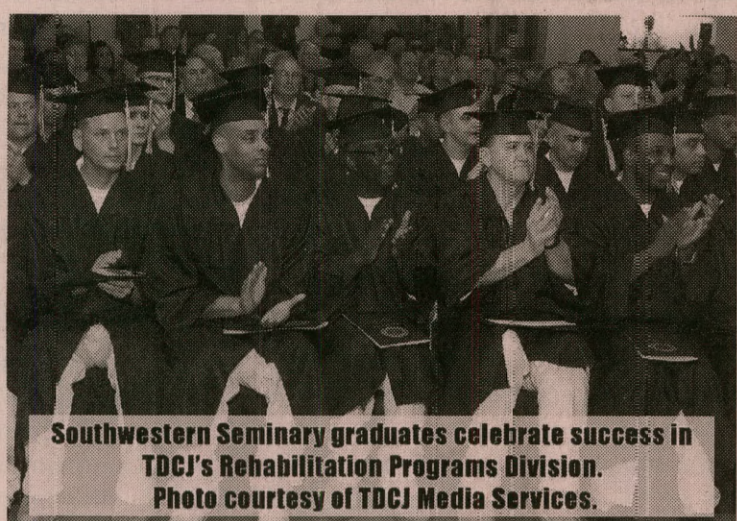


THE ECHO

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DISTRIBUTED FREE TO THOSE WITHIN TDCJ



Southwestern Seminary graduates celebrate success in TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division. Photo courtesy of TDCJ Media Services.

RPD supporting successful secondary education at units

William Hill, ECHO Staff

“Success is all about rehabilitation,” said Dr. M. Rutledge, deputy director of Operations and Evidence-Based Practices - Rehabilitation Programs Division (RPD) for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). “It is not about what you have done in the past. It is about what you can do now, and that is the key. Incarceration should just be a chapter in a person's life, it should not be a period. Rehabilitation allows a person to live not only a new chapter, but also new chapters in their life so that they can move forward.”

time to be in prison, the offenders of today's TDCJ have access to a myriad of programs designed to promote successful reintegration into society. The task of coordinating these programs among various units with the offenders who need or desire to participate has been undertaken by a dedicated team of case managers and counselors employed in the RPD. The division's stated mission is to develop and provide evidence-based rehabilitative programming that facilitates positive change in the lives of TDCJ offenders.

While there is never a good

RPD continued on pg.3 >

inspect 2 PROTECT

MAIL safe

K-9 safe

PEOPLE safe

www.tdcj.texas.gov

#inspect2protect

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) hosted its Houston-area Public Awareness Corrections Today (PACT) conference in late January and discussed several key policy changes affecting offenders within the agency. These changes to the contraband policy are called “Inspect 2 Protect” and are designed to promote the safety of anyone who spends time inside a penal facility, including offenders, visitors, volunteers and correctional staff.

“All of these changes are coming about because we have to do more to combat the contraband problem,” said Lorie Davis, director of TDCJ's Correctional Institution Division (CID). Davis addressed PACT participants and discussed the changes with *The ECHO*. “We owe it to the offenders, their families and TDCJ staff to do all we can

Implementation begins March 1

Inspect 2 Protect: Rule changes affect offender mail, visitation, accounts

to make the facilities better and safer for everyone.”

Inspect 2 Protect includes new regulations for offender mail, revises canine and personal search procedures, introduces new Security Precaution Designators (SPDs) and changes how incarcerated individuals receive money in their inmate trust fund account. Mail regulation revisions, canine and personal search procedures, and new SPDs go into effect March 1. An exact date for changes to account deposit processes to begin is not yet available. Davis said revisions to these policies are not meant to be punitive to the incarcerated population but will allow for better detection and confiscation of drugs and other forms of contraband.

According to the TDCJ website, contraband in prison “becomes alternative currency, and simple issues like an unpaid debt can easily lead to threats, extortion and even physical assault. When contraband involves synthetic drugs like K2, it takes only one small dose for the user to suffer seizures, permanent disability and, in

some cases, death. ... In 2019 there were approximately 2,300 incidents of marijuana, illegal drugs, and/or K2 reported at facilities system wide” (https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/news/inspect_2_protect.html).

Offender mail

Revisions to the mail policy are due to the overwhelming amount of incoming mail received on TDCJ units each day containing some form of foreign or suspicious, unidentifiable substance. The TDCJ website states that in 2019, offenders in TDCJ received more than 7.5 million pieces of mail, and that approximately 3,500 letters per month have an uninspectable or suspicious substance.

Types of paper for incoming correspondence will be restricted in new regulations, and “plain white paper” will become the paper of choice for those writing to loved ones in TDCJ. Colored paper and manufactured greeting cards are two examples of items that will not be accepted as incoming mail by TDCJ.

Inspect continued on pg.8 >

Harrell uses HVAC class at Lewis Unit to set course for his professional success

Reprinted from Windham School District's Annual Performance Report, School Year 2017-2018

Arrested at age 23, Chris Harrell believed himself to be the family disappointment and burden. Harrell filled his teenage years and early 20s with shenanigans and disruptive behaviors that eventually led to his imprisonment within Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Even though Harrell already had a high school diploma when he entered TDCJ, he wanted to get involved with Windham School District (WSD).

“I was actually looking forward to it. I was hoping I was going to get sent to a unit that had some kind of vocational training,” he said. “As soon as I got to the unit, I started sending request forms out to be put on the waiting list. I wanted to take every one of them that I could,” Harrell said.

Although policy wouldn't allow Harrell to take all the vocational courses offered, he earned several industry certifications including one in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) with WSD instructor Ted Watts. Harrell said Watts was different than most other teachers and made a significant impact on Harrell's vocational education.

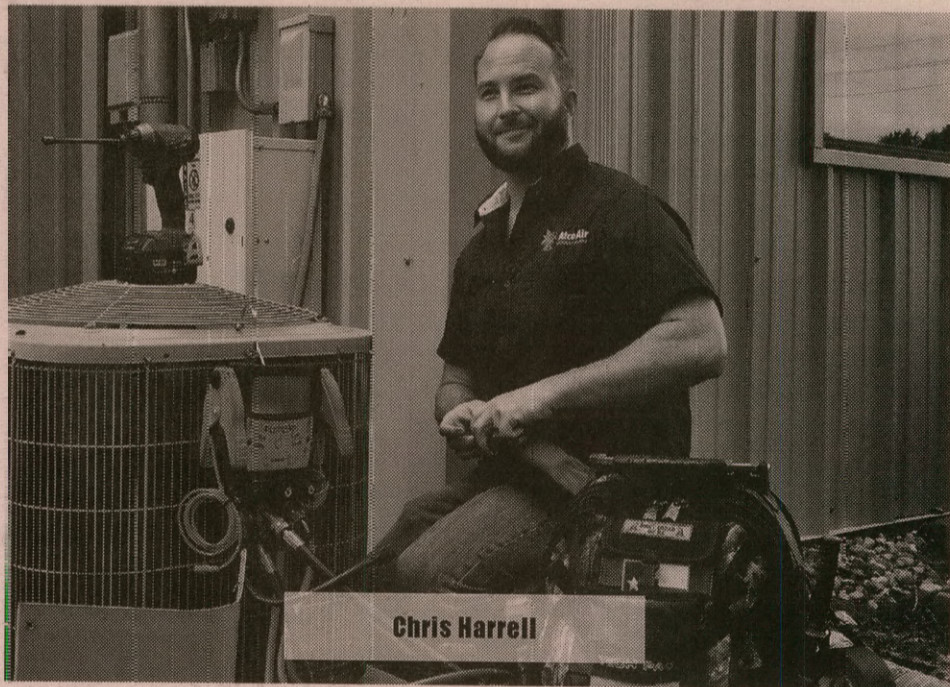
Harrell even tried to track down Watts at the Lewis Unit to give him a special message after he reestablished himself in his community. “I just wanted to let him know I appreciate all the training he gave me,” Harrell said. “He actually cared. In that kind of setting a lot of people don't, and he's one of the ones that cared. He really put his heart and soul and a whole lot of effort into [teaching].”

Knowing the difference between a job and a career is one of the many things Harrell learned in his WSD education. Along with setting and obtaining goals, a career offers professional fulfillment and provides for family.

For Harrell, his career must also entice him with day-to-day variety. Working as a lead installer and service technician for a heating and air conditioning company in East Texas achieves this goal.

“Every day is different. I'm not stuck behind a desk in an office, which some people, they like that. It helps them be organized, and I'm just not a paperwork kind of guy,” Harrell chuckled. “I love working with my hands.”

Lack of monotony and diversity are important to Harrell in his work. He also enjoys the responsibility of his position.



Chris Harrell

“I'm trusted. We work business hours Monday through Friday while everyone else works too,” he explained. “I work in people's homes. People trust me, and it's given me the opportunity to make the best of a new start.”

Harrell went to work soon after his release in 2014. However, it wasn't until 2016 that he began his current career, which fulfills his professional goals and allows him to provide for his family.

“I learned quickly, and I was willing to do anything they threw at me,” he said, smiling. “Eventually, they put me in charge of the install crew, and it's been great ever since.”

Harrell's advice to those currently incarcerated includes “taking the chip off your shoulders, being willing to take instructions and learning from mistakes.”

Today, five years after his release, Harrell diligently works a steady job near his hometown and brings home more than \$50,000 a year. When asked about his parents' reaction to his full turn around in life, Harrell said they are ecstatic and grateful.

“That is real humbling and gratifying for me, to give back and be a positive aspect of their lives again,” Harrell explained. “After everything I put myself through, I put them through so much more. So, for them to see me being successful and having a career and being sober, a good influence and a force for good in the world — they're just at peace.” ★

One Man's Treasure

Clothing that makes a difference



Dallas-based nonprofit now clothing former residents with hope, confidence

John Walter Flagg, ECHO Staff

Caring about one's appearance is a way of expressing personality, projecting confidence to the world and possibly fitting into a new workplace. As residents prepare for release from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), obtaining suitable clothing for job interviews, new careers and the return to family and community can be a challenge.

Upon release, former TDCJ residents are given four items: a simple pair of pants and shirt, \$50 and a bus ticket. When they attend their first meeting with parole officers,

they are given another \$50. If a man served the entirety of his sentence, he receives the full \$100, in addition to used clothing and the bus ticket, but do clothes really make the man? The answer lies with recipients of One Man's Treasure, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and ministry based in Dallas that delivers clothes to former male residents of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). These men are trying to reenter society and appropriate, well-fitting clothing improves their chances for success.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I'm from the old school, so I found it hard to believe that someone could tell me how or what to think, which is why I refused to attend Windham's Cognitive Intervention class. Then one day I overheard someone tell someone else that they had a "screwed up belief window" and I just had to ask them what they meant by "belief window." They said they learned about belief windows in Cognitive Intervention and, as a result of taking the class, they had a new way of thinking things through. I decided right then to sacrifice dominoes and TV and sign up for Cognitive. This turned out to be the best decision I've made in years! The main thing I've learned is that making smart decisions will keep me free, so in heated situations I must always ask myself, "Will this meet my needs over time?" I would like to thank Windham School District for the Cognitive Intervention Program. Because of it, I can better understand the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of others.

Anonymous

To the Reader,

Congratulations on taking a step in a positive direction while in prison. The Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) is one of several life skills programs offered through the Windham School District (WSD) that teach students new, healthier ways of thinking and acting so they can improve their life journey. This is not an easy step, but it is a critical part of a successful reintegration into society. Thanks for writing!

To the Editor,

Kudos to the author of "I Am Stupid Dog." I read a lot and have written a little, also. That short story was one of the finest ever. I hope the author recognizes her God-given talent and continues to pursue it. Thank you, Ms. Chelsey West!

**Robert Nelson
Wynne Unit**

To the Reader,

Yes, Chelsey West's submission was excellent - that's why she was a winner in the 2019 writing contest. We are looking forward to sharing and rating the entries in our 2020 writing contest in a future issue. Keep reading and see which entries came out on top! In this issue, you will also find a great 2019 Honorable Mention: The Undoer.

To the Editor,

Between February 2000 and March 2001, *The ECHO* published an article on how to correctly compile and submit a parole package. Unfortunately, I find myself in need of this information once again. Could you please publish this information again? I am sure I'm not the only incarcerated individual who would benefit from this article. Thanks for your help!

**Sincerely,
Robert Daugherty**

To the Reader,

The article you reference has been published multiple times for the benefit of our readers and their families. We will publish it again in an upcoming issue. Thanks for writing!

Outside Looking In



Stable life is a state of mind

Jennifer Toon, ECHO Contributor — Released

My coworker is a good natured, hard-working woman. She is always on time, and volunteers to do the most difficult tasks. She is well mannered and helpful. We are usually paired together, and I look forward to those shifts. We inspire a lot of laughter in those around us, and our work ethic encourages others to keep pace. Of course, I feel an extra kinship with her as someone who has also done time. I guess that's why it bothers me so badly to see her struggle in her personal life. Her rent is late, bills are left unpaid, there's the emotionally abusive relationship she's in and the chronically busted vehicle. The list is endless.

The other day she finally asked me, "How is it that you have a stable life?!" We both make the same salary, and we are both felons. You're even on an ankle monitor, totally limited but somehow you do pretty well." Now, I never give advice until it's requested because no one wants your opinion until they are ready for it, and even then, they still might not be ready. Thankfully we have the kind of rapport where I could answer bluntly, "I make better decisions."

Decisions, I had to explain to her, are based on priorities. She makes bad decisions because she has her priorities wrong. Being a free, responsible adult kinda sucks sometimes. It means using your income for boring things like

rent and bills. I told her that I made it a habit to thoughtfully decided how, why, when, and where I need to spend time and money. I do not make impulsive decisions about anything anymore. I reminded her of those times when we had to make 30 bucks last a month at commissary. We spent whole days working on our lists to determine how much to budget for the essentials and how much for the fun stuff. I became so determined to stick to that, I stopped carrying a pen to commissary. No impulsive adding while in line! Prison taught me a lot about how little I actually needed.

I also learned that nobody owes me anything, nothing is for free and if I don't like certain outcomes or consequences, then I must make different decisions; that's hard-earned yet rather commonsense wisdom which has served me well. She frequently makes comments that lead me to believe that she thinks, somehow, I have it easier. I suppose I make it look that way, but I most certainly do not have it easier. I must make hard not-so-fun decisions everyday based on serious life-enriching priorities. When I feel swept away by the current of daily stress, I always go back to my favorite author, Viktor Frankl. He wrote that the quality of our lives is based on decisions and not situations. I want better outcomes and the ability to make those happen is within my power. I simply make better decisions. ★



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Dear Darby,

I've got a bone to pick with y'all. I'm a unit reporter and I constantly send pictures to *The ECHO* but you never print them! What's the deal?! Do you have a problem with my unit? With my reporting? Help me, Darby — I want to represent!

An Anonymous Reporter

On an Anonymous Unit

Dear Anon,

Okay, we made you anonymous because we received several complaints from different units. We really don't have a problem with you or your unit. Here's the deal, though — we couldn't use what you sent because of one of the following reasons:

- *No media release was sent.*
- *The media release was incomplete.*
- *There were more people in the photo than were in the media release.*
- *The printed names and/or numbers were illegible.*
- *The photo was too dark/blurry/grainy or otherwise unusable.*
- *The photo was too old by the time you got it to us.*

We WANT to use photos sent to us. We want you to represent! Here's how to increase the likelihood of your unit's photos being used:

- *Fill out the media release with:*
 - *Info about the event.*
 - *PRINTED names and numbers.*
 - *A name for each person in the photo (there can be more names than people in the photo, but not more people than names.)*
 - *A signature for each name.*
 - *Two witness signatures.*
- *As far as the actual photos:*
 - *Have the photographer take multiple photos — we'll pick the ones we like.*
 - *Have the photographer use the highest resolution possible.*
 - *Have your sponsor or unit's principal send digital files of your photos and media releases (as scanned PDFs) to Ms. Kiser at Bambi.Kiser@wsdtx.org.*

If you follow these tips, we're more likely to publish your unit's photos. Now hop to it and send us some stuff we can use!

Dear Darby,

I'm usually on the giving end of advice, but not today. Darb, I need a little advice. A few weeks ago, I received a letter from a woman I didn't know. She

said, "I hope you're the Joe Smith from Conroe that I knew long ago." She went on to talk about how she thought about me all the time, and how things have been good since we last saw each other. Darb, I don't have a clue who this woman is! I wrote back and introduced myself, but I haven't heard a word from her.

I don't get it. Women say they are looking for good men, and here I am, a perfectly good man, but I can't get them past the first stumbling block of me being in prison. What gives? I told her the truth — doesn't that matter?

**Signed,
Achy Breaky Heart
Boyd Unit**

Dear Achy,

Brother, I feel your pain. Being single in prison is a lonely experience, and the Darbster has been doing it a long time. I applaud your honesty with the woman who wrote to you, but the truth is most women don't see incarceration as a positive trait when looking for a significant other. There are exceptions, but not near as many as we lonely guys on the inside would like. It's hard, but you've got to get past being alone in here and instead focus on taking advantage of this time to better yourself. This way, when you DO get out, you've got a lot to offer the woman who's been waiting to meet you! There are good women out there, and they deserve good men.

Dear Darby,

People inside TDCJ keep talking about "the man" messing us over, but it's often other incarcerated individuals doing the dirty work. Sometimes they shake the spoon on us so bad you would think they were feeding toddlers. The milk or juice may be watered down because someone is trying to hustle a couple of soups. The sandwiches seem to have just a smear of filling, instead of the full amount. I have seen the oppressor, and he is wearing white!

**Sincerely,
Garron P. Davis
Telford Unit**

Dear G,

Suffering from the shaky-spoon blues, huh? I know that I look like I've had more than my fair share of Rocky Road pints, but I swear that some folks on the serving line must think I need to be on a diet!

I agree with your belief that it's not the man keeping us down. Most times, it's just us. When other incarcerated individuals get out of their comfort zone and start thinking about their neighbors and not just themselves, we all have a higher quality of life. In the meantime, don't let small minds get you down with

their childish antics.

Dear Darby,

I just wanted to ask, why do people come to prison and never find themselves? They come here and play games all day. I have three little boys and I'm sure other men in prison have kids. If we don't get out there to save our kids, it's most likely they will end up in prison too.

All I'm saying is if we don't find it in ourselves to change, we cannot help the ones who really need us — our kids!

**Sincerely,
Andre Monroe
Gib Lewis Unit**

Dear Andre,

I understand your concern. The guys you see playing all day have already found themselves. They still possess the same youthful mindset that allowed them to enjoy a day at the park climbing on the jungle gym. Instead of forgetting how to enjoy life, Andre, we just want them to be more mature. It is very important that you understand this, my friend. I don't want you to spend your whole life expecting boys to be men. Keep setting a strong example of how to "man up!"

Dear Darby,

Is there really a thing called a Christmas Kickout? I'm fairly intelligent but new to the system, so I'm skeptical on whether this is a real thing. I figured that if anyone would know, the Darbster would!

Not quite a newboot

**Billy C.
Michael Unit**

Dear Billy,

I, too, was skeptical when I first came down to TDC those many years ago. We seem to have photographic proof of Santa visiting a unit, though, so there's a kernel of truth to it. Check out the picture below and decide for yourself! Although Christmas has come and gone, there's always hope for the next jolly holiday season!



► RPD
continued from page 1

An important part of the rehabilitation process involves education in general and post-secondary education specifically. The responsibility for providing contemporary educational programming falls to the members of the Operations and Evidence-Based Practices department, consisting of D. Etheridge, J. Wright, C. Guzman S. Wright and Rutledge.

Post-secondary education encompasses all college-level programming available to TDCJ offenders, including academic and vocational degree plans. There are several degree programs offered by TDCJ and its many educational partners. They include two-year associate of art degrees available for most programs, while vocational training offers an associate of applied science degree with certification for vocational courses. In addition, TDCJ partners with two four-year institutions, the University of Houston - Clear Lake and Texas A&M - Central, to provide bachelor's and master's degree opportunities for those interested in further advancing their education.

Colleges offering classes in TDCJ:

Associate degree

Lee College
Trinity Valley Community College
Alvin Community College
Lamar State College - Port Arthur
Cedar Valley College
Clarendon College
SW Texas Community College
Central Texas College
Western Texas Community College
Hilltop College
Amarillo College
Austin Community College
Texarkana Community College

Bachelor/Master's degree:

University of Houston - Clear Lake
Texas A&M - Central Texas

One of the most important responsibilities of the post-secondary education team is to gauge which careers and professions will be most in demand in the near future, and to determine what type of instruction is needed to prepare for a job in those areas. Once that determination has been made, they customize courses so the incarcerated population can obtain the skill sets they will need to find quick and profitable employment upon release.

"As an agency, we recognize that the trends are changing and we are trying to stay in front of the trends," says Rutledge. "It may present some challenges on our side as far as security, but we are trying to meet those challenges so that we can create opportunities for the incarcerated population to gain the necessary skills they need in order to successfully reenter society."

One such trend is the growing number of women in fields historically dominated by men, such as the introduction of Central Texas College's Network Analysts course for female offenders. The vocational course, which is on track for 2020 start, teaches the skills required to maintain a Windows Server infrastructure, to include user and group management, network access and data security. Offenders who successfully complete the program will earn five certifications from Microsoft and the Computer Technology Industry Association (CompTIA).

CompTIA Security and Security+ certifications verify that a person has a proper understanding of advanced information technology concepts required for a career in cybersecurity. Earning these certifications teaches the

skills employers in the technology industry are looking for in potential employees. Learning these skills while in prison reduces the learning curve a parolee must undergo upon release. In addition to providing progressive educational opportunities, RPD is working to identify companies that are hiring, with the expectation that they will come to the unit and interview potential job candidates.

In addition to the Network Analyst course, TDCJ and its post-secondary partners are offering female offenders diverse training in field like welding technology, construction technology, electrical technology, manufacturing and logistics. In 2020, the agency will, for the first time ever, have post-secondary educational opportunities on all the female units.

In the same way that society becomes increasingly more digitized, institutions of higher learning are embracing technology as a means of presenting lesson plans to their students, even inside prison. Texas A&M - Central, which had previously begun to wind down from offering courses within TDCJ in what Rutledge referred to as a "teach out," has started anew by offering classes via The Teaching Virtual Network (TTVN). Instead of being in a classroom setting with the professor, students will interact with him or her through a video link while completing all assignments on non-internet accessible computers.

In addition to many new fields of study, RPD is expanding the scope of existing vocational courses to efficiently and effectively teach more offenders. The goal is to have each trade represented in every region of the system to increase opportunities for more incarcerated students.

Acquiring a college degree presents incarcerated students with both tangible and intangible benefits. Once the student reenters society, they are going to encounter challenges, but an education makes them more emotionally equipped and gives them the tools to overcome those challenges. In addition to enhancing an individual's critical thinking process and allowing them to make better decisions, increased education also elevates a student's employability and earning potential. Most important, studies have shown that earning a college degree dramatically decreases the likelihood of recidivation.

"The recidivism rate for the agency currently is 20.3 percent, and we know once they get a post-secondary education with a vocational certification, the recidivism rate decreases significantly," Rutledge says, adding, "As you look at those recidivism rates, you discover that the more education and the more skill sets a person possesses, the less likely they are to recidivate."

If an individual is interested in pursuing either an academic or a vocational degree, the first step is to fill out a college/vocational interest form and send it to the RPD, whose address is printed at the bottom of the document. Depending on the facility, these forms may be found in either the unit's Education Department or the Law Library.

TDCJ offenders interested in participating in post-secondary educational programs must meet certain basic eligibility requirements according to TDCJ's Post-Secondary Education Operating Procedures (PSEOP) manual. To participate in academic programs incarcerated individuals must be within 10 years of their projected release date, and within five years for vocational courses. After satisfying those requirements,

the potential student must then take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) test to determine his or her ability to function academically on a college level.

A common element between higher education in the freeworld and in prison is the desire of the institutions to be paid for their efforts.

Depending upon offender eligibility, an offender may make payment upon registration by one of the following methods:

- Personal Funds (1-25)
- Direct Payment
- Veterans' benefits
- Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG)
- College/University Scholarship
- Post-Secondary Education Reimbursement (PSER)
- Pell Pilot Program

Detainers and stacked sentences are among the common situations that may affect an offender's eligibility to utilize a particular method of payment.

"Having a felony detainer does not affect an individual's eligibility to enroll in college programming, however, what it does affect is their ability to use PSER funding," said RPD's D. Etheridge, Program Specialist V. "If the offender has a state jail detainer that expires on or before their Institutional Division sentence, then they are eligible for PSER funding. If an offender has stacked sentences, the individual must be serving time on the last offense of the stacked sentence, as well as meet all other eligibility criteria in order to enroll in college programming."

"Post-secondary educational programs impact more than just the incarcerated student, they impact the student's families," Rutledge says. "In many cases, this is the student's first real achievement, and it is encouraging for the families to see that. Even though their loved one may be incarcerated, they are able to get an education and skill sets. They [the families] know that their loved one's life may well be different upon release."

Individuals interested in actively participating in improving their prospects should submit a college/vocational interest form to the RPD. A college education, as well as a brighter future, is within reach of many TDCJ offenders. ★

A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

MOVING ON UP

Eva Shelton, Contributing Writer — Lockhart Unit

On Monday, Sept. 23, 2019, I was moved to the Lockhart Unit in Lockhart, Texas. The experience has been very positive. The journey starts with bright, colorful affirmations and pictures painted on the walls. There are staff and ranking officials introducing themselves, shaking your hand, and saying, "Welcome to Lockhart," as if you had just landed in Hawaii.

When you come in, they automatically inventory your property and then give you everything you need. Then it was UCC, get a job, get a cell, see STG, meet the rank and off you go. On Wednesday comes a lay-in for orientation. Orientation might be the best idea ever and should probably be implemented on units statewide. The peer educators host the class and tell you about PREA and available PREA classes. Then there are visits by teachers, aides, food service, property and the chaplain. You will know everything you need to about classes, processes, schedules and available jobs by the end of the five-hour session.

The Lockhart facility has a faith-based dorm, Paws in Prison program, and a PIE program. There are free college courses, taught by volunteers willing to donate their time to correctional education. Incarcerated individuals are encouraged to become tutors and help those working to raise their EA levels, taking the HSE, and those enrolled in a six-month program from which they will receive their high school diploma. There are vocational classes, a CHANGES program and a variety of classes to teach you things like finance, typing and career planning. There are constant PREA classes you can sign up for like Somebody Cares, Woman to Woman and Wall Talk. The variety of religious programs never ends.

The Lockhart Unit operates under a guideline for the officers referred to as BIONIC (Believe It or Not I Care) in which officers ask how you are doing, do you need anything and respond to your

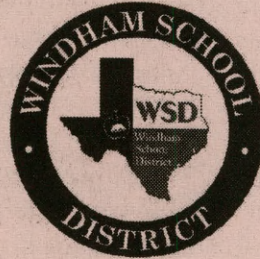
questions with respect.

I'm now feeling like a new arrival all over again. I'm asking about toilet paper issue, I'm finding someone to follow to the chow line, I'm asking for directions to the infirmary or the rec yard. After six years of basically not caring at all about parole readiness and doing nothing to prepare, I'm enrolling in some classes and I am excited about developing workplace skills and computer skills. I am due to see parole again in six months, and I will have some skills under my belt this time.

I believe the Lockhart Facility will offer me the things I need to better myself and enter the world with more confidence. I believe that women who have gotten a good dose of what prison really is, women who have some time under their belts, are the ones who will truly appreciate and take advantage of what Lockhart has to offer.

I've learned a few things about this journey. One is that we can't become too comfortable in prison because that comfort vanishes in the time it takes for the officer to say, "Pack it up!" Second, I've learned that what's important is not who and what surrounds us, but who we are inside that determines if we can deal with tomorrow. I will always remember that the tears of someone put in a terrible position make my fear seem insignificant by comparison.

There are things that should be second nature to us all. Always be kind to those around you because you don't know what they are going through. When a newbie arrives on the unit, remember that they know nothing and help them without demanding things in return. Do not let prison shut you down and don't let repeated set offs cause you to stop trying to better yourself. All it takes is one eye-opening experience to let you know that things could be much worse, or one move to show you that things can actually get a little better. ★



WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Memo to: TDCJ General Population
From: Windham School District
Date: January 31, 2020
Subject: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notification

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act requires that the Windham School District (District), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information from your education records. However, the District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District within 30 days of the date of this memo, or during the reception process, that you do not want this information released. Directory information is similar to having your name printed on a graduation program - it shows that you have graduated in a specific trade or received a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate. Directory information will **only include** your name, Texas Department of Criminal Justice number, and a list of programs that you have completed. This information may be helpful for current and future employers or court officials to assist in verification of an HSE, a high school diploma, Career and Technical Education program completion, and job skills training participation. If you choose not to allow the release of your directory information, please submit an *Inmate Request to an Official*, I-60, to the Unit school counselor detailing your decision.

If a student agrees that the Department may share any **specific** education or job skill program information verbally or in writing following a request by someone other than the program participant, she or he will be provided with, and must complete, a Windham School District Records Request form. Specific (protected or confidential) education records are those that contain assessment scores, grades, program progress notes, or enrollments in programs not yet completed.



Jalapeno cheese poppers

Charles Gonzalez, Montford Unit

Ingredients:

10-12 jalapenos, sliced lengthwise, seeds removed
1 summer sausage, diced fine (substitute SPAM)
1 squeeze cheese
1/3 bag cheese puffs, crushed fine
2 sleeves saltine crackers, crushed fine

Directions:

Place a small amount of chopped meat and a squeeze of cheese inside the jalapenos. In a bowl, place crushed saltines; add a little water to create a dough. Place crushed cheese puffs in a separate bowl. Cover each jalapeno with some saltine dough and roll in the crushed cheese puffs to coat. Let jalapenos sit for 10 to 15 minutes to solidify. Enjoy! Can be garnished with ranch dressing.



Ranch riez

T. Hughes, Hilltop Unit

Ingredients:

1 cup rice
1/2 summer sausage, diced fine
1/2 ranch dressing

Directions:

Mix rice and summer sausage in an empty bowl. Add enough hot water to barely cover rice/sausage mixture; set aside to cook for 10 minutes. Stir well and top with ranch dressing. Enjoy! Can be garnished with hot sauce, crushed chips or salsa, if desired.

Monkey's chicken enchilada casserole

Monica Wilson, Grain Unit

Ingredients:

1 pkg. chunk chicken
1 pkg. chicken chili
1 pkg. chili soup seasoning
1/2 bottle salsa
Salt and Pepper (to taste)
1 jalapeno pepper (diced)
2 pkgs. cream cheese
1/4 cup jalapeno cheese
2 1/2 cups tortilla chips (crushed)
1 can V-8
2 large spread bowls
2 ranch dressing

Directions:

Mix chicken chunks, chili, chili seasoning, salsa, jalapeno pepper, salt, pepper, cream cheese and jalapeno cheese. Stir well. Add crushed tortilla chips into mixture. Pour 3/4 can of V-8 into mixture and mix until it is slightly soupy but not runny. Divide into two cooking bags, double bagging if necessary. Cook for 4 to 5 hours, so flavors can meld together. Pour into bowls, top with ranch dressing, and eat your heart out. Makes two servings. Also works well with beef or pork. For added deliciousness, spread chili over top with extra cheese.



Tamales

Danny Murrell, Hillred Unit

Ingredients:

1 bag tortilla chips, crushed
1 pouch chili of choice
1 bag instant chili beans
Onion and garlic powder, to taste

Directions:

Place crushed chips in bowl. Add two cups water and let stand for 10 minutes; knead into dough. Place both chilis, cold, in a separate bowl and mix with 1/4 cup of water to form a paste. Place a golf-ball size piece of dough in an empty soup bag half and work into a disk. Place a healthy spoonful of chili mixture in center of dough disk, fold over and use the bag to roll the tamale, tucking in both ends. Repeat until ingredients are used up. Place six tamales in an empty rice bag and cook for 1 hour. Makes between 20 and 24 tamales. Enjoy!

Servant's pizza

Garryt Franks, Formby Unit

Ingredients:

Crust
1 soup
1 sleeve saltine crackers
Toppings
1 summer sausage
1 pkg turkey bites
1 chicken chunk
1 pickle
1 jalapeno
1 ranch dressing
Habanero sauce (to taste)
Jalapeno squeeze cheese (to taste)
Crushed chips (to taste)

Sauce

Marinara sauce from the pasta seasoning pack

Directions:

Prepare the marinara sauce to desired consistency and set aside. Heat soup in bowl until fully cooked, drain excess water if needed. Crush saltines and pour into soup. Knead vigorously into a ball of dough. Place dough in an empty chip bag and roll flat to form pizza crust. Spread sauce evenly and then add all desired toppings. Makes one or two servings; use more ingredients to increase size of pizza.



Seven-layer hot shot

Jeffrey P. Halstad,

Lechner State Jail

Ingredients:

2 chili soups, crushed fine
2 chili soup seasoning packets
2 cream cheeses
1/2 cup refried beans (substitute instant chili beans)
1 summer sausage, diced fine
1/2 bottle squeeze cheese
2 jalapeno peppers, diced fine
1 ranch dressing (optional)

Directions:

In a white bowl place beans, sprinkle with chili soup seasoning then layer cream cheese, summer sausage and chili soup noodles. Slowly add hot water until barely covered; cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Top with jalapenos and squeeze cheese; drizzle ranch dressing on top if desired. Enjoy! Makes one or two servings.

Cheese enchiladas

Ishticia Vengas,

San Saba Unit

Ingredients:

2 chili soups, crushed
1 bag cheese curls, crushed
10 flour tortillas
1 chili, no beans, heated
1/2 cup cheese
1 cream cheese

Directions:

Combine crushed chili soups and cheese curls in bowl; add just enough hot water to cook and be absorbed. Take soup/cheese curl mix and place inside tortillas and roll up like enchiladas in a bowl. Top with hot chili, cheese and cream cheese and enjoy! Serve with Spanish rice and refried beans, if desired.



Power punch oatmeal

Larry A. Harris,

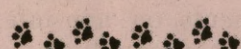
Lyngaugh Unit Reporter

Ingredients:

1 vanilla Chike
2 packs instant oatmeal
2 spoonful peanut butter
1 pack energizer mix

Directions:

Prepare Chike with very hot water; mix until smooth. Place oatmeal in bowl, cover with Chike and add peanut butter and stir. Add energizer mix and enjoy! Add 1/2 cup hot water to thin mixture, if desired.



Savory dirty riez

Tommy Mathza,

Polunsky Unit

Ingredients:

1 summer sausage (substitute turkey bites or roast beef)
1 bag chili (no bean)
1 bag white rice (substitute 2 brown rice)
1 soup, finely crushed
2 packs cream cheese
2 packs ranch dressing
1 jalapeno, diced
1 level white spoonful (about 2 tsp.)
no-salt seasoning
1 level white spoonful

(about 2 tsp.)
onion powder
1/4 level white spoonful (about 1/2 tsp.)
garlic powder
1/2 cup hot water

Directions:

Hot Pot:

Put chili pouch into hot pot, heat while preparing the meat.

Meat:

If using summer sausage, slice into sixths lengthwise, then cut into six small slices widthwise. If using turkey bites, slice each sausage into thirds. If using roast beef, use directly from package. Open the top of the chili pouch in the hot pot and add the meat of your choice. Heat an additional 20 minutes.

Bowl:

Pour cream cheese, ranch dressing, seasonings, diced jalapeno, heated chili pouch mixture and hot water, mix well. Pour crushed soup into bowl, add rice, mix well and allow to thicken. Place mixture in two empty rice bags and cook for 30 minutes up to an hour. Pour bags into a white bowl and stir. Goes great in tortillas, by itself with chips or as a side with enchiladas. Really good!

Write away!

Enter The ECHO's writing contest

Todd Carman, ECHO Staff

All write, all write, all write!

So, do you think you have the "write" stuff? Do you want to see how you measure up compared to other writers in the TDCJ?

If so, prepare to enter *The ECHO's* writing contest!

Special recognition will be awarded to top contestants in fiction and non-fiction categories. Fiction entries can cover any topic appropriate for publication in *The ECHO*. Non-fiction entries can include life stories, articles, opinions or journal excerpts. The top three winners in each category will have their work published in *The ECHO*. Entries will be judged on content, clarity, creativity and correctness.

Submission guidelines:

- Include a cover sheet with your name, TDCJ number, unit of assignment and submission title.
- Specify your work as **fiction (F)** or **non-fiction (NF)**.
- **DO NOT SEND POETRY!**
- Entries should be neatly handwritten or typed. If typed, **do not use a script font**. If we can't read your entry, it won't be judged.
- Entries should be no longer than 1,500 words (three typed or five handwritten pages).
- Multiple submissions are allowed and can be included in the same envelope.
- Entries must be received by *The ECHO* no later than March 1, 2020.
- Send your entry in via truck-mail or regular mail to:

The ECHO Writing Contest
P.O. Box 40
Huntsville, TX 77342-0040

Due to the large number of entries, submitted materials will not be returned. ★

Marriage seminar strengthens partnerships

Henry Molina, Wynne Unit

Anticipation was prevalent in our demeanor as we impatiently hopped from foot to foot. We were waiting for our wives (our better halves) to walk into this place. As they entered, some women ran to their husbands, some jumped into their arms and my extremely happy wife ran into my hug. Smiles were contagious and tears of happiness were on many faces of 25 participants in our marriage seminar on the Wynne Unit.

More than one husband expressed gratitude for his wife being able to attend. Every wife came from out of town,

out of state or from another continent.

Only 3 percent of marriages survive when one partner is incarcerated for any length of time. That number will rise with programs like this one, which focuses on reconciliation within the sacred covenant of marriage. In one exercise, the wives and husbands were told to express in one word how they felt at the beginning of the incarceration experience. The similarity between the responses of women and men was astonishing.

"Growing Together as One" is the name of the workbook constructed by the program directors, a husband and

wife who not only facilitated the event, but also survived as husband and wife for more than 20 years of incarceration. God and testimonies from amazing volunteers help strengthen and reconstruct marriages.

Thanks go to Warden R. Moore, Wynne Unit administration and security staff for making the facility a welcoming environment for our loved ones. Thanks to Chaplain R. Lowe and the ministry volunteers for making these events possible, and thanks to all participants for making this a very positive experience. ★

►ECHO-LADES continued from pg. 12

Award for Worst Scandal: No matter how stridently or vociferously the New England Patriots, or their fanatical fan base, deny any wrongdoing during the organization's unrivaled run of success, the amount of incriminating evidence against the team continues to grow. The newest scandal, dubbed Spygate 2.0, alleges the team conspired to videotape the sideline activities of opposing teams, which is against NFL rules. This is nothing new for a Patriots' organization that in 2007 was caught taping the sideline of their divisional rival the New York Jets. In the ensuing investigation, it was determined that the duplicitous behavior had extended as far back as their first Super Bowl win following the 2001 season. The crux of the new allegation involved a videographer for the Patriots who was discovered taping the sidelines of the Cincinnati Bengals, the team's next opponent. As usual, the team had a ready explanation, the team's production company was doing a piece on the life of advance scouts for a web-based series "Do Your Job," the catch phrase of head coach Bill Belichick. The excuse rang hollow as the advance scout, who was supposedly the subject of the episode, was conspicuously absent from the footage. In fact, what was featured most prominently in the video was the sideline personnel of the Bengals and their signals, although the videographer helpfully offered to delete the film before the security personnel confiscated the footage. Hmm, perhaps the team's impressive defensive performance in holding one

of the league's most prolific offenses without a touchdown in Super Bowl LIII was due to more machinations than simply Belichick's genius.

Award for Best Athlete: The inaugural ECHO-LADE for best athlete goes to United States gymnast Simone Biles. In an age when athletes are bigger, faster and stronger than at any time in history it is ironic that the diminutive Biles is recognized as the best of them all. Biles is the first female gymnast in history to land a triple double in the floor competition, a move consisting of three full twists completed while performing two flips. She accomplished the extraordinary feat during her routine in the floor exercise at the 2019 Nationals; an event she won for the fourth consecutive year. For those who do not consider that gymnasts are "real" athletes (whatever that means) ponder statistics associated with the incredible feat. To complete the move, Biles had to attain a launch speed of 14.7 miles per hour in her approach, in a space of less than 50 feet. At the apex of her jump, Biles was more than 9.5 feet above the mat while covering a horizontal distance of 6.5 feet in the air between takeoff and landing. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the record-setting move is that upon landing her tiny frame absorbs an average impact force of 382 pounds. Originally, this award was going to be split into male and female categories but due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Biles' incredible exploit, she is simply named THE athlete of the year. ★



The Lace Up – TDCJ Unit News

Participants learn effective communication and other skills that promote personal growth and professional achievement.

Reported by Wayne Bailey

Beto Unit

WSD holds graduation

Caps were flying in the air at the graduation of Windham School District's (WSD) Cognitive Intervention Program and High School Equivalency (HSE) students. Graduates walked the stage and received certificates to the applause of school faculty, unit staff, family members and friends. WSD also recognized honor graduates: valedictorian Jesse Dobbs, salutatorian and youngest graduate Raziel Pazos, and oldest graduate Sergio Corona.

Reported by Quincy Patterson

Eastham Unit

Special events build fellowship

Offenders at Eastham recently participated in several special events. Some attended a special event to honor more than 100 chaplaincy volunteers at the 21st Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Unit participants also had the opportunity to demonstrate their musical gifts in front of an audience of 400 at the unit's second annual Talent Show. The unit Basketball Tournament allowed players to show off their hoop skills, with a total of nine teams participating in the tournament. The unit herb garden also was enhanced with a new greenhouse. The unit currently grows 20 different herbs to season food.

Reported by Johnny Wooten

Jester III Unit

Toastmasters instills leadership

Leaders for tomorrow are being developed by the unit's Toastmasters International Gavel Club, Ambassadors for Leadership.

2019 Herbs Behind Bars Awards

Herb gardens in TDCJ enhance food, raise hope

Bryan J. Moore, ECHO Staff

"Agriculture teaches the basic principle of reaping and sowing," said E. Cooper, president and CEO of the San Antonio Food Bank during his recent keynote address at the thirteenth Herbs Behind Bars competition.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and Lee College held the competition's awards event at the Walker County Storm Shelter in Huntsville. Several TDCJ dignitaries, including TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier, regional directors, unit wardens and members of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice were in attendance. Their presence underscored the importance of not only the competition, but of unit herb garden projects in general.

"The purpose of the herb gardens is to teach residents the reward of growing something and to enhance the food served in unit kitchens," said D. Sparkman, assistant director of TDCJ Laundry, Food and Supply.

The competition judges the quality and quantity of agricultural output from unit herb gardens. In addition to garden design, the competition also has a farm-to-table aspect where the herbs are judged on how well they are prepared.

Competing units are separated into three categories: Small Unit, Medium Unit and Large Unit divisions. Besides the divisional awards, there is also a grand championship award. (see box for the results). In addition to making institutional meals taste better, the competition is a great way to rehabilitate residents.

"The real reward of a unit herb garden is to teach incarcerated individuals the rewards of planting, growing and utilizing the harvest in the kitchen," Sparkman said.

Dalhart was the first unit to have an herb garden. Currently, there are 54 units with herb gardens. Three units participated in the contest for the first time this year and private facilities were invited to compete in next year's competition. This is all done to increase the existing number of unit herb gardens.



Kitchen workers garnish meals with garden herbs. Photo courtesy of TDCJ

"It takes a village, a community, to do what we're doing. The fact that we've been doing this for 13 years is amazing, and it continues to grow," said D. Zuniga, dean of the Lee College Huntsville Center.

P. O'Daniel, attending member of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, said, "I'm a big believer in this event because it builds community."

Each unit must document the step-by-step development of their herb garden and present the data in book form. The books are used as instructional aides so other units can learn how to start their own gardens. The seeds for the crops are donated, so there is no cost to plant a unit herb garden.

Cooper, as head of San Antonio Food Bank, is no stranger to TDCJ; there exists a longstanding partnership between the two entities. While delivering his keynote address, Cooper unexpectedly disclosed a very personal detail: "The thing you don't know is that my little brother has done time on a couple of the units," he told attendees. "If I can do anything, it's making sure that people know that people can be redeemed. A community without hope is dead. In TDCJ, hope is alive." ★

Ferguson Unit

Unit holds Eid al-Fitr celebration

Members the Islamic community celebrated the Islamic festival known as Eid al-Fitr with religious activities and recreational time, enjoying games of checkers, basketball and Scrabble.

Reported by Steven Thomas

Hobby Unit

WSD holds graduation

WSD students walked the stage for the unit HSE and Construction Fundamentals graduation ceremony. In another special program, WSD's Middle Way Parenting Program continues to teach students how to develop parenting skills so they can provide effective, positive guidance for their children



Middle Way Parenting participants

Reported by Misty Weaver

Ney State Jail

Participants embrace recovery

Participants are embracing recovery from substance abuse through the Recovery Oriented Support Group. Those in recovery can also find community support by joining the Winner's Circle Peer Group.

Reported by Stephen Unger

Smith Unit

Participants enjoy Kolby retreat

Participants recently shared testimonies at Kolby, a Catholic retreat, and at Kairos 45. The unit's decade-old faith-based wings program continues to successfully promote positive change.

Reported by Roger Taylor

Working Hard on The Yard

Landscaping learned on many units



Beto Unit Horticulture and Landscaping project



Boyd Unit's inside yard squad



Polunsky Unit's inside yard squad

Landscape training and garden work continue throughout Texas. Beto Unit Horticulture and Landscaping crews are recycling materials to create waterfall landscapes and theme gardens while learning new landscape skills. Boyd Unit's Inside Yard Squad keeps the rec lawn looking good while growing veggies for residents' meals. In addition, WSD courses and On-the-Job training (OJT) programs teach individuals skills for landscaping careers. The Polunsky Unit's Inside Yard Landscaping and Gardening crew maintains beautiful unit landscaping. "Working this job allows us to feel productive and to pay back some of what we took from society. We are able to create a semblance of beauty – an atmosphere of peace for those who visit the Polunsky Unit," participant C. Almers said.

Reported by Quincy Patterson, Michael Master and Kevin Hargrove, unit reporters and embedded landscape worker

Wynne Unit

WSD celebrates HSE, CTE graduation

The Wynne Unit recently hosted 44 Windham School District (WSD) High School Equivalency (HSE) and Career and Technical Education students from three Huntsville-area units to celebrate their progress from students to graduates. Many family members attended the commencement, some traveling long distances to honor their loved one's hard work and achievement. They witnessed the graduates enter the chapel to the familiar strains of "Pomp and Circumstance March" and wearing traditional mortarboard and gown.

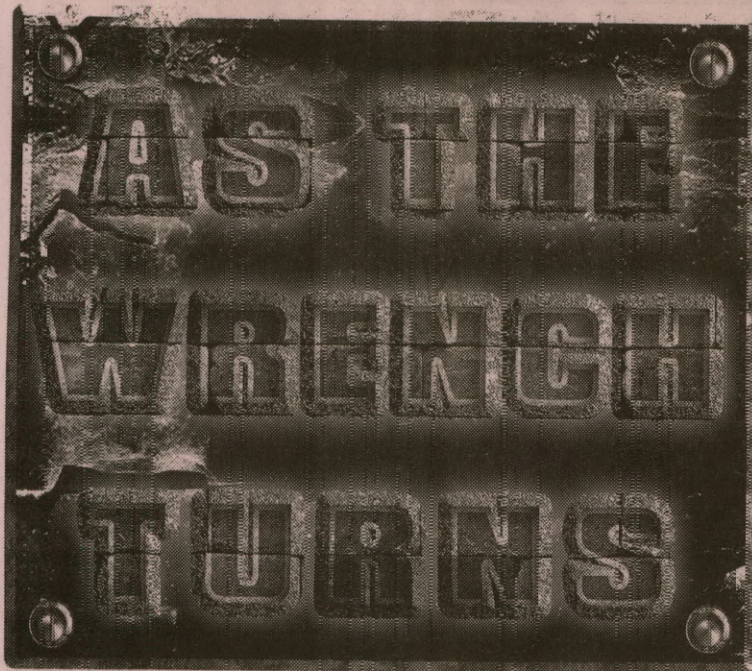
Reported by William Hill



Havins Unit staff receiving grand prize recognition

2019 Herbs Behind Bars Contest Winners

- Grand Prize Winner:** Havins Unit
- Divisional Winners:**
- Small Unit Division:**
 - First place: Havins Unit
 - Second place: Hilltop Unit
 - Third place: Halbert Unit
- Medium Unit Division:**
 - First place: Pack Unit
 - Second place: Dalhart Unit
 - Third place: Luther Unit
- Large Unit Division:**
 - First place: Robertson Unit
 - Second place: Ellis Unit
 - Third place: Hughes Unit



Mechanical workers build bridge to employment



*Cory J. Wisnoski
Wynne Unit Special Report*

There is a seldom seen cog in the workforce that constantly rotates at the Wynne Unit. Beyond the primary fence, past the industrial whir of electric grinders and the cranking of ratchets, through the spray of welding sparks and into the bus barn, there is an assembly of soot-stained men honing trade skills. They spend their days fabricating security gates, installing bus seats and repairing engines in vehicles vital to moving incarcerated individuals from unit to unit throughout the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

The Wynne Unit's Mechanical Department offers many opportunities for incarcerated individuals to obtain and use valuable employment skills and be certified for their work. These industry certifications are transferable to the freeworld, and the experience gained is invaluable.

All the seats, expanded metal and various barriers in these vehicles were, at some point, fabricated or repaired by incarcerated men. These men work on Volvo and Freightliner trucks that use four miles of wire

the flasher bulb to a complete engine overhaul," West said. "I've earned certification for service and repair on diesel engines, air-conditioning, air-brakes, drive-lines, fuel-injectors and front-end suspension."

"We have a solid, well-rounded crew in our shop," West said. "Some of the men who work here bring freeworld experience; I can really learn from them. With the opportunities afforded me by the TDCJ, I am confident I have a pathway to success upon release."

J. Allison, a Gang Renunciation and Dissociation (GRAD) graduate, worked at the unit as a welder in the mechanical shop. He refined the skills he learned as a fabricator in the Lee College Welding Technology course at Wynne, earning a 3G vertical and 4G overhead welding certification through the nationally recognized American Welding Society (AWS). These certifications deemed him competent in his ability to perform the 1G (flat position), and 2G (horizontal position), as well as the vertical and overhead groove weld processes 3G and 4G. He also earned his T2 ASE certification.



We are responsible for everything, bumper-to-bumper. We do everything from changing flasher bulbs to complete engine overhaul. I've earned certification for service and repair on diesel engines, air-conditioning, air-brakes, drive-lines, fuel-injectors and front-end suspension.

and six to 11 computer systems to control every facet of the truck's operation. To facilitate diagnosis and repair, the shop has manufacturer-specific software that technicians can access using a laptop computer. This proprietary software allows the technician to communicate with the truck in real-time to evaluate the truck's recent performance, isolate the problem and make an accurate diagnosis.

TDCJ offender R. West currently works in the mechanical shop at the Wynne Unit. He has earned his T2 Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification, which classifies him as a medium and heavy truck technician, able to diagnose problems and service and repair diesel engines.

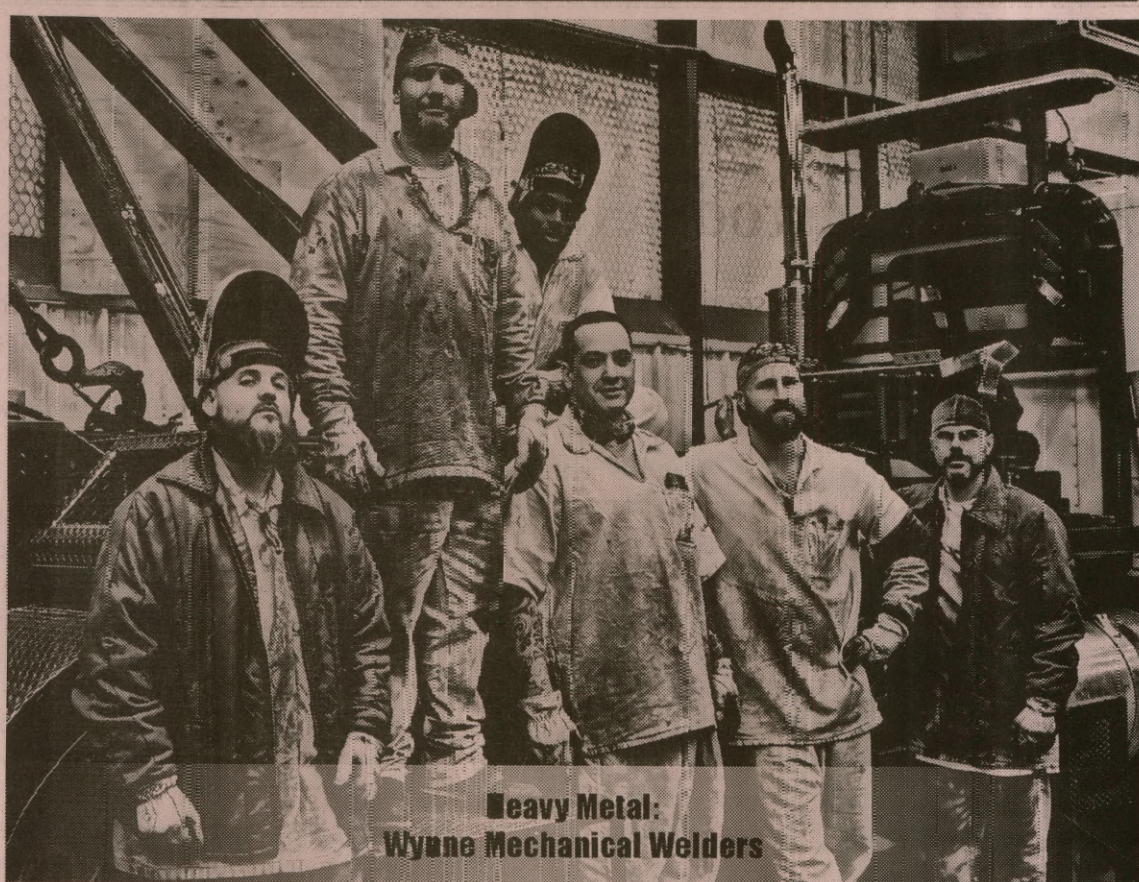
"We are responsible for everything, bumper-to-bumper. We do everything from changing

"I came to this farm from the GRAD program in 2014. I had some mechanics in my background, so UCC thought it'd be a good idea to give me shot at working in mechanical," Allison said. "I wrestled with cars and hot rods as a kid and I did some welding when I was younger, but not on this level."

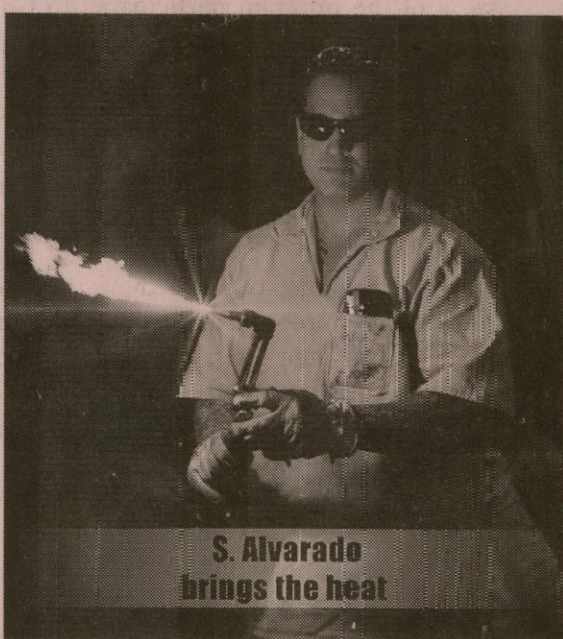
Allison went through a one-year welding program offered by Lee College and was taught by K.W. Knuppel, an experienced and respected welding instructor.

"I haven't had much experience with people actually caring for my well-being. When I encountered Mr. Knuppel, the class was hard to get used to because he didn't have an angle," Allison said. "He honestly wanted to help me, and he made a positive impact on my life."

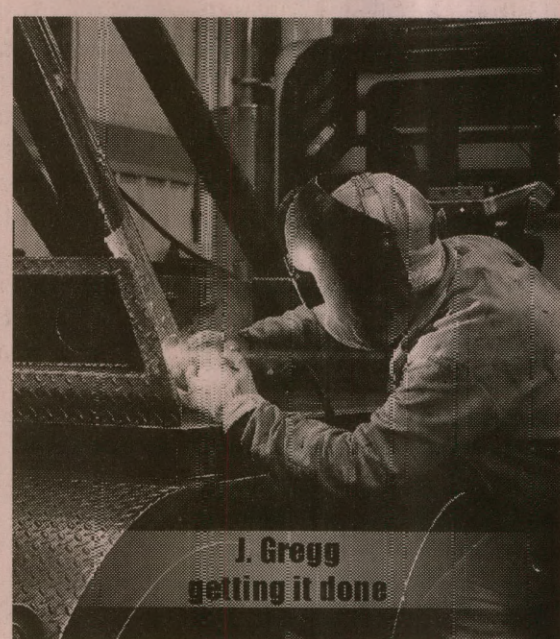
Allison utilized his time in



**Heavy Metal:
Wynne Mechanical Welders**



**S. Alvarado
brings the heat**



**J. Gregg
getting it done**

mechanical since attaining his AAS degree from Lee College.

"I'm now certified in all positions and processes in pipe, plate and sheet metal welding. I'm also certified as a diesel mechanic under T2 of ASE. I've come a long way because someone showed a little care and a little interest in my life."

E. Victor, who enrolled in the Lee College welding programs, was also a welder in the Wynne Unit mechanical shop. Coming in with no experience before taking the college welding class, Victor spoke about his introduction to the trade.

"Mr. Knuppel, my instructor at Lee College, told me my inexperience was a good thing because I didn't have the bad habits that a lot of welders pick up," Victor said. "I didn't even know what a welding machine was or what a welding rod looked like. I just knew that it sounded like something I would be interested in doing. The fact that you can build things is what attracted me the most to welding." He has also passed AWS certification testing for the 3G and 4G MIG and flux-cored welding processes.

"The AWS means an opportunity. I have the opportunity to leave out of prison and go to a company, show them my AWS certification and get my foot in the door," Victor said.

A recipient of Lee College's Wooten Scholarship, G. Gomez was transferred to Wynne to work as a fabricator in the welding shop at the mechanical department. Like Allison and Victor, Gomez attended the Lee College welding program taught by Knuppel. Gomez was able to improve his

trade skills in the college welding environment and transferred those skills to his job in the mechanical department.

"I fabricated everything on the trailers and repaired anything that needs to be repaired. I also did brakes, brake chambers, slack adjusters, paneling on the inside and outside and the roof," Gomez said. "I fabricated bumpers from time to time. When the buses come in, I did everything inside, from the cages to the doors and all the security barriers inside the bus."

C. Kemp, another fabricator/arc welder who worked in the mechanical department, went through the Windham School District (WSD) welding program before his one-year Lee College welding training with Knuppel. After finishing the college program in 2018, Kemp began work as a welder's helper, which consisted of fitting up and tacking different pieces of metal together so the welder could come in behind him and weld it all together. Helpers also retrieve tools and rods, and grind and cut metal for welding.

After gaining some experience, Kemp was promoted to arc welder and fabricator. Despite his job change, he held onto many of the responsibilities he learned as welder's helper.

"It's all about being job-oriented and being able to help at any time. If you make yourself available, then a person feels like they can depend on you," Kemp said. "That's the way I want to project myself."

Kemp related some of the experiences of his youth and his motivation for getting into the

welding program.

"Growing up, I liked to build with my hands. But also, I looked at my time [when considering the program]. I have a 30-year sentence," Kemp said. "I was 32 at the time, and I said to myself, 'Hey, when I get out, I want to be able to be productive with the time I have, because I can't make up the time that I lost.' I'm the kind of guy that doesn't mind getting dirty, but I like to see my creations. I like to say, 'Hey, I did that,' you know? 'I created that!'"

Kemp also described some of the difficulties of working in a team environment while still accomplishing the tasks laid before him.

"The most difficult part of it all was humbling myself and biting my tongue," Kemp said. "I learned how to deal with diverse people and not just taking a person at face value. A lot of times, you see people and your first impression of them can either make you accept them or reject them. I started looking past people's initial façade and started digging deeper and giving them a chance. I would want that chance."

Editor's Note: Special thanks to John Rhine, and the Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) Division for interviewing the men in this story and sharing related transcripts.

Participants in WSD and TDCJ job skills programs can find training opportunities at any level. Marketable skills and career experience can be acquired through a variety of programs and work opportunities prior to release from TDCJ. ★

Experienced air conditioning and diesel mechanics are needed at the Wynne Unit Tire Shop (61 status only) and Wynne Mechanical (62 status).

Mechanics will work on heavy trucks, buses, trailers and refrigeration systems (608 and 609). On-the-Job Training (OJT) and ASE certifications are available. Come work in an environment that can increase your earning potential and help you use your time wisely while in TDCJ.

Interested applicants should send an I-60 to the Work and Training Program listing their custody status, qualifications and experience to be considered for job placement at one of the above locations.

Good & Angry program Wynne anger management helps improve conduct, custody classification

William Hill, ECHO Staff

The Wynne Unit's administration recently selected eight incarcerated individuals from the G5 population to participate in an innovative anger management program called the Good & Angry program. It differs drastically from traditional forms of anger management by avoiding an impossible goal — never getting angry — and instead providing tools to positively deal with anger. Facilitated by E. Harmon, a longtime volunteer chapel assistant who oversees the unit's G4 and G5 ministries, the first Good & Angry program met for about two hours a week for 13 weeks.

The program was supported by Wynne Unit field ministers and is based on the book "Good and Angry: Redeeming Anger, Irritation, Complaining, and Bitterness," by David Powlison.

A dayroom on a noisy close custody wing may not be a typical commencement setting, but for the inaugural graduates of the Good & Angry program, it was familiar. Each participant has spent many years on close custody due to his mismanagement of past anger issues. The atmosphere inside the small, simple room was festive and jubilant as participants greeted Harmon and field ministers with smiles and handshakes. These men were chosen to participate in the class despite their history of aggressive behavior because officials saw each had the potential to change for the better — even when they did not recognize it in themselves.

"Mr. Eddie came to my door one day and announced he was starting an anger management class back here and asked if I would be interested in participating. I told him, 'You know what Mr. Eddie? I'll give it a shot, but it's not going to work,'" said M. Walden, explaining his negative mindset that had to change before real progress could be made.

After an opening prayer and group songs, participants spoke about what the course meant to each of them personally and noted how their anger issues affected not only in their lives but also the lives of their loved ones.

"My dad stopped writing to me because I wasn't listening to anything he was trying to tell me," said R. Bishop, a Good & Angry program graduate. "He told me in a letter, 'All I hear about you doing is catching case after case, getting in fight after fight. When are you going to start listening to me?' He just pulled back from me. When I get this certificate, I am going to send it to my dad. I am going to prove myself to him by my actions, not by my words. I am going to prove to him that I am making a concerted effort to stay out of trouble and trying to get out of here."

"During the course of my incarceration, I have had more Use of Forces than I have had pancakes, and you know how often they feed pancakes!" said Walden. "Now look at me. I work as an SSI for Major Boyd. I'm out of my cell sweeping the runs. If it wasn't for Mr. Eddie, the field ministers and this program, I would still be jacking the slot and dashing the laws and running the team."

If the participants thought the class would simply be an opportunity to get out of cells for a few hours a week to sit in the dayroom to talk to friends, they quickly discovered otherwise. Three of the field ministers assigned to the Wynne Unit, J. Bradshaw, C. Hawkins and M. Green, led in-

depth class discussions weekly and assigned in-cell projects for each participant. Each participant was required to complete homework during the week and be prepared to share their thoughts with the class.

"We didn't expect homework, but that just shows how much they care," participant Walden said. "They could have simply come in here and spoke for a couple of minutes and then left, but they did not do that. They actually took the time to prepare homework assignments for us, and when we came back the next week, they asked, 'Where is your homework? Did you do your homework? Now read your homework to the entire class!' It showed me that they really cared."

The program works for many of the men. The Wynne Unit classification committee promoted several of the program participants to G4 status before the conclusion of the 13-week course, due in large part to a noticeable improvement in behavior. In order to allow the entire class to graduate together, the field ministers continued their lessons with those residents on the medium custody cellblock by assigning supplemental homework from additional course material.

Participants in the Good & Angry program said, as they began to recognize the difference the class was making in their lives, they began to hold one another accountable and show support for the other men in the class. They even began to refer to them as their "brothers."

"I can remember at least three times when participants Kimmel, Walden and Bishop will tell you that I was like a proverbial fly on the wall," T. Evans said. "Anytime something disruptive happened on the wing, I just happened to be there. I was able to help calm the situation because

sometimes it is easier when one is on the outside looking in rather than being in the middle of it. Now I know that I can help others who are struggling with the same things that I used to struggle with and that they can help me."

However, participants acknowledge their previous anger issues sometimes keep others from understanding participants' changed behaviors.

"Some of the other guys on my cellblock asked me, 'How are you going to tell me what to do when you were someone who was in trouble every single day?'" Walden said. "I told them not to look at the person I used to be but look at the person I am now. If I can change, then almost anyone can change. There are some people who want to live in anger; I was once that way myself. I have caught extra time for this and extra time for that, and my family finally said, 'You love the penitentiary more than you love us!' Sadly, for a long time, that was true."

The Wynne Unit anger management program is allowing men to learn to deal with anger in a positive manner rather than continuing to engage in the same negative activities that resulted in their assignment to close custody.

"I just believe that when opportunities are given to these men, they will rise to the occasion," Harmon said. "If given positive feedback from these actions, they can grow tremendously in character." ★

DURING THE COURSE OF MY INCARCERATION, I HAVE HAD MORE USE OF FORCES THAN I HAVE HAD PANCAKES, AND YOU KNOW HOW OFTEN THEY FEED PANCAKES!



Taking control: Good and Angry participants describe new outlook

Erik Njoku & Jesus Ibarra, Wynne Unit

Two participants of the Wynne Unit's inaugural faith-based anger management program described to The ECHO what they learned during the class and how those lessons have influenced the way they do their time. Originally, both were residents of the unit's restricted housing wings; while in the program, both were promoted to G4 status due to a noticeable improvement in their attitudes and behavior.

Jesus Ibarra

I would like to thank Mr. Eddie and field ministers Bradshaw, Hawkins and Green for working with our anger. My whole life I have struggled with anger; I have always reacted without thinking about the consequences or the ones I could have hurt, especially my loved ones. I have learned that anger is just an emotional feeling that one can overcome and control because if not controlled and wrongly handled, it will destroy you and hurt others and your loved ones. But through the grace of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I took the example of the apostle Paul, who was once one of the worst sinners of all, full of anger and hatred and persecution for the church. He wrote, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5: 17 NKJV). Therefore, I push myself forward to succeed and to accomplish how to overcome and control my anger and to see things before I overreact, because through Christ everything is possible, and nothing is impossible.

Erik Njoku

Since taking this Good & Angry course for anger management, my thought process toward anger has changed. I used to think of anger as a negative defect in one's emotions, but now I have come to the realization that anger exists in each of us. The important aspect of anger is how you channel that anger. You can channel your anger either positively or negatively. This class has benefited me with a wiser outlook on the emotional state of anger. Now I have to remind myself when I am frustrated to channel my anger towards something productive — to use my anger as a tool to do something positive. Overall, this course has taught me that the anger that fuels me can be used for either good or bad. ★

The Undoer

Joseph D. Kayne, Allred Unit

Finalist in Fiction, ECHO 2019 Writing Contest

The sand was warm beneath my feet and moist from the tropical surf. The beach seemed to stretch endlessly in both directions with the usual collection of shells, seaweed and flotsam washed ashore from various parts of the world.

It was only a flicker of sunlight reflected off the object mostly buried in the sand that caught my attention. Admittedly, if I were a cat, curiosity would have claimed my life a long time ago.

Exhumation revealed the object to be an oil lamp of ancient origin, possibly having existed for millennia upon various ocean-spanning vessels. Although centuries past pristine condition, the lamp appeared to be capable of functioning according to its original design and purpose.

A good and thorough cleaning would be the first priority. It would have been difficult to find a Marine without a can of Brasso in his gear and "once a Marine always a Marine." So, armed with my trusty can of Brasso, a toothbrush, a few old rags and some elbow grease, I began a noble endeavor of restoration, backed by the sound of breakers on the beach.

A few swipes on the side of the lamp with a polishing rag was all it took.

The lamp vibrated and jostled like an old Peterbilt starting up, belched out a plume of black smoke, and just as quickly became inert once again. When the smoke cleared, an old salt who looked to be about as ancient as the lamp itself, sat on the porch steps facing the beach. He wore frayed and faded trousers, the color of some long-forgotten contrivance and cut off at mid-calf. His upper torso sported a vest which very well could have been pieced together from Egyptian mummy wrappings. Barefooted, he sat on my steps gazing out at the ocean in silence.

I spoke first and hesitantly, "Hello?" being more of a question than a greeting.

"Man! How good it feels to be out of that thing for a while again. I was beginning to think I might never be called out anymore!" He spoke from a mouth well hidden behind a chest-length beard resembling a seagull's nest.

"Always an exhilaration to grab a few breaths of that salty sea air! The opportunities to do so are few and far between. So, what can I undo for you?"

"What do you mean, undo? Are you a genie or something?" I asked.

"Hey! Do I look like Barbara Eden? Give me a break! I suppose

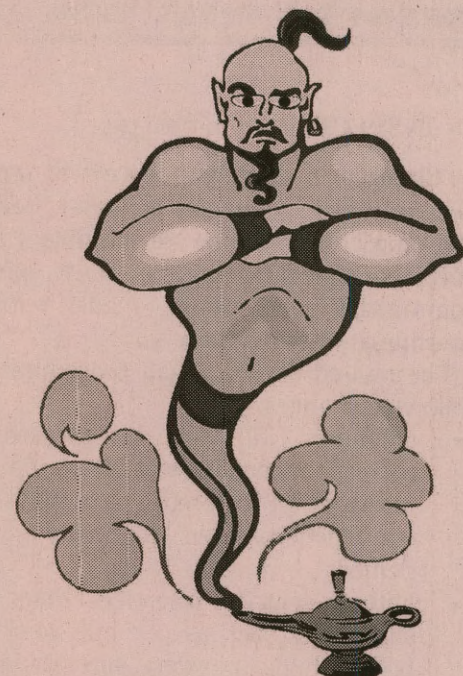
the "or something" might be accurate, though. No, I don't grant wishes. In fact, there have been a few of those that I've had to undo."

"So, what exactly do you do then?"

"Not 'do' son. 'Undo.' I'm the 'UNDOER,' which is the acronym for Undisputed Nonpartisan Destroyer of Eclectic Regrets. It's my job to eliminate the one regret of your choosing. Not the same thing as a wish exactly, though my services have been required when some rookie genie responds to someone who wishes that they had not made such and such mistake. See, something like that fits the criteria of a regret. And before you speak the regret you want eliminated, you need to fully understand the parameters within which I operate."

For the next hour I listened while the UNDOER explained, with appropriate warnings, the possible far-reaching implications involved in the elimination of just one regret. How many others' lives and futures might be altered or affected by the expurgating of my regret? Which one of all my regrets would I choose to have removed?

I have no idea how long we sat in silence as I pondered that last question. The reverie of the moment

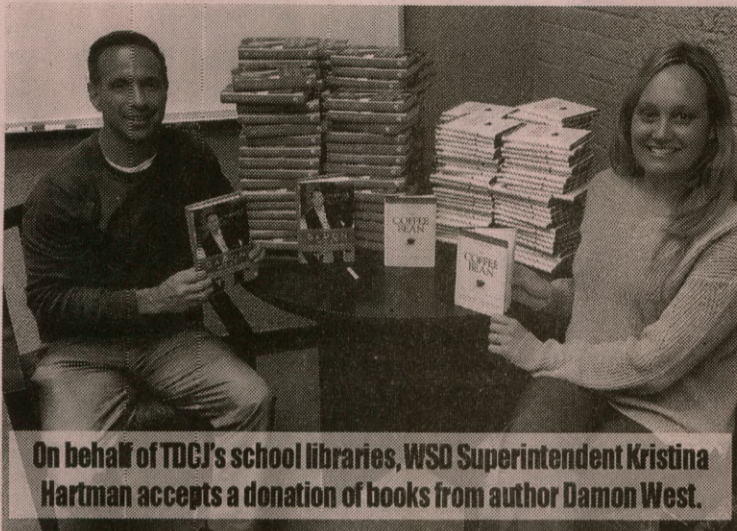


was shattered by my abrupt remark: "Man! I regret ever finding that old oil lamp on the beach."

The sand was warm beneath my feet and moist from the tropical surf. It was a flicker of sunlight reflected off the object almost buried in the sand that caught my attention. I stopped. Whoa! Was this ever a déjà-vu moment or what?

Exhumation revealed the object to be a medallion of curious workmanship on a gold chain with ancient symbols and markings. It was tarnished and in need of a thorough cleaning. Well, I thought, nothing my can of Brasso, a toothbrush, and a polishing rag can't take care of. ★

THE COFFEE BEAN



On behalf of TDCJ's school libraries, WSD Superintendent Kristina Hartman accepts a donation of books from author Damon West.

Damon West, ECHO Contributor — Released

Many of you may know from my article last month that I'm going on a tour of all 104 TDCJ prisons. I call it the Coffee Bean Prison Tour. In November I had the opportunity to speak at a program at the Wynne Unit. Warden Moore approached me afterward to thank me for sharing my story. We had a great conversation about the power of the coffee bean message and put our heads together on how to make the message go even further.

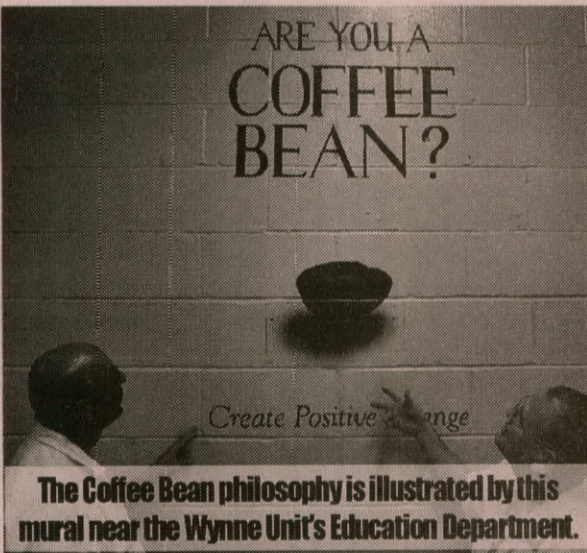
We came up with a mural.

The mural on the wall of the Wynne Unit asks the existential question: Are you a coffee bean?

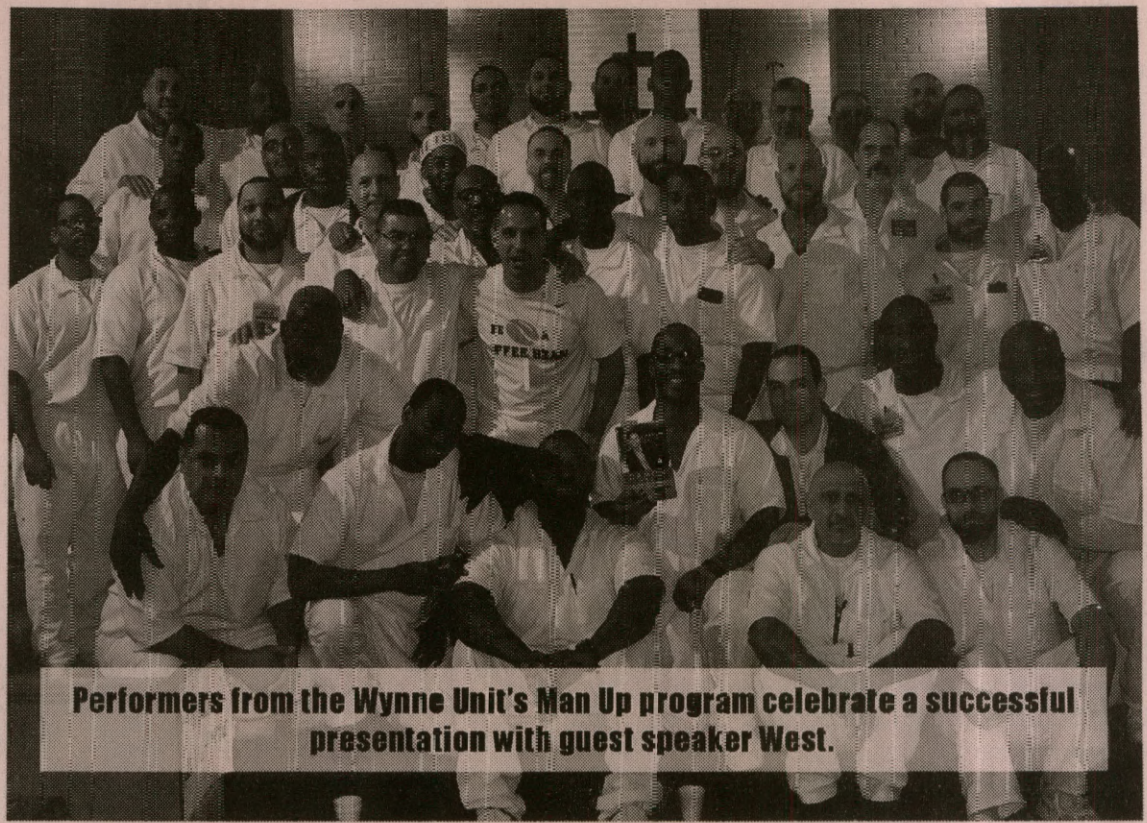
It is probably the most powerful mural I have ever seen in TDCJ. I hope every warden will put one up after I roll through their prison with this simple lesson about inner positivity that is changing lives all over the world.

In my last article, I shared with you the allegory of the carrot, the egg and the coffee bean. Imagine prison as a pot of boiling water and you must decide how to react: You can choose to be like the carrot and turn soft, allowing life and circumstances to beat you down; carrots are sad, mostly. Then there is the egg, which turns hard on the inside; the eggs are mad, and their hearts become hardened, like the yolk of a hard-boiled egg. Or, you can be like a coffee bean, which changes the pot of boiling water into a pot of coffee; coffee beans are the inmates you see smiling, being positive everywhere around the prison, and always trying to help others.

So, are you a coffee bean?



The Coffee Bean philosophy is illustrated by this mural near the Wynne Unit's Education Department.



Performers from the Wynne Unit's Man Up program celebrate a successful presentation with guest speaker West.

PRISON TO PROFESSOR

"Your past does not define you!"

This is the message in which I end each of my presentations.

I remember the first time my father visited me in prison. He reminded me that, "No one — not even the State of Texas — could take away your education."

I remember thinking he was delusional.

There I was, serving a life sentence on the Mark Stiles Unit, not having any clue when I would get out, and this guy is talking about my bachelor's degree from University of North Texas.

Thankfully, while in prison I got into a recovery program and quit trying to run things in my life. I surrendered to my Higher Power and got out of the way, just in time for the miracles to happen. In prison, I grew so much spiritually, mentally and physically. Like a coffee bean, I changed myself from within and the world around me.

My father was correct, too. Since making parole in 2015, I graduated from Lamar University, with a master's in criminal justice. Graduating with my master's was made even sweeter, because I graduated exactly 10 years to the day that I was sentenced to life in Dallas County. Ten years, and I had gone from the lowest part of the criminal justice system to being certified to teach criminal justice at any school in America. Since teaching criminal justice was a dream of mine, I would have to find a school to take a chance on me.

I would not wait long.

In August, I was contacted by former parole commissioner Lynn Ruzicka. Mrs. Ruzicka retired from parole a few years ago and is now an adjunct professor of criminal justice at the University of Houston Downtown. She contacted me after reading my book, *The Change Agent*, and wanted to know if I would be a guest lecturer in her class.

I jumped at the opportunity. It would be the first time I could meet my lead voter, shake her hand, tell her thanks for taking the chance on me and ask her the question I had been wondering since I made parole in 2015.

We met in the parking lot of the UHD campus before class. I actually gave her a hug instead of shaking her hand. As we walked to class, I told her of all the things I had been doing in my life to take advantage of the amazing second chance her fateful lead vote provided me four years ago. Then I got the chance to ask her my question.

"I know you've reviewed thousands of files, so you may not even remember mine. But, how did you decide to take a chance on me and vote for my first parole with a 65-year sentence?"

She told me she honestly did not remember my file, but she knew from my story that I had a great support system, had adjusted to the institution well, was genuinely sorry for the things I had done and was unlikely to reoffend because I got into a program of recovery.

"You talked about your parole packet in your book. Parole packets helped me so much because it allowed me to know the individuals incarcerated

more than just what their file said. I'm guessing you had a good parole packet and the answers to my questions were in there," she said.

I smiled. She was absolutely correct. My parole packet showed every rehabilitative program in which I enrolled. I got involved in every positive program I could in the chapel and the schoolhouse. In the end, my parole voter did look at my packet. I felt grateful to my mother for helping me put it all together.

After I spoke to Mrs. Ruzicka's class, I was approached by Dr. Michael Cavanaugh, from University of Houston Downtown's criminal justice department. Dr. Cavanaugh said he enjoyed my presentation and wanted to know if I would like to put my master's degree to work and begin teaching criminal justice classes to college students. "You'll be teaching a class called Prisons in America," he said.

My jaw dropped to the floor. "Dr. Cavanaugh," I said, "if teach a class about prison, I'm going to teach it from the perspective of someone who did time. It will be a completely different perspective than every prison class being taught in America."

"That's exactly what we want," he assured me, smiling.

On Jan. 15, 2020, I began teaching and am known to my students as Professor West. The first sentence they heard from me is, "Your past does not define you!"

SMUGGLER OF HOPE

Last month, I donated 104 copies of my books, *The Change Agent* and *The Coffee Bean*, to Windham School District. They are putting copies of each in every prison library in TDCJ. I hope my books find those who are looking for a roadmap to navigate life.

It is my intention to smuggle hope to you in each edition of *The Echo*. I want my stories to be proof that you can and should have dreams, that you can have a life in prison and after prison, that rehabilitation works, and that having a felony is not the end of the world.

If you will commit your life to being part of the solution instead of part of the problem, then you will have to pinch yourself because your life will become so good.

I did not do all these amazing things going on in my life. We all must have help along the way. I'm a drunk and drug addict with a life sentence. Recovery did these things for me because I surrendered to a Higher Power and worked The Steps. If you want what I've got (and I hope you do), then you are going to have to positively change your mindset and change the culture in your prison. Everything begins with a mindset change and every action is born of thought.

You must stop looking at prison as a punishment and start looking at prison as an opportunity to work on yourself 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is your chance to change your world and the world around you! ★

► INSPECT continued from page 1

"Changes in correspondence will strictly impact General Correspondence. However, lined and ruled stationery will still be permissible [for incoming correspondence] as well as cards bought on the commissary and those made with approved commissary items," Davis said.

The revised offender mail procedures include the following changes:

- Offenders will only be allowed to receive correspondence on standard white paper. Mail received on colored, decorated, card stock, construction, linen or cotton paper will be denied.
- Letters sent to offenders may not contain substances such as perfume, stickers, lipstick, bodily fluids, powdery substances or artwork using paint, glitter, glue or tape.
- Offenders may not receive greeting cards of any kind. "The key here is simple: plain white paper only," Davis emphasized.

Correspondence may be sent to incarcerated individuals on white (rule line) notebook paper, white typing paper, white printer paper or any other sort of plain white paper. White paper may have color ink printed on it, but colored or special textured paper is not acceptable. TDCJ also encourages the use of electronic messaging to help reduce the amount of contraband entering facilities.

There will also be a limit of ten (10) photos allowed per envelope. As an alternative, the JPay service provides the Snap n' Send program which allows family and friends to send photos safely and securely on plain white paper.

"Individual photographs will be placed under stricter scrutiny," Davis said. "Photographs have been found to contribute to ongoing trafficking and trading

problems, thus limitations on incoming photographs are needed."

Davis said TDCJ receives large numbers of individual photos which must be inspected by mail personnel. A sheet of plain white paper may have multiple photographic images on it and be mailed to offenders.

Search procedures

The agency is initiating new procedures related to searches of staff members and visitors entering a unit. Canines trained to find narcotics and certified through the National Narcotic Canine Detection Association will be used on units throughout the system.

"We are focusing our efforts on the deployment of canines throughout the system to augment our search procedures. We are refining these processes so we can have a sound correctional practice in place to use the canines," Davis said.

Procedures for searches of individuals entering the facility will include:

- Canines will be used strategically to detect narcotics and synthetic marijuana on visitors entering facilities. Searches on staff have already been implemented.
- Individuals the canine "alerts" on will not be allowed to visit any offender that visitation cycle (i.e. weekend of the visit). If a certified narcotic canine alerts on a child visitor, all adult visitors accompanying the child will not be allowed to visit any offender that visitation cycle.
- Incidents of alerts will be documented. A second alert, regardless of the time frame for an individual, will result in removal from any offender's visitation list.

"Families and friends must make better choices and structure their behavior so they can avoid being alerted on during the searches," Davis said.

New Security Precaution Designators (SPDs)

SPDs are a means of communicating to staff members that a particular offender poses a specific risk factor because of their history. A new SPD for specific violations will be instituted March 1, which includes the following TDCJ disciplinary codes:

- 10.2 (possession of certain contraband)
- 12.0 (use or possession of narcotics)
- 12.1 (refusal to submit to a urinalysis)
- 16.0 (possession of cell phone or money)

Any offender who receives a conviction after March 1 on any of the above cited codes will be given a Contraband (CB) indicator. The CB indicator will enable the unit administration, warden and classification to recognize the risk with certain offenders, resulting in housing and job assignment implications for those offenders, though the most crucial impact will be the limitation of ways of depositing money.

"Offenders who have a CB designator will only be able to receive money in two ways: bank-to-bank transfer and money orders," Davis said.

Commissary accounts and money deposits

Only the 10 individuals who are listed on one's approved visitator list, along with the 20 individuals on one's Offender Telephone Service (OTS) list, may deposit funds or make eCommDirect transactions. This results in a total of 30 people who can send money to individual offenders.

"As long as you are on those lists, there will absolutely be no problem for offenders to receive money [from you] through the eight current ways of depositing money," Davis said.

For further information:

New policy changes are described on the TDCJ website at: <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/news/inspect2protect.html> ★

Gateway Church's prison campuses help inmates change the way they see themselves

Stephen Wilson, Contributor to The Dallas Morning News
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Editor's Note: Stephen Wilson is the prison campuses pastor for Gateway Church, a multi-campus church with six locations in North Texas. He wrote this article for The Dallas Morning News and it was published online June 9, 2019. On this page The ECHO also presents related news concerning Gateway.

We're in prisons every week building relationships with men who are broken, forgotten and condemned. We teach them how to see themselves for who they can be and not what they've done so they become leaders in their communities once they're released.

My first night in a Tarrant County jail, I sat on my bunk overwhelmed with fear. I didn't know anyone who had ever been arrested or incarcerated, so I had no idea what to expect. I kept thinking about my kids, ages 18 months, 4 and 6, whom I had kissed with a gut-wrenching goodbye. In 21 days I would be transferred to a state prison to begin serving a two-year sentence for a crime I had committed several years before. I had decided to turn myself in after I started living a Christian life because I wanted to take responsibility for what I had done.

As that night crept along, I remained cautious and aware of my surroundings. Soon I noticed a group of inmates huddling in the corner of the dorm we shared. From what I had seen in the movies, I imagined they might be planning a hit on somebody, so I watched them closely and stayed alert. Then they did something that shocked me. They gripped hands, bowed their heads, and started to pray. They called it their prayer circle, where they prayed daily for each other and their families. I asked if I could join them and they

welcomed me in. In that moment, I realized the way to show my faith was by helping the guys in my dorm. I helped some learn to read and write letters to their children.

At the prison, I had friends who were serving much longer sentences than I was, but they too would eventually be released. I wondered how they would



fare and cope when they returned to a changed society and strained family relationships and had to interact with people with commonly held biases toward offenders. This weighed heavily on me, and I wanted to do more for them.

After my release I started G3 Prison Ministries to prepare inmates for re-entry into society. I always say, "Today's offender is tomorrow's neighbor." Why wouldn't we want to teach them how to be better husbands, fathers and sons so they return to their families and communities different from when they went in? In

partnership with Gateway Church, we made nearly 495,000 connections with inmates from 2010 to 2018 through faith-based programs and outreach initiatives.

In November [2018], Gateway took it a step further and planted a church inside the Coffield Unit, a maximum-security prison in Anderson County. Every week, 500 men attend and serve during worship services at our Coffield Campus as well as the Sanders Estes prison in Venus, with Gateway staff and volunteers serving and worshipping alongside them.

We're in prisons every week building relationships with men who are broken, forgotten and condemned. We teach them how to see themselves for who they can be and not what they've done so they become leaders in their communities once they're released. According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's fiscal 2018 Statistical Report, more than 134,000 men and women are currently serving time in Texas prisons, which presents us with a tremendous opportunity to change lives and communities.

As part of the Rehabilitation Programs Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Gateway Prison Ministry's faith-based programming includes practical tools to help offenders succeed upon re-entry. We focus on four areas: marriage and parenting, financial stewardship, spiritual development, and leadership

development. While education and job skills training play key roles in reducing the recidivism rate, the faith-based relational component creates the foundation that supports lasting progress in those areas. For example, if the offender's family life or home environment is solidified, he becomes a better employee, and so on.

According to the Criminal Justice Trends report by Prison Fellowship, more than 1 million Americans are incarcerated. Through Gateway's prison ministry, we've seen marriages with incarcerated spouses strengthened and relationships between children and their incarcerated fathers repaired.

The launch of our Coffield Campus has also prompted many families who attend our church to, for the first time, share their need for resources and support as loved ones of someone incarcerated. Sometimes these families just need someone to cry with them. Sometimes the offender needs to hear someone say, "I know you messed up, but I still love you." We're here to do both.

As a church, we're all about people, but it's not just a Gateway thing. It's our faith that makes people our focus. As we continue to launch campuses in more Texas prisons, we're reminded the way we walk out our faith is to walk alongside someone on his or her journey. It's not about getting people to church; it's about meeting them where they are. ★

Gateway Church founder Morris visits Coffield Unit chapel

Coffield Unit residents visiting the chapel for a weekly Gateway Church service were surprised last August to find the church's founding senior pastor personally delivering his message of hope.

According to PRNewswire onStreetinsider.com (Aug. 12, 2019), Pastor Robert Morris made a surprise visit to the 439 men in attendance. He said he was honored to minister to men at the Gateway Church Coffield Campus, finding them "welcoming and gracious." The article said Morris was excited to share the message at Coffield and with Gateway's seven other church campus locations via the airways and a recorded message.

Gateway Church launched the Coffield Campus in November 2018 to serve incarcerated men and their families. According to the article,

weekly attendance at the Coffield Unit Campus averages 400 people and, since its inception, been more than a thousand decisions for Christ have been reported at that site.

Through Gateway, incarcerated individuals can experience a regular worship program and attend classes on discipleship, marriage and parenting, preparing for reentry into society. Gateway also offers programs for families of incarcerated individuals to help them through this period, and to prepare them for life once their loved one is released.

"The Gateway Church Coffield Campus runs like any other campus, with inmates serving as greeters and ushers and operating the sound, video and audio," onStreetinsider.com said. "Stephen Wilson, an ex-offender who went to seminary school and has been ministering in prisons for years, serves as the Gateway Coffield Campus pastor."

The article also said not all inmates can attend service regularly: "The 2,000 minimum-security offenders can attend each week. The medium-security offenders are only able to attend on special occasions, such as the November launch service, and maximum-security offenders are not able to attend but receive materials from Gateway including the church magazine, devotionals, and books like *The Blessed Life* by Pastor Robert Morris."

Gateway Church is a multi-campus church with six other locations across the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and one location in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The church also added a second prison campus at the Estes Unit in Venus, Texas. A third church prison campus is planned for the Lindsey State Jail in Jacksboro in 2020.

According to Gateway Church's website, the church was founded in 2000 by Pastor Morris and is considered to be "one church in many locations," with more than 30,000 people attending each weekend. ★

Sudoku

Easy

		7	6	8	3			
3				5				
		1		7				
	8	5	4		6			
		9				2		
		8		5				
			5					
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CRIME STOPPERS

Missing person

Harold William "Bill" Roland



Harold William "Bill" Roland, a white male, was last seen in San Augustine County, Texas on July 21, 1997. Roland resided in Lufkin, Angelina County, but owned a lake house on Lake Sam Rayburn. Roland told a witness he planned to go fishing. Roland's wife reported him missing on the following morning. Also missing were Roland's pickup, pontoon boat and boat trailer. During the next three months Roland's pickup was found deliberately burned in a rural area of Angelina County. Roland's boat trailer was

found abandoned in a National Forest in San Augustine County, and Roland's boat was located hidden under willow trees on Lake Sam Rayburn. Pontoons on the boat had been shot, possibly in an attempt to sink the craft.

If you have any information regarding Harold Roland, please contact the TDCJ Crime Stoppers Office at P.O. Box 1855, Huntsville, TX 77342. TDCJ Crime Stoppers will pay from \$50 up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest, filing of charges or indictment of a person or persons who committed a felony crime or is a wanted fugitive. Crime Stoppers guarantees your anonymity.

Preparing for inclement weather: Recognition of cold-related illness, injury

Editor's Note: The following information was provided by TDCJ Risk Management.

Frostbite

Not only can wind chill cause a rapid body heat loss, it also can cause frostbite, the freezing of body tissues. Frostbite can occur in 15 minutes or less at wind chill values of 18 below zero or lower. Offenders can be at an increased risk to frostbite because of factors such as exhaustion, hunger and dehydration, which further lower the body's defenses against cold.

Watch for the following symptoms of frostbite:

- cold, white and hard skin;
- pain;
- itching;
- loss of feeling in the affected area;
- spots or blotches on skin;
- swelling and blistering;
- skin becomes red and blotchy when warmed and
- tissue loss, depending on the severity of the frostbite.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition occurring when the body loses heat faster than the body can produce it. With the onset of this condition, blood vessels in the skin constrict (i.e., tighten) in an attempt to conserve vital internal body heat, thus affecting the hands and feet

first. Hypothermia, the severe or prolonged loss of body heat, begins when a person's body temperature falls below 95 degrees. Because the temperature drop may be gradual, and an early symptom of hypothermia is mental confusion, the victim may not know a problem exists. If one's body continues to lose heat, involuntary shivers begin. This reaction is the body's way to produce more heat and is usually the first real warning sign of hypothermia. Further heat loss produces speech difficulty, forgetfulness, loss of manual dexterity, collapse and finally death.

Some offenders can be at an increased risk to hypothermia if they have predisposing health conditions or take certain medications. Some of these conditions include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, poor physical condition, poor diet, and/or advanced age.

Watch for the following hypothermia symptoms:

- confusion;
- drowsiness;
- slurred speech;
- a drop in blood pressure;
- shallow breathing; and
- a pinkish tint to the skin.

Report all incidents of cold-related illness to a staff member immediately. ★

TDCJ & WINDHAM

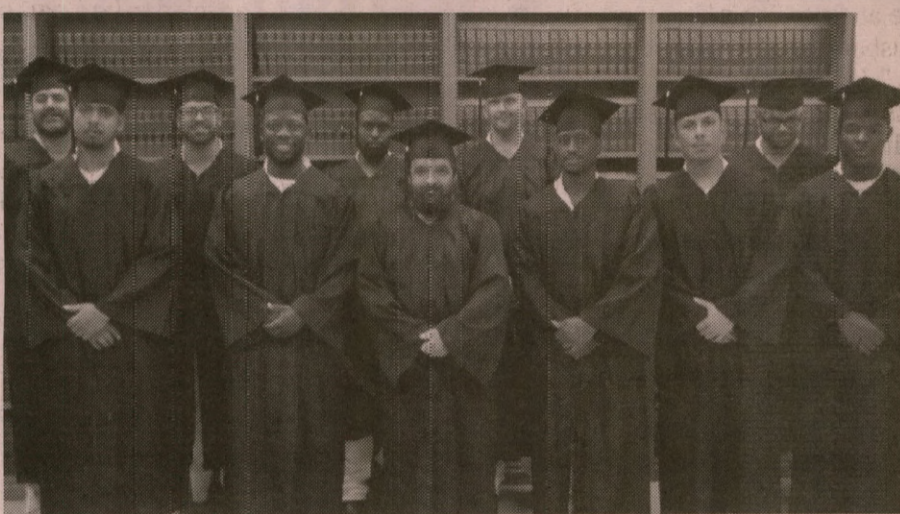
BULLETIN BOARD



Windham School District (WSD)'s Lewis Unit High School Equivalency (HSE) graduates are: C. Reyes, P. Aguinaga, A. Oranet, D. Edward, J. Kier, K. Chopan, C. Hunt, E. Williams Jr., J. Bullock, T. Titus, Q. Murray and S. Odom.



Beto Unit WSD Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) machining graduates are: R. Gonzales, J. Wills, R. Perez and C. Humberto.



WSD's Cole State Jail HSE graduates are: J. Grayden, D. McChristian, R. Casneal, S. Gonzales, K. Sheilay, D. Draper, R. Smith, J. Thomas, L. Mareno, C. Hinchliffe and J. Mack.



Robertson Unit Automotive Standard of Excellence (ASE) Auto G1 Maintenance & Repair graduates from WSD are: D. Davis, J. Garner and R. Stevens.



Beto Unit WSD welding graduates are: K. Camp, J. Martinez, W. Shapland, C. Shaoin and A. Bailey.



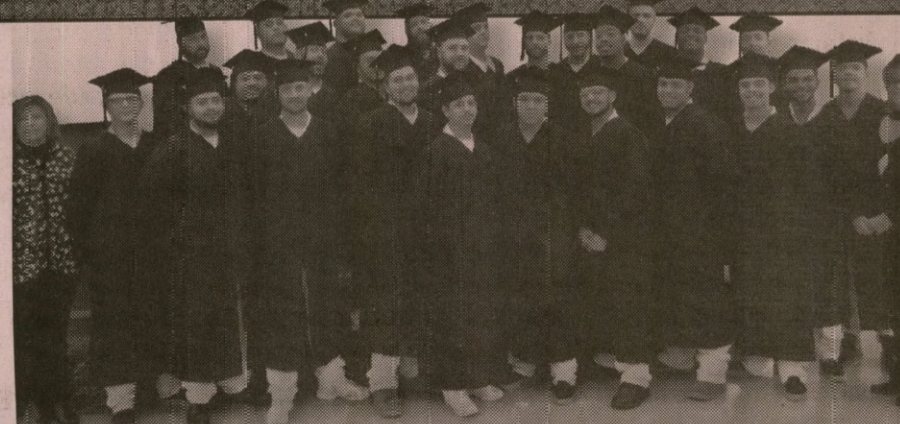
Hamilton Unit WSD plumbing graduates are: C. Alexander, S. Santellana and E. Gutierrez.



Hamilton Unit WSD HVAC graduates: G. Simmons, E. Fernandez, F. Saldivar, A. Jones, T. Costley, J. Solis and E. Diaz.



Michael Unit HSE graduates from WSD are: D. Canady, J. Edwards, R. Eaglin, T. Harrell and S. Grimble.



WSD's Johnston Unit HSE graduate are: T. McKinney, X. Aguilera, J. Bowman, A. Calvert, B. Montana, Y. Castillo, J. Flores, J. Galindo, C. Henderson, R. Williams, D. Lee, J. Tovar, J. Galyon, C. Guevara, K. Curtis, J. Hoskins, A. Lane, R. Wooten, C. Miller, E. Lopez, J. Silas, S. Owens, G. Carroll, C. Gulley, M. Morris and D. Nations.



Beto Unit electrical technology graduates from WSD are: R. Ford, R. Veasey, P. Wilson and B. Lamar.

► ONE MAN'S TREASURE continued from page 1

"One Man's Treasure took away the worry and pain of having to forage for quality clothes, providing dignity and confidence for a man attempting to gain entrance back into the workforce and society at large," said one former TDCJ incarcerated individual. "I was blessed to be a recipient of their kindness."

Dressing well is a way of learning about oneself while integrating and expressing one's personality to the world. Yet, thousands of indigent men return from incarceration each year with limited support to help them reenter society. One Man's Treasure cares about how formerly incarcerated men present themselves. Those without family or friends to provide support often go into transitional or alternative homes, and clothing becomes an expense they cannot easily afford.

"Many of these men have been incarcerated from 10 to 20 or more years, and the world as they know it has changed dramatically. They do not have family or are returning to families who are unable to financially assist them in obtaining basic needs," said One Man's Treasure Executive Director Annette Jenkins, who has overseen the day-to-day operations of the organization since 2010. "Our focus at One Man's Treasure is to address this critical need and work to rectify it."

Between 2005 and the end of 2019, One Man's Treasure had supplied clothes to 11,939 formerly incarcerated men, helping them feel confident, prepared for work and empowered to succeed. Guided by a roster of administrators and executive managers, One Man's Treasure's structure is like that of other nonprofit organizations. It includes a governing board of directors, the chief executive officer (CEO) and other business administrators, a site manager at the clothes closet, a clothing coordinator and community partners. An additional 150 volunteers share their time and effort with the nonprofit, and two-thirds of those are also responsible for delivering clothes to the men.

"There are 25 churches of all denominations that support us in different ways, such as financially or in clothing drives," Jenkins says. "All employees at One Man's Treasure are committed to fueling innovation and spurring exciting new opportunities for offenders. We inspire clothes recipients to think bigger and bolder about their future."

Jenkins' involvement as a KAIROS volunteer on the Beto Unit in the TDCJ led to her belief that those who were incarcerated really wanted to change and better their lives. She said she was greatly inspired by the Bible verse "When I was naked, you clothed me; when I was hungry, you fed me." She felt that God had touched her spirit and she set out on a course of vigorous action to shine love and light into the lives of incarcerated men. She saw that the men needed clothes when released from prison, and One Man's Treasure was formed.

"Everybody who serves in One Man's Treasure does it for the same reason: the belief that men can truly change the direction of their lives," she says. "I went to the Beto Unit and witnessed that their change was real. This ministry is made up of people who believe that incarcerated individuals deserve a second chance. If we can play a small role in this process, then we are truly grateful."

How it works

A partnership between TDCJ and the Windham School District (WSD) supports the efforts of One Man's Treasure. The process begins when TDCJ residents about to be released fill out an application,

Applications for One Man's Treasure can be located through TDCJ's unit chaplaincy offices, WSD CHANGES classes, or unit Reentry departments. Applicants must live in Dallas, Collin, Rockwell, Denton, Kaufman, Van Zandt, Henderson, Ellis and Smith counties. A male volunteer will deliver clothing in 7-10 days. The toll-free number for use after release to verify your application info is: 1.888.433.9826.

available from their unit's chaplaincy department or unit reentry personnel. One Man's Treasure is also working to distribute applications through the WSD's Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) pre-release class, as well as several transitional homes across North Texas. The information on these applications gives One Man's Treasure a good idea of an individual's height, weight, and arm and leg length.

According to One Man's Treasure staff, their greatest challenge is contacting those who are incarcerated. Men may send in the clothing application, but it's not a requirement, and the organization encourages those requesting clothing to use their toll-free 800 number, which is 1.888.433.9826.

What you receive

"We have a saying here at One Man's Treasure: if you wouldn't let your husband walk out in it, then don't give it to these guys," Jenkins says.

The fortunate recipients of clothing are given four to five shirts, two pairs of pants, one pair of shoes, three T-shirts, five pairs of socks and five pairs of underwear. Work boots are not always available, but staff at One Man's Treasure will do their best to help find a pair for those who ask. Even a suit for job interviews can be found, if the right size is in stock. Winter wear like coats, hats and gloves are distributed during cold months.

"We have gotten so good at matching the right sizes that I can recall only a few times over the years when we had to replace the clothes," Jenkins says. "However, a volunteer can sometimes make all of the necessary alterations or adjustments to achieve the perfect fit."

Those who benefit from One Man's Treasure are not committed to attend any programs or classes, nor do they have to attend church to receive any clothes.

"There are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lecture to endure," Jenkins says.

Location

One Man's Treasure has no storefront or brick-and-mortar shop. Clothes are collected at a clothes closet on ministry premises, which cover a considerable amount of space. One Man's Treasure currently serves Dallas and surrounding areas such as Rockwall, Addison, Garland, Denton and Plano. After basic introductions are made and the necessary size information is shared, clothing is delivered to the recipient's current residence.

"Everything is delivered to recipients," Jenkins says. "They do not come to the clothes closet. We come to them."

Getting the message out, raising awareness

Approximately 8,000 to 9,000 men leave prison and return to the Dallas-area every year, and One Man's Treasure says it reaches about 1,500 of those recently released individuals. In a move to promote growth and solidarity, One Man's Treasure has partnered with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), a state agency that provides employment opportunities to former TDCJ residents. This relationship will allow both parties to better inform those nearing parole or discharge about their services.

Raising awareness within the community about the challenges faced by incarcerated individuals is a step in the right direction, and One Man's Treasure is working to spread this message. The organization's volunteers hope their work with TDCJ will raise awareness within the community and open the doors of opportunity for those who are reentering freeworld society.

A hand-up, not a handout

According to Jenkins, One Man's Treasure strives "to be hand-up, not a handout." She added, "I have seen the changes in these men and the new paths they are taking, and it's real. I am glad to be a part of this."

So, in a sense, the right kind of clothing can help re-make the man.. ★

Second regional PACT Conference set for March 14 in Dallas

In 2020 the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is holding its Public Awareness -Corrections Today (PACT) conferences in locations throughout the state, making it easier for people to attend this important communications event. The PACT Conference allows interested parties to meet agency staff, view presentations and ask questions about criminal justice in Texas.

Offenders' families and advocates, community leaders, prison ministries, criminal justice volunteers and the general public are invited to join any PACT conference to discuss the TDCJ.

The second regional PACT conference will be held on Saturday, March 14 in Dallas, at the Gateway Church. The meeting will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a one-hour independent lunch break for conference participants. Registration will take place onsite from 8 to 8:30 a.m., with the event beginning at 8:30 a.m.

PACT conferences are coordinated by the TDCJ Ombudsman's Office and there is no charge to attend. ★

Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking System

*House Bill 281
Government Code 420.034*

On Sept. 1, 2019, the Texas Department of Public Safety implemented a statewide electronic tracking system to track the status of forensic medical kits at a health care facility, a law enforcement agency or at an accredited crime laboratory.

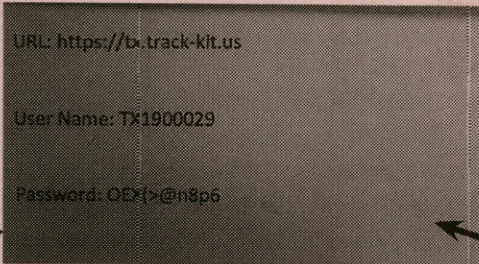
This tracking system will:

- Track the status and location of each item of forensic evidence collected during a Sexual Assault investigation through various stages of the criminal justice process
- Allow entities involved in the handling of the evidence update and track the status and location of evidence
- Allow survivors to anonymously track or receive updates on the status of evidence.

How it works:

The healthcare facility/local hospital that conducts the forensic medical exam will provide the survivor with a Survivor Card containing the web address, a generic user ID and temporary password to access the status of the kit. The Survivor Card:

- Is plain and discreet
- Contains no identifying information
- Is the size of a business card
- Requires the password to be changed at first login



Survivor information:

- Track-Kit (<https://tx.track-kit.us>) is a web-based system you can access at any time using any internet connection.
- Seek the help of a trusted friend or family member to anonymously access the status of the kit and provide you with updates.
- If you have not received information pertaining to the forensic evidence and **do not** have family or friends to help, contact the **PREA Ombudsman Office** confidentially, in writing, to request a status check of the evidence collected.

Requesting status checks through PREA Ombudsman Office:

- Requests **will not** be accepted from anyone other than the victim of the alleged sexual assault.
- Requests must include your name, the date, time and location of the incident, along with the username and password from the Survivor Card received after the forensic exam.
- Responses from the PREA Ombudsman Office will **ONLY** be provided to the victim and no one else, including family and friends. ★

**PREA OMBUDSMAN OFFICE
P.O. BOX 99
HUNTSVILLE, TX 77342-0099**

Sistema de Rastreo de Evidencia de Asalto Sexual

*Proyecto de Ley 281
Código de Gobierno 420.034*

En Sept. 1, 2019, el Departamento de Seguridad Pública implementó en todo el estado, un sistema de seguimiento electrónico para rastrear el estatus de los equipos médicos forenses en un centro de atención médica, agencia de aplicación de la ley, o en un laboratorio acreditado de la delincuencia.

Este sistema de seguimiento:

- Rastrear el estatus y ubicación de cada artículo de evidencia forense recogida durante una investigación por Asalto Sexual a través de las diversas etapas del proceso de justicia penal,
- Permitir a las entidades involucradas en el manejo de la evidencia actualizar y dar seguimiento al estatus y a la ubicación de evidencia, y
- Permitir a los sobrevivientes para que anónimamente den seguimiento o reciban actualizaciones del estatus de evidencia.

Aquí es cómo:

El centro de atención médica/hospital local que efectúa el examen médico forense proporcionará al sobreviviente con una tarjeta conteniendo la dirección electrónica, una ID de usuario genérica-user name y una contraseña temporal-password para tener acceso al estatus del kit. La información en la tarjeta es:

- Sencilla y discreta.
- No contiene información de identificación.
- Es del tamaño de una tarjeta de negocios.
- Requiere que la contraseña sea cambiada al iniciar la primera sesión.

Información de Sobreviviente:

- El Rastreo de Kit es un sistema basado en internet al que se puede acceder desde cualquier lugar con una conexión 24/7 de internet en <https://tx.track-kit.us>.
- Buscar el apoyo de un amigo confiable o familiar para acceder de forma anónima al estatus del kit y le proporcione con las actualizaciones.
- Si usted no ha recibido información pertinente a la evidencia forense **Y no** tiene familia o amigos para ayudarlo, usted puede contactar confidencialmente la **Oficina Ombudsman PREA** por escrito, para solicitar una revisión del estatus de la evidencia recogida.

Solicitando revisión del estatus a través de la Oficina Ombudsman PERA:

- Solicitudes **no serán** aceptadas de alguien que no sea la víctima del presunto asalto sexual.
 - Las solicitudes deben incluir su nombre; fecha, hora y lugar del incidente; y el nombre del usuario-user name y la contraseña-password en la Tarjeta de Sobreviviente recibida después del examen forense.
 - Las respuestas de la Oficina Ombudsman PREA serán **ÚNICAMENTE** proporcionadas a la víctima y a nadie más, incluyendo familiares y amigos. ★

Making A DENT

Take two: 'Twelve Mighty Orphans' becomes a Hollywood film

Jim Dent, Contributing Writer — Polunsky Unit

Like a lot of inmates, I didn't leave my past life in very good shape when I went off to prison for a second time in 2015. Behind me were the broken pieces of sheer chaos. My friends and family were blindsided by the tornadic wind shift of my lifestyle. I knew there would be more consequences as the years passed. I was almost certain that I would never return to my level of success in the book business.

When I got in trouble the second time, my story landed on the front page of the *Dallas Morning News*. The newspaper ran all my precious mug shots and employed thousands of words to recreate the sordid drinking events that got me back in this jam. My New York publisher dropped me before I left county jail and boarded the Blue Bird headed south for the Big House. I just knew that my writing career was over in spite of some successful books that placed me on some notable bestseller lists, including the *New York Times*.

Then, in the fall of 2018, I caught the break of a lifetime. The movie rights to my best book were repurchased by a famous oilman out of Fort Worth by the name of George Young, who had told me long ago of his interest in *Twelve Mighty Orphans*, the story of a bunch of ragtag little orphan football players back in the Depression who captured the attention of an entire nation with their

grit, savvy, resilience and persistence to win against big odds.

The significance of the movie coming to the big screen was laid out recently in a letter that I received from nationally acclaimed book author and good friend Carlton Stowers.

Stowers wrote: "It has long been my belief that for each of us, regardless of misfortune and ill fate, there comes that pivotal moment in life when some magical turnaround presents itself. Some call it luck, some a second chance. The trick is to recognize it, embrace it, and look upon it as day one. I was delighted to learn that *Twelve Mighty Orphans*, my favorite of your books, will be filmed with such a fine cast. My sincere congratulations."

Coming from Carlton was almost like hearing it from Hemingway.

The news of my potential comeback had come a year earlier on Oct. 26, 2018, as I lie on my bunk at the Polunsky Unit, reading a book and feeling a bit sorry for myself. Just a few months earlier, I had determined the movie was never going to be made. I had sold the rights 10 years earlier and, like me, it needed a second chance — fast.

About 9 p.m. that night, the officer in my pod dropped an email on my bunk. As I read it, I started jumping

up and down on the mattress like a kid on a trampoline. The officer looked at me as if I'd lost my mind, and then politely asked me to get down — fast.

The email from SMU journalism chairman Tony Pederson said that Young and four investors would fund the movie that would be completed sometime in 2019. It was a reversal of fortune like I'd never experienced.

Everything that Young had promised came off on schedule. They completed filming in Nov. 2019, with an all-star cast that includes Luke Wilson, Robert Duvall, and Martin Sheen. One of the executive producers, Michael DeLuca, has been nominated for three Oscars.

I happen to believe that the strength of the movie is the story. Of course, I am biased since I wrote the book. I grasped the idea in Nov. 2005, when I was living in Houston. I jumped in the car that night and drove straight to Fort Worth, waking up the next morning in the parking lot of the Masonic Home, the fabled orphanage that would operate from 1898 until 2006 and left an indelible mark on the city and state.

The message of the story will resonate with everyone who sees it. The head coach of the Mighty Mites team had lost his eyesight in France

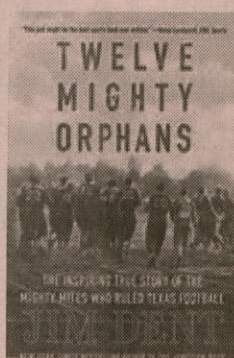
in 1917 during World War I and promised God he would do something important with his life if he could just get his eyesight back. That debt was repaid a few years later when Rusty Russell left a high-paying coaching job in Temple, Texas to coach at the orphanage for peanuts. That first year, the Mighty Mites had no football to practice with and only six leather helmets. They practiced barefoot on a gravel field because the school could afford shoes only half of the year.

The players were outweighed at least 35 pounds per man. Russell was the first to introduce the spread passing offense to any level of football. He did it simply because his players were too small to fight toe-to-toe with big boys from the big schools.

It took the Mighty Mites just five years to win a Texas state championship in the highest division. They went to the state semifinals three times in the 1930s and beat the Fort Worth schools, which were at least ten times bigger, every time they played for nine straight years.

The message of the story is to believe in yourself even when hope is all that is left. *Twelve Mighty Orphans* would be a great movie for every individual in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to see. Everybody deserves a new day.

And, yes, I know precisely what the story means to me. ★



2019 ECHO-LADES

William Hill, ECHO Staff



SPORTS VIEW

To paraphrase wise American philosopher Forrest Gump, "Sports are like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." Sports run the gamut from the sublime to the ridiculous, which prompted us at *The ECHO* to create the *ECHO-LADES*, the newest (and dare I say, best) annual sports award, to praise athletic greatness and lampoon ineptitude. In this issue, we announce the winners of the first-ever *ECHO-LADES* for the 2019 sports year:

Award for Best Organization of the 21st Century: In 2019, the New England Patriots defeated the Los Angeles Rams 13-3 in Super Bowl LIII. In an era that emphasizes explosive offenses, the

Patriots' ability to hold one of the league's most potent attacks to only three points reinforces the genius of the team's head coach Bill Belichick (more on this later). With six championships since the 2001 season, the Patriots have established themselves as the National Football League's (NFL) standard of excellence. Even more remarkable is that they were able to win their latest title without any semblance of a scandal (unless you consider Patriots' owner Robert Kraft's arrest for allegedly soliciting prostitution in a Florida massage parlor a scandal).

Award for Best Career Comeback: In a scene that many golf fans feared they would never see again, Eldrick "Tiger" Woods once again dominated the back nine of a course to win another major. For the first time in his Hall of Fame career, Woods had to battle from behind to win his fifth Masters Tournament title and 15th major championship. The good vibes generated from that victory seemed to invigorate him for the rest of the season as he took on the dual roles of captain/player in the year-end Presidents Cup where he went 3-0 in his matches and led the United States team to a win. Woods, the best golfer of his generation, has spent the past several years battling personal issues and injuries that prevented him from playing a full schedule of tournaments until the 2019 season.

Award for Best Pupil Surpasses Teacher Moment: Clemson University Tigers' head football coach Dabo Swinney defeated his alma mater, the University of Alabama's Crimson Tide 44-16 to win the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) National Championship game. Swinney, who attended the University of Alabama on a football scholarship and served as an assistant coach on the coaching staff of current Crimson Tide head coach Nick Saban before joining Clemson, defeated his mentor for the second time in three years. The 28-point deficit was the worst bowl-game loss suffered by a Saban-coached team in his legendary career.

Award for Lifetime Achievement: After 82 career wins, Lindsey Vonn leaves the sport of Alpine skiing as the winningest female skier in the history of the sport. In an age when many competitors specialize in one discipline, she was determined not to be a one-trick pony. Vonn earned victories in all five Alpine disciplines: downhill, slalom, giant slalom, super G and the combined. In addition to her individual wins, she also topped the World Cup Tour's overall season standings for three years in a row. Vonn was a three-time Olympic medalist, including a gold in the 2010 downhill. In 2018, she came back from a devastating knee injury so she could leave the sport on her own terms. In the end, Lindsey Vonn is one of the greatest and most determined athletes of her generation.

Award for Best Idea That's Time Had Come: When the California senate passed Senate Bill 206, known as the Fair Pay to Play Act, they granted college athletes in the state the ability to receive compensation for the use of their name, image and likeness. Although the California law does not go into effect until January 2023, the legislation had an immediate impact on the world of collegiate athletics as it forced the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) to promote their own version of the bill. The NCAA used its considerable influence in an attempt to convince California Governor Gavin Newsom

to veto the bill, arguing, "This is just a new form of professionalism and a different way of converting students into employees," (NCAA president Mark Emmert to the *Indianapolis Star*, quoted in the Oct. 21-26, 2019 issue of *Sports Illustrated*). The sentiment is laughable considering that the NCAA is itself a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. Apparently, it is okay for the institutions, coaches and almost everyone else associated with college sports, except the ones who actually put their bodies and health on the line, to make money from college sports.

Award for Most Dominant Team: The United States Women's National Team's (USWNT) run to the 2019 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup title was historic for several reasons. When the team defeated the Netherlands 2-0 in the final, it ended a dominating tournament in which the team never trailed in any match. The 2019 USWNT is the highest scoring team in World Cup history, with 26 goals scored. In addition to the title, team captain Meghan Rapinoe left Paris with the Golden Boot (top scorer) and the Golden Ball (awarded to the tournament's Most Valuable Player). The dominance extended to Head Coach Jill Ellis, as she became the first coach to win back-to-back women's World Cup titles. Rapinoe's post-score pose of arms spread wide and chin held high as if she were a real-life version of one of the marble statues of Greek goddesses in the Louvre triggered an onslaught of attention from the world's media. The various expressions used to describe the team ranged from the upbeat "supremely confident," "awesomely formidable," to the downright rude assertions of "arrogant," "ruthless," "disgraceful" and even "villains." Really! Does being better than everyone else in the world in a sport make you a villain? Whichever term is used to describe this remarkable group of competitors, make sure to include the honorific of back-to-back World Cup champs.

Award for Most Inspirational Season: The Washington Nationals, left for dead after a slow start to the season, rebounded to win the franchise's first World Series title. The Nationals were able to reach the World Series despite being heavy underdogs in every series during their post-season run. Although it seemed everybody wanted to see the Houston Astros win it all again (including the umpires, judging from the horrific officiating that went against Washington); however, the Nationals would not be denied. The 2019 World Series became an instant classic as they defeated the heavily favored Astros four games to three in a historic series, in which the road team won every game.

Award for Worst Impersonation of an NFL Quarterback: Although Mitch Trubisky of the Chicago Bears; Joe Flacco of the Denver Broncos and Kyle Allen of the Carolina Panthers made this a deep competition, the *ECHO-LADE* goes to Faker, oops I mean, Baker Mayfield. He was an easy choice for the award due to Mayfield's inept play for the hapless Cleveland Browns during the 2019 NFL season. Mayfield, the top pick in the 2018 NFL draft, is better known for his abrasive personality and brash comments than he is for his play on the field of play. Although it may be premature to label the former Heisman trophy winner as a bust, he is well on his way to that ignominious designation. The polarizing player has already managed to achieve something no other quarterback has ever accomplished: during Mayfield's first two seasons in the league, he has gotten three head coaches fired due to his unpredictable play. Even though "coaches fired" is not an official statistic kept by the NFL, that would seem to be a record.

Award for Worst Impersonation of an NFL Head Coach: Freddie Kitchens, the head coach of the Cleveland Browns, is the perfect example of the Peter Principle. The concept, taught in business management courses, explains that a person will continue to rise in an organization until they reach the level of their incompetence. Kitchens served as the team's quarterbacks coach in 2018 before being promoted to offensive coordinator when then-head-coach Hue Jackson was fired. During the off-season, the organization promoted Kitchens to the position of head coach over more qualified candidates due, in large part, to a recommendation by the team's starting quarterback, Mayfield. Unlike his quarterback who faced steep competition for his own *ECHO-LADE* award, Kitchens was the runaway winner in this category.

ECHO-LADES continued on pg.4 ►