Inside the wire:
Longtime educators teaching GED classes to inmates at Polunsky Unit

Gary Stallard
Reprinted in The ECHO with permission from The Lufkin Daily News

Inside the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Polunsky Unit - past the rolls of barbed wire, past the security checkpoints, past the seemingly endless gates, one of which leads past Death Row - there's a door marked "Education." Inside the door is a classroom, one no different from any high school classroom save for the guards outside the door. There are bookshelves and a chalkboard, desks and work tables, a teacher's desk sitting below walls filled with instructional and motivational posters.

Sitting at the work tables are approximately 30 inmates dressed in white jumpsuits dealing in various ways with an overwhelming sense of anxiety. Some tap their feet restlessly, or drum fingers on the tables, while others engage in nervous conversation. Today is the day they're supposed to get their GED test results.

None are more anxious than the two teachers sitting in front of the room. B. Lewing and M. Waller both spent years teaching in the public school system. Waller retired from Lufkin Independent School District (LISD) a couple of years ago and now works as a substitute teacher for the unit, while Lewing has worked with LISD and Scholastic Inc. Lewing also spent a brief period teaching classes at a Diboll prison; her experiences there impacted her in such a way that she's chosen to continue working with inmates.

Hobby Unit print shop offers skills for future

I truly enjoy working in the Hobby print shop. I am learning new skills that will help me find employment when I go home," offender M. Weaver said. "I worried about how I would support myself and my children, but the Hobby print shop has allowed me to develop new skills in accounting and also database programming and management. I now feel like I will have a new marketable skill and on-the-job experience to help me find employment when I go home."

This was the attitude expressed by several female offenders assigned to work in the TDCJ Hobby Unit print shop, located about six miles southwest of Marlin. The Hobby Unit print shop is one of 37 Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) facilities and part of the Manufacturing and Logistics Division of TDCJ.

Free fan from TX-CURE — How to get one —

Editor's Note:
The following process is new and somewhat different from the previous process described in prior ECHOs. Use this process if you are a new applicant.

If an offender applied for a fan using the prior process, that application will still be valid.

If you have been indigent for six months or more you may qualify for a FREE fan from TX-CURE. Follow these simple instructions to apply for a fan:

1. Write an I-60 request to: TDCJ-CID TRUST FUND, P.O. Box 60, Huntsville, TX 77342

Inmate Trust Cure Fan
I would like to get a fan from TX-CURE.
Name______________
TDCJ#______________
Unit______________

FAN continued on page 9

Hobby Unit print shop offers skills for future

I truly enjoy working in the Hobby print shop. I am learning new skills that will help me find employment when I go home," offender M. Weaver said. "I worried about how I would support myself and my children, but the Hobby print shop has allowed me to develop new skills in accounting and also database programming and management. I now feel like I will have a new marketable skill and on-the-job experience to help me find employment when I go home."

This was the attitude expressed by several female offenders assigned to work in the TDCJ Hobby Unit print shop, located about six miles southwest of Marlin. The Hobby Unit print shop is one of 37 Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) facilities and part of the Manufacturing and Logistics Division of TDCJ.

PRINT continued on page 9

The ECHO sponsors writing contest

Do you think you have the "write" stuff? Do you want to see how you measure up compared to the other writers in TDCJ? Enter The ECHO's writing contest! Recognition will be given to the top contestants in both fiction and non-fiction categories.

Fiction entries can cover any topic appropriate for publication in The ECHO. Non-fiction entries can include memoirs (life stories), articles, editorial opinions or journal excerpts.

The top three winners in each category will have their work published, receive special recognition and receive a free one-year subscription to The ECHO.

Entries will be judged on content, clarity, creativity and correctness.

CONTEST continued on page 9
Succeeding through education

Von M. Short
Guest Writer
Wynne Unit

Next month I’ll be going on my twenty-third year in prison. In that time I’ve earned several college degrees and I’m currently working on another. I’m not suggesting that anyone make a career out of college. I simply had the time to do it, and the opportunity was there, so I took it. In that time, I’ve also seen many men, for whatever reason, refuse to attend school.

Before coming to prison, I worked several menial jobs, not making much money. To compensate for my lack of funds on payday, I also robbed my employers blind. I felt I worked for and deserved it, so I took it. I have a different outlook on life today, mainly because of my education. I have many marketable skills and something to fall back on should my first choice of employment fall through.

Postsecondary education was highlighted this summer when the Texas Correctional Educational Conference was sponsored by Lee College. Guest speakers included M. Normington, business specialist with the Texas Workforce Commission; J. Erschabek, executive director of Texas Inmate Families Association; M. Molnar, executive director of Texas Voices for Reason and Justice, and former TDCJ offender T. Lloyd. Lee College staff members Dean D. Zaniga, and academic division chair P. Allen hosted the event.

The conference was held to promote college programs within TDCJ and highlight the benefits of education on lowering recidivism and gaining employment upon release. Having spent 22 years in prison, guest speaker T. Lloyd discussed the hurdles experienced by ex-felons who are trying to find a job. He highlighted the benefits of having a college degree and how he was able to land several jobs because of education obtained in TDCJ.

I think we should take note that people are taking time from their busy lives to have conferences discussing how to better educate offenders. Many times we fail to recognize the people that go to bat for us when a majority of society disagrees with any form of education for convicts felons.

In the area of college education, the Wynne Unit now has a computer lab with 24 Dell personal computers and the latest software, a study hall, and even Lee College monitors to allow us school time. Educators are determined to provide us with a quality education, even behind these walls.

Another advocate for education for convicted felons recently passed away, and I would like to remember this great man who staunchly advocated for offenders, often facing adversity. He recognized the benefit not only to us, but society as a whole, when felons acquire a quality education. Dr. Walter Bennett, a member of the Sociology Department of Sam Houston State University, spent many years teaching offenders in the Huntsville area. I remember him as a challenging professor but one who really cared about his profession and ensured that we had the same educational opportunities as the rest of society. He will be greatly missed by the students who were fortunate enough to be able to attend one of his classes.

One of the best investments that can be made with time in prison is to pursue an education. It’s not always easy. It takes hard work, but the satisfaction in obtaining a degree and becoming part of educated society makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Some units now have tutorial software to help pass your college entrance exams and even software to help with development classes. Some units even have peer tutors at your disposal who have already obtained their degree or are close to it. Use these resources and give yourself a better chance at success once you get out.

Nobody’s going to give you a free ride, but there are many educators out there devoting precious time to give you the chance that even many in the freeworld don’t get. Take advantage of it!
ATTENTION!

ECHO Workers Needed

The ECHO is seeking offenders to assist in publishing The ECHO.

We are seeking workers to work in an office environment creating a newspaper read by more than 150,000 offenders. Applicants should have a positive attitude and work well with others. The ECHO prefers workers to have experience in similar/related work in the free world or in TDCJ.

Graphic Designer
Job duties include page layout, photo scanning and editing, art creation and performing general clerk responsibilities.

Preferences:
- Experience with Adobe InDesign or Page Maker, Illustrator and Photoshop.
- The ability to type 40 words per minute is preferred.

Staff Writer
Job duties include writing articles and stories on various topics; typing; editing and performing general clerk responsibilities.

Preferences:
- Experience in journalism/publishing or a degree in journalism or related field.
- A strong knowledge of grammar, punctuation and news writing styles is required.
- The ability to type 40 words per minute is preferred.

Requirements:
Applicants must meet the following requirements — those who do not will automatically be screened out.

Offender must:
- Be classified as a G2 custody status.
- Be willing to relocate to the Wynne Unit in Huntsville, Texas.
- Have no history of convictions involving aggressive sexual acts.
- Have no history of convictions involving kidnapping.
- Have no history of institutional disciplinary cases involving aggressive sexual acts.
- Have no major disciplinary infractions within the past 12 months.
- Have no history of security precaution designators.

Interested applicants may send an I-60 with qualifications to:
Managing Editor
The ECHO
Windham Administration Bldg.
Wynne Unit
Huntsville, Texas

Dear Darby,
I’ve been in administrative segregation for going on three years and there have been a lot of rumors going around. It has been said that there was an article in The ECHO talking about MP3 players, not having to shave anymore and the commissary selling televisions for the cells. Can you please let me know what is true? If so, when will these things happen? Thank you for your time.

William Calvin
Dalhart Unit

Dear Billy,
Save up your commissary money. But if you believe that, I’ve got a great piece of oceanfront property in Arizona that I’m trying to unload, er, sell. Get real, Billy. If you don’t see it in print in The ECHO, it’s probably not true. If commissary were to sell MP3 players, you’d see it on the front page. Now, about that property in Arizona...

Dear Darby,
First of all, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read our questions and comments, and help us clarify our doubts or confusion. My reason for writing you this short paragraph is to ask you about a question many of us here at the Coffield Unit have been asking ourselves — is it true or just a rumor that all red brick units (which have small cells) are to become one-man cells? If so, by when should that happen?

Cuadros
Coffield Unit

Dear Cuadros,
Yeah, I’ve heard that rumor a time or two. Sounds good, but it ain’t happenin’. Think about it objectively — they’d have to drop the population significantly on the units with the small cells, which isn’t likely. What IS likely — they won’t build more small cells in TDCJ.

Dear Darby,
I felt the need to write you because I could use some blunt wisdom. I’ve carelessly landed myself in a lot of trouble, receiving my first major case and losing privileges I once had as a trustee. The reason for my writing is that I see parole for the first time in less than 45 days and I’m sweating it like a pig back here in seg. I’m afraid this major case may keep me from making parole. Can you please give me your input? Can’t still make parole?

Sincerely worried,
Alysa East
Hilltop Unit

Dear Worried,
Girl, you’re up for parole and you’re catching major cases? You really don’t want to go home, do you? Is it the fine dining in the chow hall, the laundry services or the communal showers? If you really want to go home, toe the line. As far as parole is concerned, receiving a major case or dropping below your intake line class are definitely reasons for a possible set-off and may even delay your review.

Famous Quotes:
“A man’s character is the reality of himself. His reputation is the opinion others have formed of him. Character is in him, reputation is from other people — that is the substance, this is the shadow.”

— Henry Ward Beech
The Chronic: learning about marijuana

Bryan J. Moore
Staff Writer

A growing number of people are becoming part of a dedicated movement that is working day and night in the single-minded pursuit of legalizing marijuana. So far, Washington and Colorado seem to have successfully decriminalized marijuana, ratifying laws that directly contradict federal prohibition. In Washington state, the moment the law passed there were folks on the streets of Seattle lighting up like Bob Marley in broad daylight to celebrate their new liberty.

As popular as discussion about it is, very few have been educated on marijuana. Even many of the armchair lobbyists for its legalization don’t know, for example, the specifics of how marijuana interacts with the brain or its persistent adverse effects. For this reason, the highly political topic of whether or not marijuana should be legalized is one that will not be discussed. Instead, our focus will be on the drug itself, its effects, how the body processes it and its impact on behavior.

Getting high

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the name of the substance that causes marijuana’s psychoactive effect. Although THC is found in the resin of both the male and female varieties of Cannabis sativa, more commonly known as the hemp plant, many prefer to harvest the resin from the flowering tops of the female plant.

Smoking has been shown to be the most expedient means of releasing THC into the body. Mind-altering effects normally follow within minutes of inhaling marijuana smoke. In most users, the typical effects include distorted perceptions of time, euphoric emotions, and blissful tranquility. Experiencing the collective effects of marijuana is commonly referred to as being “high,” a term used to describe the onset of changes in perception and thinking.

The actual cause of the marijuana high is the chemical process that occurs when THC interacts with the brain’s THC receptors. To avoid a complicated scientific explanation, suffice to say that two THC receptors have been discovered in the body; they are called CB1 and CB2 respectively.

There is not a lot of information on how the CB2 receptor functions beyond that it is somehow associated with the immune system. The CB1 receptor, however, is not such a mystery. Located in both the brain and spinal cord, it has the greatest collection of receptor sites in the hippocampus, cortex, basal ganglia and the cerebellum. Because of their location in the brain, these CB1 receptor sites are the source of the mental alterations and changes in behavior associated with marijuana, including short-term memory failure and sedation.

Marijuana is classified as a hallucinogen because it causes radical shifts in a person’s perception of the environment at fairly small doses. Those with “preexisting psychiatric disease” who ingest large doses of marijuana may experience “acute functional psychosis with confusions, hallucinations, disorientation and paranoia.” These symptoms normally disappear after a period of a few days to weeks. In addition, marijuana affects not only the mind, but also the body, causing increased heart rate, dry mouth, blurred vision, dizziness and decreased blood pressure, all of which are considered adverse effects.

Staying high

According to A Handbook on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, “The most serious effect of persistent marijuana use is the possible development of compulsive use and of difficulty in reducing or eliminating its use when desired. An almost equally potent serious effect of chronic marijuana use is the possibility that use of this relatively soft drug will serve as a portal to the use of harder drugs such as heroin or cocaine.”

Frequency of marijuana use varies with the individual and how well they think the marijuana high agrees with them. Usage can be as infrequent as several times per week or as frequent as every day. Social users are usually able to maintain their obligations to work and family, smoking only on certain occasions such as holidays, the weekend, etc. There is a minority of users who wind up spending most of their time getting high, using early in the morning, throughout the day and into the night. This pattern of compulsive marijuana use is a key indicator of possible addiction.

According to A Handbook on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, “An estimated 85-90 percent of alcohol and tobacco users who had an opportunity to use marijuana made the transition to marijuana use. The corresponding estimate for individuals who had never used alcohol or tobacco was under 25 percent within six years after the first marijuana exposure opportunity. The authors conclude that the use of one drug (licit or illicit) increases the likelihood that a young person will use another drug given the opportunity, and that this transition does not appear necessarily linked to motivational drug-seeking behavior. Based on the above, it would appear the reality of the infamous ‘marijuana as a gateway drug’ concept is that if a person experiments with any sort of intoxicant, then they are much more likely to experiment with other drugs. Any drug could then in theory be a gateway drug.

The dark side of Mary Jane

The argument often arises concerning whether or not marijuana is safer to smoke than tobacco. Research has shown that smoking marijuana produces four times more particle deposits in the airway than cigarettes. This is due to marijuana smokers’ practice of holding the smoke in and because joints and bongs don’t have a filter like cigarettes. Volume is another aspect to consider. While a marijuana user may smoke three or four joints daily, a typical tobacco smoker often burns upwards of 20 or more cigarettes in the same period of time.

Both chronic marijuana and tobacco users develop symptoms like the dreaded “smoker’s cough” and bronchitis (swelling of the bronchial tubes). Both tobacco smoke and marijuana smoke contain harmful carcinogens which cause swelling of the respiratory tract. It has been shown that smoking marijuana in particular causes impairment of the lung’s immune function, making development of lung tumors and cancer of the head, neck and lungs more likely to occur in heavy users of marijuana. Only those who are heavy users of both tobacco and marijuana are at greater risk of cancer than marijuana smokers.

There are other harmful aspects of marijuana usage that have nothing to do with the body or brain. Marijuana is classified as an illegal narcotic in most states and having enough marijuana to constitute felony possession translates to time in prison. Furthermore, indulgence, as stated earlier, tends to lead to further indulgence, a circumstance that is counterproductive at best and self-destructive at worst.

As a frequent user of marijuana, one will spend progressively more time in the drug subculture, associating primarily with those who either use or deal to make the process of obtaining the drug easier. The vicious cycle of addiction, prison, immersion in a drug subculture and serious damage to bodily health should make one think twice...
Revisions — Board Policy 03.91 Uniform Offender Correspondence Rules

The Texas Board of Criminal Justice approved the following revisions to the correspondence rules during the August 2013 board meeting. The revisions were effective Oct. 1, 2013, with the exception of the receipt of stationery.

1. Stationery
   - Effective March 1, 2014, offenders will no longer be allowed to receive stationery through the mail.
   - Stationery is defined as “paper and envelopes, to include carbon paper, purchased through the unit commissary by the offender, provided through the indigent correspondence supply program, or purchased by offender families and friends through the eCommDirect program.”

2. Time Limits
   - Incoming/outgoing mail will be processed within two business days of receipt.
   - Packages will be processed within three business days of receipt.

3. Altered Photo
   - Added a definition for altered photo; means “an image with content in violation of this policy that has been edited, including, but not limited to, by removing or changing the contents of the image with a computer software program or other means.”

4. Sexually Explicit Images
   - Revised the definition so photos showing intercourse without being able to see actual nudity can be denied.

5. Indigent Postage
   - An indigent offender may use indigent postage to send five one ounce domestic letters per month to general correspondents.
   - Removed references to the first 60 days that an offender is indigent.

Preparing for future: 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 pre-existing 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.

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman

In 2007, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman was established by the 80th Legislature (Texas Government Code §§501.171-178) and was appointed by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ). The PREA Ombudsman provides offenders, family and friends of offenders and the general public an independent office to report sexual assaults occurring in Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) correctional facilities, and to ensure the impartial resolution of complaints of allegations of sexual assault. The PREA Ombudsman reports directly to the TBCJ chairman and may be contacted at the following address:

PREA Ombudsman
P.O. Box 99
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Due to the serious nature of sexual assaults, and in accordance with TDCJ policy on “Zero-Tolerance” against sexual assaults, offenders knowledgeable of an offender-on-offender or staff-on-offender sexual assault that occurs within a TDCJ correctional facility are encouraged to immediately report the allegation to the facility administration or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

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

Sudoku Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 5 7 9 3 8 2 1</td>
<td>3 1 9 6 2 8 5 7 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 8 1 2 4 5 7 3 9</td>
<td>5 2 8 3 7 4 6 5 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2 9 8 1 7 6 5 4</td>
<td>7 4 6 5 1 9 2 6 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 8 3 4 2 1 5 9 7</td>
<td>8 6 2 4 3 7 9 5 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 1 2 6 5 9 3 4 8</td>
<td>9 3 4 8 5 7 1 6 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 5 4 7 8 3 2 1 6</td>
<td>1 5 6 8 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 8 6 7 4 3 2 1 5</td>
<td>2 7 1 5 9 8 3 6 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 7 6 5 9 4 1 8 3</td>
<td>6 8 5 1 3 8 4 2 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 4 5 3 8 9 7</td>
<td>2 8 3 7 4 5 1 9 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number Puzzle Answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Setting goals for success  
By Van Sassaman
Daniel Unit  

As I read an issue of The ECHO, the Dear Darby letter from Jesse Flowers caught my eye. It spoke of setting short and long term goals. I wanted to throw in my two cents.  

First of all, goals are awesome! They are your roadmap for success. There are lots of ways to get from point A to point B and you must find the way that best fits your needs. Goals get you to your destination. Here are some tips to maximize your success:

1. Write your goals down. That makes them real. It also serves as a reminder, holds you accountable, and allows you to check your progress.
2. Share your goals. Find someone you trust who will be supportive and hold you accountable. Ask them to check on you periodically.
3. Goals must be specific. "Lose weight," is not a goal. "Lose 20 pounds by July 4," is. Being specific makes it easier to track. It also allows you to break it down to daily tasks easier.
4. Write down your reason. Why lose 20 pounds by July 4? Want to be lean and fit for a wedding? Planning a trip to the beach? Or maybe you want a job where you will be surrounded with positive peers and am moving forward. I tell myself that I am greater than any challenge I’ll ever face!
5. Break it down to simple daily tasks. Looking to get your GED? Pay attention in class and set aside study time each day. Want to make parole? Break down your parole packet into daily tasks and do them. Whatever your goal, break it into realistic steps.
6. Visualize your success. Spend time mentally picturing your success. How does it feel? Who is there to enjoy it with you? All great athletes visualize their successes...whether it's hitting the game-winning basket or hoisting the Lombardi trophy. It works for elite performers, it should work for any of us!
7. Expect setbacks but don't accept them. You're human. You're going to fail sometimes but don't scrap the whole plan because you hit a snag.

Coming to prison at age 39 disrupted all of my goals — goals for my family, and my retirement. Yeah, it stings a little, but I have made adjustments. I've surrounded myself with positive peers and am moving forward. I tell myself that I am greater than any challenge I’ll ever face!  

TDCJ announces online visitation survey  

Please request that your family and friends participate in the TDCJ Visitation Survey, which is available online at: www.tdcj.state.tx.us. The survey closes on March 31, 2014.  

The ECHO requests submissions  

The ECHO attempts to reflect positive values and consider words (five pages handwritten, or three pages typed double-spaced). Publication is not guaranteed, and it may take a few issues for an article to appear.

Suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submissions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>An article is an objective discussion of an informative manner on any number of topics, such as health, history or legal issues. New and detailed facts need to have cited sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>A commentary is a discussion of any number of topics, but it is based upon the opinions or experiences of the writer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>A book review details the subject, style and key plot elements of the book and generally concerns relevant topics of the day. Opinions about the book are welcomed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extras</td>
<td>Extras refer to letters to the editor, letters to Darby, puzzles, recipes and short stories, to name a few.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Poetry is a piece of writing chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound and/or rhythm. (The ECHO already has more than 100 poems approved for publication and always has an abundance of poetry submitted, but if you have a really great poem, go ahead and send it.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Report</td>
<td>A unit report discusses activities performed on a particular unit and is submitted by unit reporters only. The report must be submitted on the &quot;Article for The ECHO&quot; form with the proper signatures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When submitting any of the above, write a heading at the top of the first page with your name, number, unit of assignment and the type of submission you are sending. For example:

John Doe, #1234567  
Huntsville Unit  
Letter to the Editor (or article, poem, etc.)

Don’t hesitate to send us your work—even if you are not a professional writer. We will edit your submissions for clarity and effectiveness. Thank you for your continued support of The ECHO.  

Texas Inmate Family Association (TIFA) announces summer program for children, visitation survey  

Children of Offenders Summer Program — TIFA is pleased to announce that the eBay Foundation has given a grant for $5,000 for programs for children of offenders for the summer of 2014. The eBay Foundation was established from eBay Inc., and its mission is to contribute to the economic and social well-being of local communities. The foundation supports a wide variety of programs worldwide, as well as eBay Inc. employees in their pursuit of charitable giving and volunteering through its Give Team program. For the upcoming months, TIFA will be working on the details of the type of program that will be sponsored this summer for children. Families will have to be members of TIFA to be eligible.

Visitation Survey — The deadline for the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition Survey on visitation has been extended to March 1. This is the chance for your visitors to TDCJ to share their experiences through an anonymous visitation survey. Please forward this information to any family members and friends who visit. The survey can be found online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TDCJ-visitaton. A hard copy of the survey can be obtained by emailing jrenaud@texasjc.org. Call (512) 441-8123, ext. 102, to request a mailed copy. Family members of offenders can request a survey by sending a written request to SURVEY, 1714 Fortview Rd. Austin, Texas, 78704.  


The penitentiary is a place where one sees scars from bullet wounds, knife wounds, blunt force trauma, and a considerable assortment of surgical procedures. The scars are arrayed on every surface of the human frame. However, these odd, jagged lines, dents and nicks are not a phenomenon unique to the prison population. No matter how small or obscure the location on our bodies, we all have scars, and they give testament to our ability to survive hardship. We are trophies of traumas that have been overcome.

The scars of the couple who have endured the difficult challenges of making a marriage work are different in nature from those of two young lovers who keep taking each other back despite the disastrous consequences.

In the case of the married couple, scars are a profit, referring to what they have gained from the pain of the learning process. The scars of the young lovers represent a price, pointing to all that they needlessly lose in suffering the pain of regret.

An accumulation of scars indicates we are actively engaged in the business of living and we are willing to brush ourselves off and try again, excising our right to keep striving until we succeed.

The counselor smiled at that. "So when we talk about other ways to handle or channel your anger like writing or taking a walk, you feel like what you're going through is not being taken seriously?"

Another light bulb flickered on. "Yeah!" I said.

One of the other women in the group said, "I know it sounds simple but exercise really does work if you can just hold onto yourself long enough to get somewhere and walk or jog or whatever. It does help."

I can't remember what happened in the rest of the group that day, but that part of the session stayed with me. After almost 14 years of therapy, it was one moment of honest, open discovery in a small anger management group in prison that changed the way that I handle my anger.

How much has it helped? Well, let's just say my awareness of my anger level and how to appropriately respond is better — and my calves are killing me.
MEMORIES

I was adopted, at the tender age of three, by my father's parents. My father, although a hard worker, was a glutton for anything mind altering or sexually gratifying. My 17-year-old mother had known very little other than suffering and abuse at the hands of her alcoholic father. Like most folks, I can recall very little of what happened during the first 10 or so years of my life, but I do have two very clear memories from the brief time I lived with my parents. So, sit back and enjoy my memories of a classic clash of natural foes, and an intense battle of wills.

I was obviously old enough to be playing alone in our dirt and gravel driveway because that's precisely what I was doing when I noticed a bizarre sight that sent me sprinting for our front steps, screaming at the top of my little lungs for my daddy. Probably thinking that someone or something was peeping at my heels, he met me at the door, shirtless and wide-eyed. With my heart pounding in my chest and out of breath from running I found myself unable to verbalize what I'd seen. Finally I managed to catch my breath. I pointed towards the road and yelled "snake!" I followed him down the driveway until we both could see what had me so flustered. There were two snakes and they appeared to be fighting. Dad patiently pointed out that the larger snake was a king snake, while the smaller combatant was a copperhead. I watched from behind dad's leg as they continued on in mortal combat. Finally, the copperhead succumbed to his adversary and was swallowed whole by the victor. I stared up quizzically at Dad who, in all his worldly wisdom, told me "Son, it's a snake eat snake world! You're either gonna eat or be eaten!"

My most cherished childhood toy was my orange and yellow Big Wheel with the awesome flame stickers on the sides. I spent countless hours slinging up gravel and dust in our little driveway and, despite numerous threats and warnings from dad, racing up and down the little country road we lived on. In my defense, there was very little traffic on that road back then, but having raised two children of my own, I completely understand why this scared him. Anyway, he just happened to get home from work one day just as I was zipping back up into the driveway. Today I know that it was fear for my safety that fueled his fit of rage that culminated in his smashing of the aforementioned Big Wheel into bits and pieces of plastic against the side of our mobile home.

At that time I was quite simply shocked, awed, and ultimately angry at him for destroying my favorite toy. I huffed, puffed and stumped my way into the kitchen where through tears of rage, I informed my clueless mother that I was never speaking to that man again! Ever! I was an incredibly stubborn child and was determined to stick to my vow. Despite my mom's daily attempts at mediation, there was little to no progress towards reconciliation for almost two full weeks. The battle of wills finally ended when, much to my satisfaction, Dad came home from town one day with a brand new orange and yellow Big Wheel with flame stickers.

I mentioned previously that I was adopted by my grandparents at age three. The sad truth is that because of my dad's busy work schedule, his recreational drug use and countless sexual conquests, and my mom's youthful irresponsibility, I spent most of my waking hours at my grandparents' home. The vast majority of love and security that I experienced was from them and not my parents.

So, those are two memories I have of my short time living with mom and dad. I grew up in an awesome home where I was always happy and secure. Both of my folks eventually remarried (mom twice) and those unions provided me with several siblings. I love both my mom and my dad, but there is no one, other than God, who I love and respect more than the two wonderful people who sacrificed so much to provide for me. My grandpa passed a couple of years ago and never had the world ever lost a greater man. My grandma is alive and well and my constant prayer is that she is around when I get out so that I can hug her tightly, look into her pale blue eyes and tell her how very much I love her and appreciate all her love and support through the years. I love you Grandma! You're the best!

It started with Alcoholics Anonymous

Tony Johnson
Wyne Unit

It wasn't until prison that I took a really good look in the mirror. I hated the person looking back at me. I saw the decay caused by drugs and incarceration. Yet it took me a decade before I got serious about making a change. Up until that point, I was playing games about who I really was. I wasn't feeling anyone but myself. I had a choice to make: I could continue to walk the long, lonely road of spiritual corruption and death or I could take the high road of spiritual enrichment and everlasting life. The right choice was clear and for me the path to healing started with Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA).

Through AA/NA I've not only learned values and principles, I've learned a new way of life. The twelve steps of AA/NA have taught me acceptance, which is important in my day-to-day living in prison, and that there is a better way than the one I'd taken so many times in the past. I've become active in a number of other organizations within TDCJ such as Peer Education and Toastmasters, but it was AA/NA and my faith in God that were responsible for my renewed spirit and zeal for life.

I know now that my life is worth something and my goal is to continue to give back in prison and beyond the gift that has been so freely given to me. What is that gift? The gift is the knowledge that you can change your life for the better.
print shop also provides job skills for offenders once they are released,” Plant Manager R. Walker said.

Offenders are learning important business skills that will be of paramount importance once they leave TDCJ.

“Before coming to work in the print shop, I would never have considered myself to be mechanically inclined,” offender D. Shepard said. “That was eight years ago. I can now take these machines apart and put them back together again with ease, whether it is simple maintenance or doing repairs. With the skills I have learned in this facility, I will be able to go into any free world facility and apply for several jobs, including a press operator. I have learned to never discredit or underestimate what you are capable of doing.”

The print shop is divided into numerous departments and thus functions much like a free world business. Departments include: accounting, billing, correspondence, personnel, bidding/work orders, job tracking, maintenance, press department, card department, typesetting/layout, bindery, warehousing and shipping.

As printing technology has changed through the years, so has the technology used by the Hobby Unit print shop. Originally, letter press techniques were used. Through the years offset printing was incorporated. Today, digital technology is used along with offset printing. As changing technology has an impact on the free world printers, it also has an impact on the Hobby print shop.

Offenders working in these areas are taught necessary skills and OJT certificates can be earned in several areas.

“Working in the print shop has been an excellent opportunity. I have learned many skills that will help me get employment once released. The work builds your self-esteem through knowing you are able to accomplish things,” offender J. McClellan said.

“The print shop has a very good atmosphere. The supervisors are very helpful and are interested in helping you succeed,” offender C. Gaines said. “I have been here almost a year and have held two positions. I am sure the knowledge and skills I have gained will help me in obtaining employment when I am released. The days and months really do fly by when you work here. It is a very enjoyable work environment.”

**FAN continued from page 1**

The facility provides quality products and services to TDCJ and reduces TDCJ costs by providing products for sale, on a for-profit basis, to other eligible entities. It also provides work program participants the chance to learn marketable job skills.

The print shop is a large, open, workroom facility with some small office spaces at the far end of the building. It houses numerous types of printing machines operated by female offenders, each with specific purposes for printing. However, the grand-daddy of all printers is the Heidelberg Speedmaster offset printing press with four-color printing ability.

Approximately 100 offenders and eight staff are assigned to the print shop, which provides printing services for TDCJ and other eligible entities. Currently there are contracts with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Parks & Wildlife and the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. Printed material created by the Hobby print shop includes: brochures, flyers, inserts, certificates, calendars/planners, posters, birthday cards, greeting cards, envelopes, bookmarks, college catalogs and even college yearbooks.

“TDCJ provides a great service to the state of Texas by having a print shop. The print shop has been an excellent area for offenders to learn important business skills and understand the importance once they leave.”

**CONTEST continued from page 1**

**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.**
- Entries should be no longer than 1,500 words (three typed or five handwritten pages).
- Multiple submissions are allowed.
- Entries must be received by the **ECHO** no later than April 30, 2014.
- Mail your entry via truck-mail or regular mail to:

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

2. The Trust Fund will then forward the request to:

   TX-CURE Fan Project  
   P.O.Box 38381  
   Dallas, TX 75238-0383

**Send only the request.**

3. Wait patiently. The Fan Project works from donations only. If you do not get a fan this year, you can request one next year if you are still indigent.

4. You may request a fan between Jan. 1, 2014, and June 30, 2014. No earlier, no later. The rule is one fan per prisoner, even if yours gets broken, stolen, confiscated or if you received a fan under a previous TDCJ number. TDCJ keeps accurate records, so please don't apply for a fan if you've received one in the past. Protect your property papers. Report a malfunctioning new fan to Unit Property. If you do not receive a fan this year, try again next year.

   Mike Jewell, Director  
   Cheri Ledbetter, Fan Project  
   Joan Covici, Secretary  
   Dallas Office (214)348-0293
Little Wings
Submitted by Mark LaReau
Smith Unit

If you look for it, you'll find the magic little one
But don't be put off because people will try to steal your sun
I was lost in this world before you came
And since you came into it, my world hasn't been the same
At first I didn't notice the change, though it was great
I didn't notice how much you meant to me till it was too late
This world's full of messed up people, but don't give up hope
When you see one drowning, be the first to lend the rope
Don't let life rumple your dress, and never say your wings
Life is unique and wonderful and full of lovely things
Sometimes you will fall and I'll be there to mend your halo

So smile and show the world your celestial glow
You saved my life, given me a second chance
Remember always, little one, I love you with all my soul
You're my baby girl and the sweetest angel.

Life on Pause
Submitted by Stuart Randolph
Hutchins State Jail

Life on pause,
Not moving,
Not turning.
No sound at all.
Consequences I have caused,
Guilty as charged.
Just sitting through time.
A penalty for my crime.
Life is never pain-free.
All my past mistakes still confront me.
If I pause the pain, would it be the same?
Sleeping and slouching only add to my shame.
Continuous reminder of the sin I have lived.
Living on pause --
Again, this is what I have caused.

Locks
Submitted by Craig White
Cole State Jail

Locks, locks, locks, locks, everywhere I go.
I have to lock my stuff up when I come from the store.
There is a lock on the building. There is a half that
And one more lock just to get where I'm at.
I'm so sick of seeing locks, they restrict me you see.
I can't get to my own stuff without using a key.
It's not much of a lock, I don't think it does much good
But I look it anyway, cause I figure I should.
This man got a lock, and that one too
And we are all locked up like animals at a zoo.
One lock ... two lock ... three lock ... four
That's how many locks it takes to get to the store.
And when you're on lock ... have I told you? Have you heard?
You'd better lock your stuff up if you're a weak little nerd
There is even a lock on the school house doors.
Don't get in no trouble cause that's more locks you earn.
A lock everywhere you look, everywhere you walk. Everywhere you turn.
I'm so tired of seeing locks, it's a pitiful shame.

So I guess they're part of the game.

Living Happily
Submitted by Howard Jackson
Holiday Unit

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder
Well now I know it's true.
Because while I'm away doing this time
I sure am missing you.
This time away has made me think
That you deserve a lot more.
I've been locked up several times
It's like life's a revolving door.
Well, now I've finally made up my mind
I know you've heard all this before.
But this time I really mean it.
Prison life shall see me no more
I'm missing you a little too much.
And I pray that you also miss me.
My life of crime is over now
And that's just how it shall be.
This time I'll get out and find a job
So I can stay home with my family.
No more running when I see the law.
We'll just live our lives happily.
Book by its cover
Submitted by Loretta Rodriguez
Released

Sometimes I wonder just what you see
each and every time you look at me.
Do you see a woman with a troubled past
who did the best she could in the role she was cast?
I wonder if you can see
what's not obvious to the eyes,
You don't even have a clue
of the pain that's hidden deep inside.

Living in a lifetime
of cold lonely nights
hanging out in places
with no water and no lights

By the tears I cry
you may think I'm weak
but I bet you couldn't even
walk a block down my street.

Who do you think you are
and how is it that you're better?
We have so much in common: same dingy clothes,
eating the same food, hoping for a loved one's letter.
I really think it's time you open your mind and look around
you see all the differences when we're the same I've found
like the Brooks N' Dunn song "We All bleed Red."
I'm grateful to be alive. God knows this addict should be dead.
So unless you are God and no other
you should never judge a book by its cover.

Steel Doors
Submitted by Jessica Rendon
Mountain View Unit

Again I sit behind steel doors
Contemplating the person I was before
A wife, a daughter, a mother, a friend
I excelled at all, but that came to an end.
In a downward spiral, my life took a toll
Drugs, alcohol, chaos, I was out of control.
I'm back to where, I swore I'd never return
 Unsure now of how many bridges I've burned.

Why do what I do, I cannot explain
One reason for certain is to kill my pain
Struggle after struggle defines my life
Never able to overcome all of the strife.

For so many things, I am ashamed
And, sad to say, only I am to blame
Will this trip change me? God only knows
Or is a life behind bars, what is imposed?

Daddy's coming home
Submitted by Robby Crocker
Jester I Unit

Sitting here these last few days
all I can do is think
how much I want to be there son
I'm pushing to the brink.

You know it's all my fault
or at least I hope you do,
that I have never been around
but believe me I wanted to.

The truth is I was really sick
I really couldn't be a dad
I should have gotten better sooner.
Man, I really wish I had.

But life always has two sides
I hope you know it's true.
Buddy, I'm coming home
I'll be there just for you.

This time I'm going to do this right,
I'm going to give you all I am.
It's time you get the best of me
if you only take my hand.

I'm so close to holding you
you are always on my mind.
Get ready cause I'll soon be there
I'm truly me this time.

Majestic Shore
Submitted by H. Daniel
Estelle Unit

As the curling waves,
Rearrange the majestic shore.
The clear blue green water,
Devours my body more.
I wonder if I'm ready,
To drift with the moving tide.
My life with endless disappointments,
Shall I go along for the ride?

Not caring to return,
To the world of anger and hate,
The caring for the ones I love
My feelings bound in a crate.

I've drifted now so far,
Coming nearer to the end.
Do I want to? Do I care to?
Does someone have a hand to lend?

I don't care, I don't worry
I won't be back, forever more.
As the curling waves,
Rearrange the majestic shore.
CHANGES
Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) is a 60-day life skills program designed to prepare offenders for release.

Wallace Unit CHANGES II graduates are C. Lisbon, B. Adams, K. Richards, J. Kroh, M. Coronado, J. Plumley, B. Stacy, B. Lewis, S. Trayler and H. Lopez.


Wallace Unit automotive vocational graduates are A. Perez, M. Stanford, R. Guzman and T. Bury.

Wallace Unit Engine Performance and Brakes graduates are R. Scott, J. Ragan and C. Thibodeaux.

CTE
The Career and Technical Education (CTE) program offered through the Windham School District (WSD) provides occupational training in a variety of areas related to current labor market needs. Through partnerships with outside licensing agencies, CTE students can earn industry certificates. Also, students can earn certificates of achievement from WSD. Contact a WSD counselor for more details.
Beto Unit Trinity Valley Community College graduates with their associate degrees are V. Howard, J. Mijangas, C. Minton, T. Dang, T. Payne, E. Blair, S. Smith, G. Andrews, J. Parsons, B. Miller, T. Alavez, J. Marsh and P. Harkabus.


Daniel Unit Western Texas College graduates are M. Fults, A. Fletcher, J. Anderson, G. Garza, A. Bazan, R. Canul and R. Toney.

Dahart Unit volleyball tournament third place winners are T. Simmons, J. Garza, J. Smith, E. Sanchez, G. Guzman and D. Lane.


Estelle Unit soccer tournament winners are J. Torrez, R. Bautista, A. Sosa, P. Ortiz and J. Deleon. Not pictured is D. Castaneda.
"I loved working with Scholastic, but my heart was always in the classroom," Lewing says. "Deep down, I always thought I wanted to go back to teaching in the prison. I realized those inmates are people; they’re not monsters like some people think. I wanted to do that again."

Lewing has been with the Windham School District, which is responsible for correctional education in the state of Texas, for the past four years. She says her job is not only to teach the men what they need to know to pass the exam; it’s also to instill the purpose behind the success, whether it’s for those hoping for parole and the start to a better life, or those who simply want to experience some sort of success while incarcerated.

Once she got involved, she couldn’t wait to share her experiences with her friend M. Waller.

"Betty called me and said she needed some substitutes and asked if I’d be interested," Waller said. "I put her off at first because I just wasn’t sure about it. I finally sent in my stuff and got approved.

"When I got here, I loved it. It was a pleasure to go to work. Those guys are polite and respectful. All they want is someone to show some interest in them, and to treat them like human beings."

The two women don’t measure their successes by scores, however. They measure them by the response of the inmates, who express the utmost respect to their mentors.

"They don’t have to be here, and they don’t have to care," an inmate says. "But they give us everything they’ve got, and the only reason they could have for doing that is because they care about us."

The classes are divided into two sessions. The first begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 11 a.m.; the second starts at 11:45 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. There are 28 students in each class, and Lewing instructs them in each part of the GED, given four times per year: reading, writing, social studies, math and science.

"I still hate math," one man moans. "This stuff has got me doing problems in my cell. Just once, I want to beat it."

Another man holds a book by Dean Koontz. He says he never cared for reading before studying the GED; now he reads everything he can find.

"This dude’s scary," he says, nodding at the author’s photo. "I never knew reading would actually be something I’d have fun doing."

The men are direct and brutally honest. None offer excuses or explanations for why they’re in their current situation. The prevailing comment is "I messed up."

And not every inmate was receptive to the idea of taking the exam. School was never a priority in their other lives, and to them, it makes less sense now. But as one man states, "Prison isn’t rehabilitation. It’s punishment. Education is rehabilitation."

"A lot of their negativity comes from not having success in school before," Lewing says, "so they don’t have any good memories of what they went through in school. So much of my job is reassuring and encouraging them and making them believe they can do it. They’re not used to being told ‘Yes, you can.’ They’ve heard ‘No, you can’t’ a whole lot more."

Some of the inmates laugh at Lewing, saying she cries for them over any little failure. One even counts out loud the number of Kleenexes she uses when discussing some of the unit’s success stories.

"I swear, if I’d have had a mama like her, I think my life would have been a lot different," a man says.

"I think that’s why they respond to Betty and me so well," Waller says. "We laugh with them, we cry with them. We’re willing to take part in something that is important to the majority of them."

Each student has different reasons for wanting to pass. Some of the men say their biggest reason for passing the GED has to do with their plans once they’re released. One 53-year-old inmate says he knows he’ll never get to retire, but getting his GED will allow him to continue his education on the outside, where he plans to help run a family business.

Others have different motives. "I have sons who come to visit me, and this is the only way I can ever be a role model to them," an inmate says.

"I talk to them about how important education is and how hard I’m trying to prove that to them."

"When my mom comes to visit me, I can tell her I’m studying for my GED and that I’m going to use it to make a better life when I get out," another man says. "It makes her proud, and I haven’t done that for her very much."

Another said he’s the only member of his family to get this far with his education; still another says he plans to use his GED to get into college.

Those are the men who see a future in which they can wear something other than white jump suits. Unfortunately, not all the men are working toward their GEDs with plans for using them upon release. They’re not getting out. Some are serving life sentences, which begs the question: Why bother with the trouble of studying and testing?

"On the outside, I spent too much time fighting for respect. I didn’t know anything about self-respect," one man said. "Doing this has given me that in a way nothing else in my life has."

Some of those men have decided to use what they’ve learned in positive ways.

"We’ve got so many kids coming through here, babies really, and they still have a chance to turn things around," one inmate who runs religious services says. "We can help them get the education they need so they’ll never have to come back here."

They have messages for anyone willing to listen. For those young- sters who hate school, one says, "I know if I’d tried this hard to get my education when I was younger, I wouldn’t be here now."

Some mentioned feeling left out in school; they weren’t tagged as "college material," so they got no guidance in other directions.

"When I was in school, I had no idea there were opportunities for people who weren’t really book-smart," he says. "Counselors in my school only worked with the people who were going to a university somewhere, people who had high test scores. No one told me how to learn how to make a living that didn’t mean going to some big college."

"They’ve got to understand, a person has to have money to live, and if he doesn’t learn how to get it the right way, he’ll get it the wrong way and end up in here."

Hanging over the "Education" doorway is a row of pictures of smiling men dressed in the caps and gowns of graduates. The first photo has seven men — the first graduates. Lewing says they’ve had as many as 52. That’s how much progress the program has made in a few short years, and those pictures are testament to the impact people such as Lewing and Waller are making. They’re not just giving knowledge for test scores; they’re instilling a little hope, something in pitifully short supply in such an environment.

"I had a guy who passed the test after a couple of tries, and when I handed him his certificate, he had tears streaming down his face," Lewing said. "He said, ‘I finally did something right.’"

She says another man told her, "I really struggled taking that test. The hard part was knowing I wouldn’t be in your class any more. For those three hours every day, I forgot that I’m in prison."

"He’s in for life without parole. He’ll die here," Lewing says. "That’s so powerful to me. How can you not love a job, love going back to something, when you hear that kind of thing?"
In our daily rushing of car trips and housekeeping, we take so lightly this age made easy. Driving here, driving there, buying here, paying there. The days pass with such ease and efficiency.

Would you reminisce for a moment with me please? Picture open prairies, cozy cabins, cooking fires and wagons. Oh, they had no electrical devices, no running water for a sewer or tap, but they had friendly neighbors on every side. All were joined in a community, all agreeing to adapt.

We must ask ourselves what we have lost instead of what we have gained. I would gladly give up electricity and running water for friendly, caring neighbors. Oh, to have the joy of simplicity knocking at my heart's door!

It'd be nice to be able to push away from my mind all the hard-hearted, careless and disrespectful people of today's society, those always seeking more and actually needing less. If I could live in such a world, if I could dare hope we'd return to that way of life, I could plant my roots deep and not have to worry when I lay down to sleep at night.

Our children will reminisce about us one day. I wonder what they will conclude about us? Could they possibly see that we were a lost people, living too fast and furious? Or, would they be fascinated by our lives and our wastefulness? Would they learn from our ineptitude? Would they think us selfish, ungrateful or careless, thinking only of the here and now? If only we could learn from the days way back when. We might give our present lives more thought somehow.

I wonder what they will conclude about us? Could they possibly see that we were a lost people, living too fast and furious? Or, would they be fascinated by our lives and our wastefulness? Would they learn from our ineptitude? Would they think us selfish, ungrateful or careless, thinking only of the here and now? If only we could learn from the days way back when. We might give our present lives more thought somehow.

Ingredients:
- 3 pouches milk
- 3 packets cream cheese
- 1 lemon cool down
- 1 package vanilla cream cookies
- 7 fluid ounces Sprite or water
- 1 pouch apple cinnamon oatmeal

Directions:
For the crust, start by pouring the oatmeal into one of the bowls. Separate the oatmeal, the cinnamon/sugar and the apple pieces into separate piles. Put the apples into a cup and the oatmeal into the other bowl. Add about one fluid ounce of Sprite or water to the apples and let stand. Separate the cookies from the cream fillings. Add the cream fillings to the bowl with the cinnamon/sugar. Put the cookies in the bowl with the oatmeal Use the hotpot insert to crush the cookies into fine crumbs. Add all of the cool down packet into the cookie crumbs and mix well. Spoon out three spoons of the cookie crumbs into the empty cookie package for later use. Add six spoons of Sprite or wafer to crumb mixture in the bowl. Blend the liquid with the crumbs until doughy. Form the dough into a ball. Press the dough into the bottom of the bowl and halfway up the side.

For the filling, add the cream cheese and the other half of the cool down to the bowl with the cinnamon/sugar and cookie creams. Mix well. Add one pouch of milk to the mixture and stir until crumbly. Repeat until all milk is mixed in. Pour the liquid off of the apples into the filling mixture. Pour three fluid ounces of Sprite or water into filling and mix well. Add another three fluid ounces and stir for at least 5 minutes but no more than 10.

Pour the filling into the pie crust and arrange the apple bits on top of the filling. Sprinkle with the remaining cookie crumbs over the top. Allow to set for about six hours or overnight. Enjoy the magic.

Problem 1: Checkmate in three
1. Qf1+ (decoy)
2. Kxf1 Bd3+ (double check)
3. Ke1 Rf1#

Problem 2: Checkmate in three
1. Rf8 Rxf8
2. Qg8+ Rxg8
3. Nf7#
A book review: ‘Life of Pi’ by Yann Martel

Alberto Casarez
Clements Unit

“Life of Pi” is an exceptional book and will be enjoyed by avid readers of brilliant fiction. A winner of the Man Booker Prize, the book was made into a film which garnered four Oscars at the 85th Academy Awards, including a second Best Achievement in Directing Oscar for director Ang Lee.

The story is narrated by the protagonist, 15-year-old Piscine Patel, known simply as Pi. Hailing from India, he grows up around a zoo that his father owns, thus a fascinating allusion to many wild animals and their habits is woven into the story.

A series of unusual events lead Pi to become a castaway adrift on the Pacific ocean in a small lifeboat with a loose, wild and dangerous 450-pound Bengal tiger aboard. Pi must figure out how to survive without being killed by the tiger or the elements of a tumultuous and unpredictable sea.

Shark encounters and perilous storms are just part of the 227 days that Pi and the tiger barely survive. They also experience intense suffering, including dehydration, near starvation, and severe malnutrition. Pi fluctuates between desiring death and a strong will to live.

This is a gripping story and paradoxical about the place of human beings in the universe. It reverberates with echoes of “Robinson Crusoe” and Hemingway’s “The Old Man and The Sea.”

You will relish and delight in reading this book. I certainly did!

Stiles Unit hosts ACTS retreat

Keith Demps
Stiles Unit Reporter

The Stiles Unit celebrated its second Adoration, Community, Theology and Service (ACTS) retreat. An ACTS retreat is a prison ministry created by the Catholic Church to share God’s love with those who are incarcerated. This ministry began in 2009 on the Connally Unit and is now on six other units.

The ACTS retreat allows ministry volunteers and the offender participants to join together for four wonderful days of worship and fellowship. It invites participants inside Catholicism by addressing the mysteries, myths, misconceptions and true worship of the faith. The ministry is not an attempt to convert offenders to the Catholic Church but to convert lives by illustrating brotherly and Godly love.

The ACTS prison ministry is open to all offenders who meet the criteria designated by their unit warden. Although many Catholics sign up to attend, other faiths are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Those interested in attending an ACTS retreat should submit an I-60 to the unit chaplain. Come experience the joy of God’s love!

Sudoku

Easy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stiles Unit hosts ACTS retreat

Keith Demps
Stiles Unit Reporter

The Stiles Unit celebrated its second Adoration, Community, Theology and Service (ACTS) retreat. An ACTS retreat is a prison ministry created by the Catholic Church to share God’s love with those who are incarcerated. This ministry began in 2009 on the Connally Unit and is now on six other units.

The ACTS retreat allows ministry volunteers and the offender participants to join together for four wonderful days of worship and fellowship. It invites participants inside Catholicism by addressing the mysteries, myths, misconceptions and true worship of the faith. The ministry is not an attempt to convert offenders to the Catholic Church but to convert lives by illustrating brotherly and Godly love.

The ACTS prison ministry is open to all offenders who meet the criteria designated by their unit warden. Although many Catholics sign up to attend, other faiths are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Those interested in attending an ACTS retreat should submit an I-60 to the unit chaplain. Come experience the joy of God’s love!

Sudoku

Easy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stiles Unit hosts ACTS retreat

Keith Demps
Stiles Unit Reporter

The Stiles Unit celebrated its second Adoration, Community, Theology and Service (ACTS) retreat. An ACTS retreat is a prison ministry created by the Catholic Church to share God’s love with those who are incarcerated. This ministry began in 2009 on the Connally Unit and is now on six other units.

The ACTS retreat allows ministry volunteers and the offender participants to join together for four wonderful days of worship and fellowship. It invites participants inside Catholicism by addressing the mysteries, myths, misconceptions and true worship of the faith. The ministry is not an attempt to convert offenders to the Catholic Church but to convert lives by illustrating brotherly and Godly love.

The ACTS prison ministry is open to all offenders who meet the criteria designated by their unit warden. Although many Catholics sign up to attend, other faiths are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Those interested in attending an ACTS retreat should submit an I-60 to the unit chaplain. Come experience the joy of God’s love!

Sudoku

Easy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stiles Unit hosts ACTS retreat

Keith Demps
Stiles Unit Reporter

The Stiles Unit celebrated its second Adoration, Community, Theology and Service (ACTS) retreat. An ACTS retreat is a prison ministry created by the Catholic Church to share God’s love with those who are incarcerated. This ministry began in 2009 on the Connally Unit and is now on six other units.

The ACTS retreat allows ministry volunteers and the offender participants to join together for four wonderful days of worship and fellowship. It invites participants inside Catholicism by addressing the mysteries, myths, misconceptions and true worship of the faith. The ministry is not an attempt to convert offenders to the Catholic Church but to convert lives by illustrating brotherly and Godly love.

The ACTS prison ministry is open to all offenders who meet the criteria designated by their unit warden. Although many Catholics sign up to attend, other faiths are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Those interested in attending an ACTS retreat should submit an I-60 to the unit chaplain. Come experience the joy of God’s love!

Sudoku

Easy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>