy ensues, the UCC financing statements can be used to establish who has priority to the collateral when competing creditors have legally enforceable interests.

The legislation takes effect Jan. 1, 2005. Public Act 212 of 2004 amends UCC law to:

- Require the Secretary of State to provide written notice to individuals who are named as debtors in a UCC financing statement;
- Charge anyone identified as filing a false UCC financing statement with a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$2,500, or both;
- Allow a debtor named in a false or fraudulent financing statement to bring an action against the person who filed it;
- Replace the current fee structure for filing and indexing records with a flat \$15 fee;
- Waive filing fees for individuals filing a correction statement to amend a false or fraudulent financing statement.

In June, the Secretary of State unveiled UCC Online, which eliminates the need for paper filings by allowing customers to file and search for UCC documents electronically. The new system reduces the processing time for searches from weeks to minutes and makes newly filed financing statements available immediately. *F.Y.J.*

Pennsylvania Parole Board observes video conferencing



Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole members observe a video conference parole hearing at Central Office in Lansing.

The MDOC Parole Board recently played host to members of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Parole Board. The Pennsylvania group is in the process of restructuring their Parole Board from field offices to a central office design. As a result, they plan to adopt a video conferencing system to assist with parole hearings.

“In their request to visit they indicated that the MDOC has a reputation for being pioneers in the use of video conference for parole hearings,” said Mike Glynn, Parole Board administrative manager. “So they wanted to come out to view our system.”

The Pennsylvania board members sat in on some video conferenced parole hearings and visited with eight DOC Parole Board members.

“They thought it was fabulous,” said Glynn.

“They were impressed with the clarity and the fact that you could see the body language and the expression on people’s faces.”

John Rubitschun, MDOC Parole Board Chair and Glynn also provided the Pennsylvania board members with information about the Parole Board Information System (PBIS.) They explained how files are organized, pre-screened and loaded into PBIS so a Parole Board member can download all the inmate’s information and history. This gives them all this information at their fingertips and provides structure when talking with prisoners.

“It was our pleasure to give them a demonstration of our video conferencing system,” said Rubitschun. “They were also interested in our use of fixed-term paroles and we provided them with information on that as well.”

The visiting Parole Board personnel were impressed with the MDOC program.

“The trip to Michigan was extremely informative and will be quite useful to us as we move forward with the implementation of video conferencing within the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole,” said Pennsylvania Board Chair Benjamin A. Martinez.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has about 41,000 offenders. *F.H.J.*

Standish Sergeant helps solve 24-year-old murder case

Standish Maximum Correctional Facility Sgt. Rod Bell received a complimentary thank you letter from the family of a woman who was murdered 24 years ago. Sgt. Bell was functioning as an acting inspector last September. During this time he was contacted by cold case detectives out of Kalamazoo and was asked to try and provide information concerning a connection between two prisoners.

Sgt. Bell worked diligently to provide the information and his work helped solve a 24-year-old murder. Because of his assistance, the family of the deceased finally had some closure in the murder of their daughter.

“We are very proud of Sgt. Rod Bell here at SMF,” said Warden Thomas Birkett. “This is an example of his outstanding work and attention to detail.” *F.H.J.*

Torch Run picnic raises \$800



Chippewa and Straits correctional facilities Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run picnic raised nearly \$800 for Special Olympics. The event was arranged by Chippewa Captain Terry Corey-Spiker and Straits Co-Captain Gayle Wilson. Several local businesses donated supplies and food and approximately 200 employees showed their support. Along with the employees who helped serve food and smiles were four Special Olympics athletes. *F.Y.J.*

From left: Special Olympians Russell Spinuzza, Marsha LeBanc and Marion Albrough; Law Enforcement Torch Run Co-Captain Gayle Wilson, hearings/grievance coord: ARUSTerry Swift; Vicki Gerou, human resources officer; Paula King, personnel management tech and Warden Jeri-Ann Sherry.

FOA Region II holds first blood drive



Delores Young, PMA, gives blood for the first time at the

The FOA Region II Blood Drive was a big success for a first-time effort. A total of 27 donors volunteered and 23 pints of blood were collected. Ten first time donors turned out.

Ten staff members from the Region II office and Genesee Probation office volunteered to help run the drive, make cookies and load and unload the truck. *F.Y.J.*



Debbi Conine, office supervisor, assisted at the registration table.



Debbie Katzinger, personnel tech, was also a first time donor.

Macomb County works on re-entry initiatives



Recently, supervisors Jo Ann Rottenbucher of Macomb Probation and Mike Berro of Mt. Clemens Parole co-chaired their first meeting of the Macomb County Community Corrections Advisory Board Subcommittee, dealing with housing and employment for offenders re-entering the community from prison.

The meeting was attended by citizens and concerned individuals from the county, as well as by Warden Hugh Wolfenbarger, Deputy Warden Charlene Carberry, Inspector Wanda Moore, and RUM Michele Grochocki from the Macomb Correctional Facility.

The purpose of the subcommittee is to identify gaps and

needs in the areas of housing and employment for offenders re-entering the community, and make recommendations in keeping with the TPCI model.

The Housing Work Group, a subset of the advisory board, will be working to advance the idea of creating a transitional living center for homeless parolees. The Employment Work Group is addressing the problems of employment for newly-released prisoners.

Staff at Macomb Correctional Facility are working with the advisory board subcommittee on re-entry issues as well. *F.Y.J.*



Warden Hugh Wolfenbarger

Is Poker your game? Find out on August 6

A Poker Challenge has been added to this year's festivities at Employee Recreation Day at the Royal Scot Golf Club on August 6. The game is *No Limit Texas Hold 'em*. In addition to receiving a trophy, the winner will name a charity to which all of the money collected for this event will be donated.

A \$20 entry fee is required. It will be collected immediately before the tournament begins. This charge is separate and in addition to the general fee paid to attend the day's events. Again, the entire amount will go to charity.

Anyone interested in the poker challenge should contact Jerry Carnes, Administrative Assistant, NCF/CMQ to reserve a seat. Register by e-mail or call (906) 293-0009. The tournament will be limited to the first forty entrants that register (family and friends are welcome). Volunteers are also needed.

Play begins at 1:30 p.m. and runs approximately two to three hours. (On average, a person will play about an hour before running out of poker chips and facing elimination.)

Rules and additional information, as well as a few strategy tips (if requested), will be sent to registered players.

Loads of other fun and activities are also scheduled. Call your designated contact person for registration information. *F.Y.J.*

Promotions

Effective Date	Name	Position
6-Jun-04	WING, JULIE A.	DEPT SUPERVISOR-2 BELLAMY CREEK
6-Jun-04	NICHOLLS, EVELYN E.	DEPUTY PRISON WARDEN-3 BARAGA FACILITY
6-Jun-04	DESCHAINED, DAWN M.	EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-E CHIPPEWA FACILITY
6-Jun-04	REVELS-WOODSON, DIANE	PAROLE PROBATION MNGR-2 FIELD OPS REGION I
6-Jun-04	GARCHOW, BRUCE D.	RESIDENT UNIT OFFICER-E KINROSS/HIAWATHA
6-Jun-04	HALFMAN, TIMOTHY J.	RESIDENT UNIT OFFICER-E CARSON CITY FACILITY
6-Jun-04	LEDFOURD, PHILIP G.	RESIDENT UNIT OFFICER-E KINROSS/HIAWATHA
6-Jun-04	MILLER, TRAVIS L.	RESIDENT UNIT OFFICER-E KINROSS/HIAWATHA
6-Jun-04	YOUNGERT, PETER G.	RESIDENT UNIT OFFICER-E CARSON CITY FACILITY
6-Jun-04	LONG, MARGRET A.	SECRETARY-E EGELER FACILITY
6-Jun-04	DAVIS, SUSAN S.	SENIOR EXECUTIVE WARDEN WESTERN WAYNE
20-Jun-04	CHRISTIANSEN, JOHN G.	CORRECTIONS SHIFT SUPV-1 IONIA MAXIMUM
20-Jun-04	BLODGETT, REBECCA M.	DEPARTMENTAL TECHNICIAN-E PINE RIVER FACILITY
20-Jun-04	MCCULLICK, MARK W.	DEPUTY PRISON WARDEN-3 THUMB FACILITY
20-Jun-04	MURINE, JOAN A.	SECRETARY-E COOPER STREET
20-Jun-04	WILSON, SHARON A.	SECRETARY-E PINE RIVER FACILITY
20-Jun-04	BRACE, PEGGY L.	SENIOR EXEC MGT ASST-2 CFA REGION II

DOC budget update

The Michigan Department of Corrections budget continues in a holding pattern in Conference Committee. As reported previously, the Michigan House of Representatives passed budget recommendations made by the House Appropriations Committee partially restoring cuts made by the Senate earlier this year.

- \$2.5 million of the Senate's cut to academic/vocational program funding was restored.
- A partial restoration of Hepatitis C testing and treatment funding brings back \$1,149,900 to the program.
- \$5 million in substance abuse testing and treatment funding was reinstated.

The House version is \$12 million general fund/general purpose less than the budget passed by the Senate. However, the reduction is due to a fiscal-year-end split-pay accounting change for the two weeks of work that straddle FY 2005 and FY 2006 and a retirement actuarial change which saves an additional \$6.1 million.

The House bill went back to the Senate for concurrence and was rejected, meaning the bill must now be passed by a Conference Committee which is made up of three members from each chamber. No action is expected in the next two weeks.

After the primary elections which are scheduled for Tuesday, August 3, the House and Senate are expected to reconvene and the Conference Committee will again take up the bill to resolve the points of difference between the House and Senate.

Once those issues are resolved, the Conference Committee report will go to the Senate and, if it is adopted, the report and the bill go to the House. If the House approves the report, the bill goes to the Governor's desk for her signature. At that time, she signs the bill into law or she may veto individual line items.

Watch for *F.Y.J.* budget updates as they develop. *F.Y.J.*

Medicaid changes assist re-entry

One more tool in the re-entry initiative tool box may help offenders returning to the community with their healthcare issues.

Currently, Medicaid is not available to inmates serving inside a DOC facility. In addition, paroling inmates often face a waiting period before their Medicaid services become available to them.

“This can be a real roadblock to a successful parole for many offenders,” said Policy and Strategic Planning Administration Deputy Director Dennis Schrantz. “Often they have medical problems that require access to a continuum of care and ongoing support. If they have to wait weeks or months for that care it can be detrimental not only to their health, but to their ability to find employment.”

New recommendations from a report by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) focus on practices that increase and hasten Medicaid access for people experiencing chronic homelessness, including assisting people leaving psychiatric facilities and correctional facilities.

CMS is encouraging states to “suspend” and not “terminate” Medicaid benefits while a person is in a public institution. Agencies partnering in the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative researched the situation and found that it is indeed an option for prisoners incarcerated in DOC facilities.

It has been past practice for prisoners who were eligible for and receiving Medicaid benefits to have both eligibility and benefits terminated upon being admitted to prison. The suggested policy on maintaining Medicaid eligibility for incarcerated persons recognizes that while benefits in the form of cash payments must cease upon incarceration, their eligibility status may simply be “suspended” while incarcerated as opposed to being terminated in which case reapplication and redetermination of eligibility would be required before benefits could again be received.

“Under the suspension status, it will only be necessary to “reactivate” eligibility and benefits, and the process for accomplishing this can occur sufficiently prior to release such that benefits can be available immediately upon release,” said James Yarborough, executive planning liaison. “This would significantly simplify and accelerate access to needed medical and other forms of assistance for eligible parolees.”

In addition to a shorter waiting period for health care, paroling prisoners may soon be able to obtain social security cards and apply for other federal benefits for which they might be eligible while still incarcerated.

“All of these efforts are geared toward assisting prisoners in obtaining access to all federal entitlements for which they are eligible in a timely fashion,” said Yarborough. “This could help remove barriers to successful community re-entry.” *F.H.J.*

Second Annual Ric Goward Memorial Golf Scramble coming up

The Second Annual Ric Goward Memorial Golf Scramble will be held August 27, 2004 at the North Star Golf Course, U.S. 27, five miles south of Ithaca. For more information contact Gary Miniard at 989-681-6444 ext. 7452 or Ray Sholtz at 989-681-9060. The first 36 teams to register will play. *F.H.J.*

Jackson staff defend title



From left: Chaplain Paul Young, Gregory Wilton and Nick Kik

Staff from G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility have successfully defended their Work Fit weight lifting championship title again this year. Work Fit is a fitness and rehabilitation facility for the MDOC employees of the Jackson region which hosts a weight lifting competition each year.

The competition between facilities is based on the total of the top three percentage lifters from each facility. A contestant's percentage is figured by dividing the total of their three lifts (bench, military and squat) by their body weight.

This year Work Fit has made this annual competition a fund raiser for the Special Olympics. Each facility was asked to contribute \$125 from their employee club to cover the entry of their top three

participants into the contest.

The top three percentage lifters for JCF this year defended their titles from last year. The winners were Officers Greg Wilton and Nick Kik and Chaplain Paul Young.

Work Fit provides various contests and incentives throughout each year to encourage the area employees to become involved in a regular fitness program. *F.Y.J.*

Kinross employees assist Habitat and local family



Employees from Kinross Correctional Facility, Hiawatha Correctional Facility, Chippewa Correctional Facility and Straits Correctional Facility are volunteering their time and expertise to raise funds and help construct a Habitat home. Staff first raised funds to build a playhouse. The playhouse is being raffled to bring in money for the Habitat home which will be constructed for the Rudyard family. *F.Y.J.*

Pictured with the completed playhouse are: from left, Director Patricia Caruso, the Rudyard family and Ginny Johnson, board member of Habitat for Humanity.