

# The ECHO

Texas Prison News

Letters to the Editor.....	Pg. 2
From the Editor.....	Pg. 2
Dear Darby.....	Pg. 3
Crime Stoppers.....	Pg. 3
A Woman's Perspective.....	Pg. 6
Health News – Thyroid.....	Pg. 8
Work Out of the Month.....	Pg. 9
Creative Corner.....	Pg. 10
Help Wanted.....	Pg. 12
Bulletin Board.....	Pg. 12
Recipes.....	Pgs. 15-16
Sudoku.....	Pg. 16

See  
**'Success  
Story'**  
on  
**Page 5**

Published Since 1928

Volume 87, No. 2, March 2015

Distributed Free to Texas Prisoners

## TDCJ establishes Veterans Reentry Dorm program

*Printed by permission of the TDCJ Connections newsletter*

**T**hose who serve in the U.S. armed forces take justifiable pride in the sacrifices they make to fulfill their patriotic duty. However, for many veterans, emotional and physical issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury make it difficult to return to normal civilian life. Drugs and alcohol help some cope with their struggles, but the crimes that often come with addiction can land a veteran behind bars.

VETERANS continued on page 4



**Academic Achiever: Hughes Unit GED graduate M. Marshall is the youngest in his class to achieve this accomplishment at the Hughes Unit. See story on page 4.**

## Child Support Corner

**Establishing paternity:  
What is it and how do  
you do it?**

*Texas Office of the Attorney General  
Child Support Division*

**W**hen a baby is born to parents who are not married to each other, Texas law does not automatically recognize the biological father as the child's legal parent. Biological fathers must establish paternity to become legal parents and gain legal rights to their children.

Establishing paternity has many benefits for children and parents. The most important benefit for children is knowing they have a father who wants to be in their life. Once paternity is established, the legal father has all the parental rights and responsibilities of a father who was married to the mother. Also, the legal father may be listed on the child's birth certificate, giving the child a sense of identity. Establishing paternity also gives children, if eligible, the opportunity to receive Social Security, military and health insurance benefits from both the mother and the father.

When the biological mother and biological father agree, they can voluntarily establish paternity by signing an Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP). An AOP establishes the father's legal relationship with the child when it is filed with the Texas Vital Statistics Unit (VSU). Paternity can also be established through an agreed paternity order or court-ordered paternity.

If both parents agree that they want to sign an AOP, the parent who is not incarcerated can contact staff at the local child support office, or call (866) 255-2006. ➔

## TIFA announces 2015 parole packet workshops

**T**he Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA) is pleased to announce the parole packet workshop schedule for 2015. These workshops are for family members and friends who have loved ones in TDCJ and would like to learn more about the parole process and how to put together a parole packet. The workshop provides information about the parole process and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, a workbook and parole packet example. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Following the parole packet workshop, a representative from the Board of Pardons and Paroles will answer questions at the next TIFA chapter meeting in the area. The TIFA website will list chapter meeting locations and times.

The cost of the workshop is \$50 for members and \$85 for non-members (which includes a membership). The organization awards two scholarships to TIFA members at each workshop for those who cannot afford the registration fee. All TIFA meetings are **free**, but participants are encouraged to join.

**\*\* All workshop dates are tentative \*\***

### Corpus Christi Chapter

Parole Packet Workshop – Saturday, March 21  
Parole Board Presentation – April 3

### Taylor Chapter

Parole Packet Workshop – Saturday, June 13  
Parole Board Presentation – June 27

### Tyler Chapter

(Meeting time and location for this new chapter will be available soon.)

Parole Packet Workshop – Saturday, Sept. 19  
Parole Board Presentation – In October

At these workshops TIFA will provide a workbook that includes information on:

- Good time, work time and flat time
- Parole and mandatory supervision eligibility timeframes
- The parole timeline

TIFA continued on page 4

# The ECHO

VOL. 87 NO. 2 • MARCH 2015

• 16 PAGES •

PUBLISHED FOR 87 YEARS, SINCE 1928

## — MANAGEMENT —

Dr. Clint Carpenter – Superintendent  
B. Kiser – Supervisory Consultant  
Don Keil – Managing Editor  
Mary Partida – Administrative Assistant

## — STAFF —

Todd R. Carman – Staff Writer & Graphics  
John W. Flagg – Staff Writer & Graphics  
Lion M. O'Neil – Staff Writer & Graphics

## — CONTRIBUTING WRITERS —

Joseph L. Fritz – Allred Unit  
Richard A. Luna – Neal Unit  
Eva Shelton – Crain Unit  
Von Michael Short – Wynne Unit  
Richard E. Smith – Wynne Unit  
Timothy Stonecipher – Michael Unit  
Jennifer Toon – Mountain View Unit

## — UNIT REPORTERS —

Allred Unit – Donald Fisher  
Beto Unit – Kyle Bankston  
Beto Unit – Quincy Patterson  
Boyd Unit – Justin North  
Clements Unit – Wylie Bone  
Crain Unit – Jane Callaway  
Dalhart Unit – Kolade Adeyanju  
Daniel Unit – James Propes  
Darrington Unit – Chris Irby  
Darrington Unit – John Stephens  
Diboll Unit – Joel Witwer  
Duncan Unit – Jim Brannen  
Eastham Unit – Lance Brown  
Ferguson Unit – Steven Thomas  
Hobby Unit – Kristi Henley  
Hodge Unit – Harold Morrison  
Hughes Unit – Gerald Holcknecht  
Huntsville Unit – David McKay  
Jester III Unit – Lucas Morgan  
Lockhart Unit – Adrian Gutierrez  
Luther Unit – Clifford Suranofsky  
Lynaugh Unit – Larry A. Harris  
McConnell Unit – Karis Williams  
Michael Unit – Steven Adkerson  
Michael Unit – Amos Jones  
Mountain View Unit – Jennifer Toon  
Neal Unit – Richard Luna  
Ney Unit – David Cauthen  
Polunsky Unit – Kevin Hargrove  
Ramsey Unit – Paresh Patel  
Roach Unit – Johnny Flores  
Segovia Unit – James Cintron  
Stevenson Unit – Arthur Sterns  
Stiles Unit – Keith L. Demps  
Stringfellow Unit – Joe Feijoo  
Telford Unit – Jamie Stewart  
Terrell Unit – Anthony King  
Torres Unit – Ruben D. Constante Jr.  
Wallace Unit – Jessie M. Manciaz

*The ECHO* is a criminal justice publication produced by the publisher and staff for use by TDCJ offenders. Permission is granted for the reproduction of non-copyrighted materials, provided credit is given to author and publication. Due to the volume of submitted material, unused material will NOT be returned to the sender. The publisher reserves the right to edit all materials for content and space. Any references to Internet sources have been provided by WSD employees.

Annual subscriptions to *The ECHO* can be purchased for \$12. Money orders or personal checks must be made out to *The ECHO/WSD*. Correspondence via U.S. Mail must be addressed to *The ECHO*, P.O. Box 40, Huntsville, TX 77342-0040.

Offenders can write *The ECHO* by truck mail.

ISSN 1530-7298.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### To the editor,

In 1976 I was a 22-year-old hot head. One day, after blowing my top, my supervisor took me to the conference room. Over a cup of coffee she told me, "nothing in this life is that serious." Of course, thinking that I knew everything, I didn't listen to the wisdom. Until now. Sitting in administrative segregation at the Robertson Unit at 60 years old, I remembered what I was told nearly 40 years ago. It makes so much sense now. Thinking of all the things in my life that I thought were important or that I had to do or I couldn't live without, just don't seem serious now. I only wish I had adopted that way of thinking years ago. This new attitude makes me feel good about myself. I've stopped being critical of others, because nothing is that serious. You should try it. The next time they serve pork noodle casserole, just smile and say to yourself nothing is that serious.

**Mel Berry**

**Robertson Unit**

### To the reader,

*I think you have touched a pertinent subject regarding many of our readers. We do tend to take many things and situations way more seriously than need be. If one is a warrior, that makes life only worse! There are many things that we need to take seriously, though. Wisdom needs to prevail, but we all do worry way too much over things that are not that serious. Thanks for sharing with our readers.*

### To the editor,

I am writing to give praise to the medical staff at the Skyview Unit. This is to all the men and women who have dedicated their lives to help those less fortunate. I would like to thank them all for the services that they render. Not too long ago, I was having chest pains and the medical staff quickly got to my pod. My blood pressure was low and I was whisked down to medical for further treatment. The medical staff at Skyview Unit was swift to respond. My chest was hurting and the staff did everything that was necessary to get me back to normal. A short time later I was sent to the hospital, and even there they were courteous and concerned. Thanks to the doctor who took care of me. Thank you, too, University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). Keep up the good work!

**David "Running Wolf" Brooks**  
**Skyview Unit**

### To the reader,

*Thanks for the positive comments towards the UTMB medical staff. They do a great job in a very difficult environment. Thanks for taking your time to express your thoughts to *The ECHO* and to our readers.*

## Letter from the editor:

# The road of life

**I**t was an honor and privilege to talk with a very special gentleman about his life and the road he has traveled.

Several weekends ago, a special outdoor fair and craft sale event was hosted by our hometown. It included hundreds of booths offering thousands of items for sale. After walking for what seemed to be hours, I needed a rest. I found a bench and sat down by an average looking guy – about my age. He was resting, too, so we struck up a conversation – and it turned out to be the highlight of my day.

As it turns out, he and I had been born in the same year and we had experienced many of the same things as youths back in the 1950s and 60s. However, after high school our similarities took different roads. I had received a selective service deferment due to college and my high lottery draft number. He was drafted.

He told me of his 18 months of service in Vietnam, where he served as a communications specialist. I've wondered about my graduating high school class and how many went to college and how many went to serve in Vietnam.

He then told me how his best friend was ambushed and killed the day before he was to return home. I could tell this had a profound effect on him, as

it would on anyone. We talked about how that tragedy was still happening with U.S. troops fighting abroad today, and our discussion turned somber.

He described how terribly he was treated when he returned home, and how much better it was now when troops returned home from war overseas. He is still very proud to have served our country.

He said how the G.I. Bill had paid toward his college education and he had finished college with no outstanding debt. He had worked his entire life in his career of choice, oil and gas, in Amarillo and Houston. He was at the point of retiring, and said he had enjoyed his work and life.

I then thanked him for his service in Vietnam. He smiled and said I was welcome. Then he got up and disappeared into the crowd. I will probably never see him again, but we had shared a special time.

I still think of three kids back in 1969 – one in college, one in the army as a communications specialist, and one in the army giving his life for his country on his last day before returning home. It is a very surreal thought. I am so very thankful for those two army guys of yesteryear, and I am thankful for our young men serving our country today. I hope you are, too. ♣

## Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman

**I**n 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). ♣

## DEAR DARBY LETTERS TO THE OL' THANG

Dear Darby,

This is my first time in prison. I'm 35 years old and have a large sentence. I read your column in every issue. I never thought I'd find myself writing to you but I've come across something that just bugs me. I've been in for about two years at a transfer facility and I try hard not to get in trouble — my primary focus is staying out of the way and making parole. I have a serious issue with people that have short sentences and think they can act any way and are quick to fight. They are arrogant and belligerent, and generally they just don't care. These types are always itching for a fight. I'm not a sissy or scared of them, but I am scared of getting into trouble and losing my chance at parole. I don't want to be away from my family any longer than I need to be. By the same token, I don't want to be looked at like I'm weak or have other prisoners think they can just run all over me. Is it like this at ID units? Please give me some advice and your wise point of view. Have a good day, Darbster.

**Christopher Ryals  
Tulia Unit**

Dear Chris,

It's unfortunate, but you've experienced the truth of dealing with those who have very short sentences — there's no "carrot on a stick" to persuade them to act right, so they tend to "act a fool" until they're out. Avoid the drama brought by those with "short-timer syndrome" by staying away from them. The good news for you is that it's better on regular Institutional Division units — the short timers are usually out of the system before they land on a real farm.

Dear Darby,

I live amongst 600 other women and I have to admit the environment is very much like high school all over again. While I was sitting in class at school doing my work, I couldn't help listening to the other women talk, and I just couldn't believe what I was hearing! It was so much nonsense that I could not even finish my work! They were judging and criticizing other women about their weight problems and messed up hair-styles, trash talking about girls who read the Bible like they are doing something bad, and making fun of the girl who sits cross-legged in her cubicle staring off into space, who is

really just meditating. These grown women all act like a bunch of high schoolers! It seems like everything in prison can be interpreted as something negative, or made fun of because we may have little or no understanding of the subject or person. People are always so judgmental and make assumptions about people rather than seek out positive avenues of communication. Shed some of your wisdom on this situation!

**Falon Devine,  
San Saba Unit**

Dear Devine,

*Girl, I hate to say it, but guys' prisons are just as bad with gossip as what you're describing on the female units. People get bored, so they talk, and the folks around them make for easy conversation. Throw in the fact that some individuals try to make themselves feel better by verbally knocking down others and you have a recipe for some really nasty gossip. It IS like high school! The best advice I can give is to keep your head up, don't feed into the gossip and stay above the fray. Focus on something positive like getting an education and bettering yourself.*



Dear Darby,

On several occasions I've noticed you chastise people who are complaining, but if we stopped complaining, we wouldn't be able to get your great feedback every month in *The ECHO*!

There are certain types of inmates who make it hard on all the others — the ones who are quick to scream obscenities and act disrespectfully to mostly all of the staff members and officers. These types swear up and down they can't stand the authority figures at all, but at every chance they get they are talking with the graysuits. You can't ask an officer a simple question without these types of offenders running up and butting in or just standing next to you while you're having a conversation. An old phrase has it that, "If you don't like the accommodations, then stop making the reservations." Help me out, old thang!

**Christopher "Madville" Smith  
Goodman Unit**

Dear Chris,

*I don't have a problem with complaints, which are valid gripes that can often be addressed with a grievance. I DO have a problem with whining, though, which is unbecoming because they're not trying to fix a problem — they just want to vent, over and over*

*and over again. Now, concerning the subject you're whining, er, complaining about, if you don't want someone in your business, then tell them! This way you're helping yourself, and I don't have to get involved.*

Dear Darby

You have three different types of offenders in the prison system. The first type: the positive kind of inmate who engages in positive things, such as going to school and faith-based programs. Some people may think that those programs don't work but trust me, they do. The second type: the lazy offender. They need and want help but are too lazy to take the initiative to seek the help for themselves. Finally, you have the last type: offenders with the "I don't care" attitude. They spend their time trading lies with other offenders. An offender must choose which type they're going to be. There are two things in life that are constant: change and more change. The question is do you really want to change?

**Jeffery Robertson  
Garza East Unit**

Dear Jeff,

*You have a point — there definitely are offenders who are positive and seek growth, some who are lazy and some who don't care about anything. Those who are growth-oriented generally stay out of trouble and don't come back after they get out. The other two types seem*

*to like it here and tend to come back after release. My question to you: what kind of offender are YOU going to be?*

Dear ol' Darby,

I read *The ECHO* all the time and I notice they mention the younger generation in all forms and fashions. They usually say we're rude, disrespectful, loud, obnoxious and don't know how to do time. Well, I personally disagree. I have met old schools who are just as loud, disrespectful and obnoxious. A person's age group doesn't make them any different — the person makes the difference. Respect is earned, no matter what the person's age. (I have lived on minimum, medium, and close custody and am currently ad-seg.)

**Justin Allen Wilwirth  
Michael Unit**

Dear Justin,

*I'm sorry to see that you've progressed to seg. I hope you can progress your way back to general population where it's much easier to do productive time. Anyway, you've got a point. Just because someone is an "old school" doesn't automatically make him a respectful convict, and being a "new boot" doesn't necessarily make someone a rude, obnoxious offender. I disagree with you on the respect issue, though — respect for others should be automatic, not an exception.*

**CRIME  
STOPPERS**

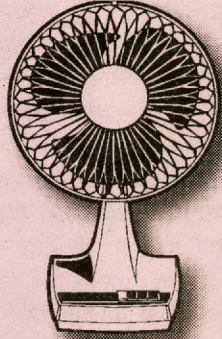
**Missing person**

**Adrian Washington**

Adrian Washington, aka Adrian Jackson, a black male, weighing 225 pounds, 5 feet 11 inches tall, was last seen in South Austin on the afternoon of May 26, 2012. Washington left his home to run an errand and never returned. He was driving a blue Ford Expedition with Texas license plate number CP1P982. Circumstances of his disappearance are suspicious, and foul play is suspected.

If you have any information about this missing person or any other crimes, please contact Crime Stoppers, P.O. Box 1855, Huntsville, TX 77342, and you may be eligible for a cash reward from \$50 up to \$1,000 if your information leads to the arrest and conviction of suspects. 📞

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



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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

TX-CURE Fan Project

P.O.Box 38381

Dallas, TX 75238-0383

Your request must be dated **Jan. 1, 2015, through June 30, 2015.**

**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, 2015, and June 30, 2015. 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**

# State Rep. J.D. Sheffield hopes to see Hughes Unit graduates 'at the top'

Rep. J.D. Sheffield, R-Gatesville, was commencement speaker at the Jan. 17 Windham School District (WSD) GED graduation at the Hughes Unit. The 21 GED recipients were acknowledged by Sheffield for the academic progress they have made while repaying their debt to society.

Assuring the graduates that their efforts have not gone unrecognized, Sheffield was reminded of a previous Hughes Unit graduation in which a young man shook his hand and told him, "I'll see you at the top."

Sheffield said his immediate response was, "I sure hope so," thankful for the drive and excitement the young man showed him. The legislator told the graduates he is supportive of them and hopes that they will receive "a fresh start and a new beginning" as they continue to prepare for successful lives after release.

"None of us know what life is going to throw at us from time to time. We cannot determine that, but each of us, as individuals, can determine how we will respond to it," Sheffield said.

"I congratulate you for taking the opportunity in this institution to better yourself through these programs from which you are about to graduate. You have my heartfelt thanks for improving your station in life. I wish you nothing but the best as you go out into society, and I hope to see you at the top."

Sheffield applauded the graduates, their family members in attendance and the TDCJ and WSD staff, acknowledging the many aspects of hard work that come



**Rep. J.D. Sheffield (R-Gatesville) congratulates a Hughes Unit GED graduate and family member.**

from each of those involved.

Graduates included: A. Adams, R. Barrera, J. Boles, P. Burns, J. Clark, R. Cerda, W. Cooper, J. Covarrubias, Z. Davis, R. Garza, G. Lewis, R. Lopez, M. Marshall, E. Nichols, R. Patterson, J. Rangel, B. Regenhard, B. Smith, H. Thomas, D. Walton and B. Williams.

B. Smith was named valedictorian, and J. Clark was honored as salutatorian. In addition, A. Adams was honored as the oldest graduate, and M. Marshall was recognized as the youngest graduate. All graduates received congratulations from family, education staff and TDCJ personnel in attendance. ♣

TIFA continued from page 1

- The risk assessment instrument and the offender severity class
- Voting options
- Parole board, prison units and contact information
- Helpful phone numbers and web sites
- A sample parole packet.

Family and friends of offenders are encouraged to visit the TIFA website at [www.TIFA.org](http://www.TIFA.org) or they can call the TIFA phone line at 512-371-0900. Membership is \$25 for a basic membership and \$35 for Basic Plus which includes a newsletter to an offender in TDCJ.

TIFA is a non-profit organization that works to break the cycle of crime by strengthening families through support, education, and advocacy. ♣

VETERANS continued from page 1

Therefore, the TDCJ and the Military Veteran Peer Network have cooperated to create a pilot reentry program designed to help those who once served our country.

The first Veterans Reentry Dorm opened at the Travis State Jail recently and is populated by offenders whose combat or service-related trauma may have contributed to their incarceration. The dorm is designed to mimic the squadron structure familiar to veterans. Offenders are housed in pods of eight, and each group participates in the same daily activities. Participation in the six-month program is voluntary and requires offenders first take responsibility for the crimes that brought them to prison. They receive rehabilitation programming in developing healthy relationships, anger management and substance abuse treatment, including Alcoholics Anon-

ymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Senior Warden Kelli Forrester has seen how the program changes some of these veterans. "Offenders lose so much when they come to prison. This program is helping them reconnect to that man — that soldier — who put himself on the line for us. They're getting their self-respect back. It's putting them back in touch with the man they are," Forrester said.

Every morning, members of the veterans dorm stand at attention. Two offenders raise the flag as another plays reveille. Every evening, offenders lower the flag while taps is played. The ritual of raising and lowering the flag often reignites the sense of purpose and belonging offenders had as enlisted personnel and will aid their transition back into society as law-abiding members of the community.

VETERANS continued on page 5

## Success Story:

# After 20 years, former offender continues to inspire others

John Flagg  
Staff Writer

### “Gentlemen: congratulations.

Let this be the beginning of a long journey on the road to self-improvement and higher education,” said Windham School District (WSD) principal K. Morgan, who addressed graduates at the Robertson Unit in Abilene.

Participants in the ceremony also included Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Major Adcox, Chaplain Baldwin and WSD instructors W. Brooks, J. Addy, S. Pritchard, A. Staggs and F. Rose. Offenders’ family members were also in attendance, showing visible support and care for their loved ones’ determination.

A total of 30 graduates were present to receive certificates of achievement from classes that included GED; automotive brakes; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); and small engine repair.

A high point in the celebration occurred when former offender M. Staggs took the stage, imparting words of wisdom to the graduates.

“Every graduation ceremony is a special occasion, but what you men have gone through in order to be here today makes your accomplishments so much more outstanding,” he said.

Staggs was incarcerated for close to 10 years within the TDCJ, serving time on the Ferguson, Hughes and Middleton units. He has now been on the outside for 18 years. He knows exactly what it takes for an offender to rise above adversity and turn the odds for a successful future in their favor.

“The education system made available to offenders through WSD and college affiliates is a true and functioning machine of change,” Staggs said.

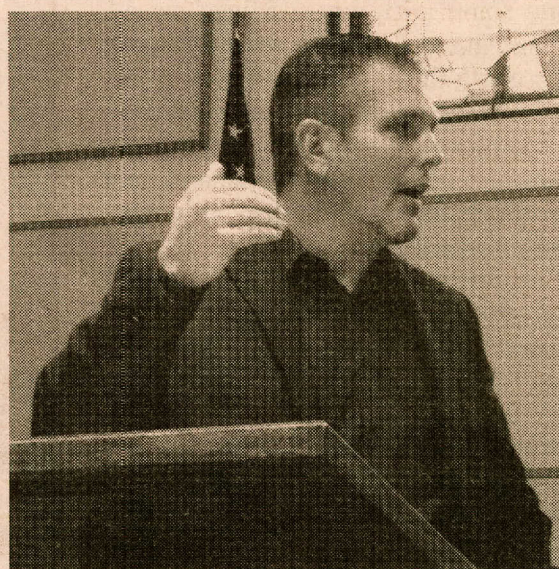
While incarcerated, Staggs took full advantage of the educational opportunities available in TDCJ through WSD. He first received a GED, then immediately followed up with a vocational certificate in auto mechanics. Afterwards Staggs’ pursuit of self improvement led him to an associate’s degree in general studies from Lee College, then a bachelor’s degree in business administration, with a minor in marketing from Tarleton State University.

“Mr. Staggs’ success is an indication that what WSD is doing makes a huge difference in the lives of offenders,” Morgan said.

“As an educator who teaches the GED class, it is exciting to see success of a GED graduate,” said WSD instructor W. Brooks. “Not only is it motivating for me, it is also motivating for the students I currently teach. I use him as an example of success.”

Giving credit where credit is due, Staggs acknowledged the importance of teachers and their crucial impact on an offender’s life.

“Education at WSD helped me realize that the teachers cared about us and were investing in us, and I needed to succeed in order to repay their efforts. I



**‘The education system made available to offenders through WSD and college affiliates is a true and functioning machine of change.’**

**— Former offender  
M. Staggs, GED recipient  
and college graduate**

did not want their efforts to be wasted,” Staggs said.

Happily married now with three children, Staggs lives in West Texas. He is an American Board of Optometry certified optician and has managed a major optometry company branch office for the past 15 years. The influence of education on life can never be ignored, Staggs said.

“Education taught me how to think and analyze problems, which helps me daily in my current employment,” he said.

Emphasizing choices and their consequences, Staggs touched on the fact that prison life offers offenders endless ways to spend one’s time.

“Do you want to waste your time watching movies and sports on TV, until a decade or more has passed you by?” he asked. “Or would you rather make choices that will get you out of prison and put you on a path to a better way?”

The Robertson Unit graduates reflected on their accomplishments after Staggs’ made his remarks.

“This was no easy task for me. All the distractions of prison life can steal your focus. I hung in there and finally did it! I got my GED,” a graduate said.

“I worked so hard to get the GED. Now that I have it, I plan on going the extra mile to pursue college,” said another.

“I dropped out of high school and my parents were very disappointed. But I’m glad they are here today to watch me receive my GED certificate,” said a third graduate.

The graduates walked up the aisle to receive their certificates, stopping only to smile at family members in the crowd or pause for an official photo opportunity.

portunity.

Some of these family members shouted words of praise.

“Great job, son! I’m so proud of you,” said an offender’s mother, with tears in her eyes.

“Way to go, Dad — you finally did it!” said a daughter, beaming with pride at her father.

After the ceremony was concluded, offenders visited with family members. Refreshments were provided, and in the background, the Robertson Unit Ensemble played up-tempo tunes.

Meanwhile, some graduates were already planning ahead for the future.

“I feel like I’m knocking on opportunity’s door,” said one of them.

The wise words of former offender Staggs summarized this event: “Education is the one thing in life that no one can take away. The tools for success are right in front of you, but it’s up to each and every one of you to make the choice to work the programs that WSD offers. An education is the door to success after incarceration, plain and simple.”

## VETERANS continued from page 4

Not only are all 24 dorm members veterans; classes are also taught by military veterans. These peers from the community understand the challenges veterans face and can offer a unique perspective as they prepare for release and successful reintegration. The significance of this connection is not lost on program participants. As one participating vet puts it, “These volunteers have been through the same things we have. They’re people we can sit down and

talk with and they understand. It shows me that there are people out there that care, and it’s given me hope for a better life when I release.”

Many of these offenders return home and find themselves alone; their family and friends don’t understand what they’ve gone through as an offender or as a veteran, and they don’t know where to turn. The veteran’s program offers critical continuity of care for offenders who might otherwise be released with no assis-

tance or oversight. Before release, each veteran offender is matched with a veteran peer coordinator already living in the community. The coordinators help them safely navigate the obstacles they may face during reintegration. Depending on the offender’s needs, peer coordinators can help a veteran secure housing, upgrade military discharge status, enroll in health benefits through the Veterans Benefits Administration, seek substance abuse or PTSD treat-

ment and access local employment services.

“They’re going to leave here with phone numbers and access to peers who are within arm’s reach,” TDCJ Reentry and Integration Director April Zamora said. “We’re connecting them to their community and helping them establish healthy relationships with their peers, people who have struggled with the same obstacles they’re facing and have found success.”

# Forgiveness

Richard A. Luna, Contributing Writer

**M**y fellow inmate, how is your heart? Really. How is that part of you that you keep hidden so well from the rest of the world? You know, that which emerges when you're alone on your bunk and you just had a good visit or phone call. Maybe just the opposite. For me, when I encounter a different me than what I allow others to see, I have to ask myself, "What are you hiding, Rich?" Surprisingly, almost every time, I can trace it back to a single word: forgiveness.

If there is a class of people who need experience in forgiveness, I suggest, it is the prisoners. It's a great thing, too, because prison life will provide the average person with the maximum opportunity to learn this skill. Sounds earthy-crunchy, but it can save your life. Mine, too. The annoying part is that forgiveness is paradoxical. It's a gift. But it is only for those who least deserve it. This catches me flatfooted every time. I'd question the sincerity of the person who says they've got this licked.

So I'm writing to that person who comes out on rare occasions. This is my plea to the human being inside you. These words are for me, too.

If you're like me, you've had some big goals and dreams for your life. The feeling that accompanies an achievement is well-earned. To be certain, we are now sitting in a place where we never dreamed we'd end up in this life. Look at how dreams slipped through our fingers like grains of sand. We seemingly traded them in for that infamous "X" everyone talks about.

I get frustrated when I'm chillin' on my bunk at the day's end, and I realize I need to forgive someone. There's that nagging feeling I know so well. It might be my free-floating anxiety, but usually it's more complicated. Unforgiveness accumulates quickly in here. It irritates me to no end when someone cuts the chow line and then thoughtfully invites his homies to join him, or when I'm next in the commissary line and the window closes ... for the holiday weekend. Never mind the person who loves spreading rumors about me.

Spending time in solitude is a great place for me to learn forgiveness. I'm talking about solitude — not secrecy — great big difference. I begin to realize how dependent I am on external forces like TV, radio or conversation to stimulate my mental and emotional faculties. Who am I when nobody is looking? Solitude is where I spend time, just me and God. I'm amused how I can sit and watch a 30-minute post-game show that recaps an entire game. Yet, I can't seem to sit so easily when I have to evaluate me. In these moments, I tend to find a guy who wrestles with the compunction of

selfish acts of unforgiveness.

What's the bravest thing you've ever done? I've done some fairly brave things myself. The bravest thing? That was when I forgave myself. I made the conscious choice to forgive myself for getting on the path that led to prison. I forgave myself for being less than a good son, brother, grandson, husband, and dad. My siblings, co-workers, parents and everyone else are to blame.

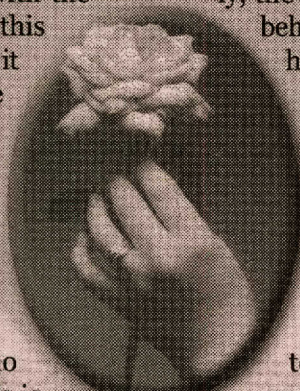
What an intense moment when I tapped in to that ugly place inside, stagnant from so many years of neglect. It is a delicate matter to sit and look at oneself and take an honest inventory of what one has become. Suddenly, the little things don't matter: the guy behind the serving line who waits for his chance to gyp me, the jury who didn't see my point of view, the judge who was having a bad day, or the court-appointed attorney who was pre-occupied with his lunch. I'm intrigued by how much of my life has been affected by, well, me. Family, friends, acquaintances, people I encounter in passing, circumstances, all were affected by me.

In forgiving myself I learned two priceless impressions: what it feels like to forgive, and what it feels like to be forgiven. There are healing qualities here. These qualities multiply exponentially when offered to others. I suppose the great thing about it is that it can be done right where you are: from the trusty camp to ad-seg to anywhere in between.

Conceivably, the supreme irony in this is that failure to forgive oneself is doubly self-destructive. I don't want to become one of those judgmental souls whose face tightens in hostile disinterest at the thought of living a life free of such heaviness. Incidentally, I'm unable to see this "X" that everyone worries so much about. It must be owned by the person who tries to put it on others. I certainly don't own one.

My friend, forgiveness is an extremely selfish act. Who says that selfish is always bad? Eating is likely the most selfish act a person can engage in, but it's necessary to sustain life. We all do it every day. What a different world we would have if we saw forgiveness this way. I'm confident that, in this practice, I would have far less KOP medications. I encourage all of us to forgive — forgive all and forgive freely. The masquerade gets old, doesn't it?

With a friendly nod I leave you with the words of Epictetus, a first century Greek stoic philosopher: "In the long run, every man will pay the penalty for his own misdeeds. The man who remembers this will be angry with no one, indignant with no one, revile no one, blame no one, offend no one, hate no one." ♦



## *A Woman's Perspective:*

# Remember when

Jennifer Toon, Contributing Writer

**T**he other day I was sorting through my memories as if they were old photographs. My thoughts lingered on each snapshot of a moment when my heart was broken. I questioned why this or that relationship didn't last, and why certain people were no longer in my life. I'm sure you've had similar thoughts and memories. We long for meaningful human connections. We desire to be soulfully connected to and understood by others. We accomplish this through the power of love, which works very well. We become frustrated, however, when love doesn't conform to our ideas about meaningful connections, or when love simply will not bend to our will.

I remember when I discovered the possibility that love's journey along life's path does not always follow our expectations. Don't laugh when I tell you I learned this lesson watching a movie. Plato wrote that art is an imitation of life, and I believe that to be true since I stumbled upon many harsh realities after reading a book, or watching films. Anyway, I was close to the age of 10 years old when I saw "Somewhere in Time", an older movie about a playwright who travels back in time to find his soulmate, only to be suddenly thrust back to his own time shortly after connecting with her. No matter how hard he tries, he never manages to return to her. The movie ends with him dying alone of a broken heart and reuniting with her in heaven.

To this day, I cannot watch the moment he is ripped from her arms. I'll get up and leave with as much dread and horror in my stomach as a person who runs out of the room during the dinner scene in "Alien". This is how devastated my 10-year-old self was at the end of "Somewhere in Time". As the credits rolled, I threw myself on the couch and bawled my eyes out. My startled mother asked, "What in the world is your problem?" I said, "That was all wrong, it wasn't supposed to end like that." She replied, "Well, maybe it seems that way, but their love survived to the heights of heaven." I sat up and pronounced quite boldly, "That's not good enough!"

I can tell you that I've accused love of that many times over the years, but the truth is even the most fleeting connection to another is enough. Whether it lasts a second or a lifetime, a meaningful moment between two souls is inherently good enough. Through heartaches, disappointments and unanswered questions, if love has ever blessed us with the connection of another, it is good enough. We can cherish our memories.

So maybe every relationship doesn't last as long as we would like or expect, but love gives us what we need now — even if the meaningfulness of those moments is found somewhere in time. ♦

## What women think... about women in prison

Eva Shelton  
Contributing Writer

*“Shared suffering, she’d found, was no guarantee of intimacy.”*

— *“Under The Skin”, Michael Faber*

I recently asked 13 women to list the first 10 words which come to mind when I say “women in prison.” I was in no way expecting the results I received. The answers staggered me. The women I asked were of varying races and ages because I wanted to be certain all women held the same quick thoughts.

Trashy, paranoid, superior, oppressed, prostitutes, whiney, nasty, messy, don’t work, conceited....

Where does this aura of hate come from? I see these girls in the dayroom eating together, playing dominos, laughing, watching T.V; I see them as friends. So where is the positivity? These are words I would expect from someone on the outside of the fence to use, someone who

has not been in our shoes. I doubt the feelings of our fellow convicts are just isolated to women. Men more than likely have the same beliefs about each other.

Do we view ourselves with these labels? I didn’t ask them to tell me about the people who surrounded us. I said, “Women in prison.” There is a saying that when you point the finger at someone there are three more pointing back at you. Maybe we believe we are bossy, unclean, gullible, stupid, treacherous and snitches. We’ve been brought up this way and lived in a way in which we believe we are worthless.

If we continue to believe this about other people and also believe this negativity about ourselves, then how can we begin to heal? Prison is a place for simply waiting. We wait for chow,

recreation, mail, lockdown and parole. We’re always waiting for something. We’re waiting on change. We want something physically different from where we are sitting right now. But we cannot be completely ready for this physical difference if we’re not equipped with a new set of mental beliefs.

If we don’t begin to search for the positivity in others and see them as mothers and fathers who are deceived, abandoned, lonely, bare and trapped, how can we begin to see the light within ourselves? We need to start believing that others hold the same positive attributes we declare ourselves to have. When we begin to believe others are truly worthy of a second chance, only we can also accept that things can be different for ourselves. ♣

## Pilot light

Richard E. Smith  
Contributing Writer

I pulled up short when my little red toolbox clanked against the kitchen doorframe. I waited silently, listening intently for the telltale sound of Mom’s light feet coming to investigate the sound. The moments crept by, seconds ticking slower than the grandfather clock ticking on the living room mantel.

Finally, nothing happened.

I let out a breath and crept across the tile floor. Today was going to be a good day — spectacular even!

That day was one of many days of adventure in my young life. I was a curious kid, always wondering how things worked. Like a surgeon in an operating room, I wandered the house with my tools of the trade looking to carve into the innards of whatever caught my fancy.

**Today’s patient was going to be Mom’s stove, and its bottom drawer was the entrance into a world of mysteries.** I carefully laid out all my tools: wrenches in order from largest to smallest, sockets beside them, and my screwdrivers positioned in a perfect little line of shining steel soldiers.

As I peeked inside, I got the shock of my life. There was a tiny blue flame flickering with life!

Why? I wondered. Why would a flame be burning if the stove wasn’t lit? A soft breeze blew across the room and the flame danced on its base. I hurriedly closed the door before the wind blew it out. Though I didn’t know it then, I was determined to find out what that flame was all about.

“Dad?” I asked later that day, “Why is there a tiny blue flame burning in the bottom of the stove?”

“Son,” he answered with a gentle pat on my head, “that’s called a pilot light. That little flame lights the burners in the stove. It’s the source of life, in a way, for all of the other flames in the stove. Without a pilot light, the burners would never work.”

We are like that pilot light. Life will come against us; twisting us up in an effort

to snuff us out. But like that pilot light, we can cling to our base and live on. The base is our integrity and upbringing; it is what we believe in and know to be true. It’s that ever-guiding compass that leads us out of the woods when the storms of life have us lost. The problem is that most of us latched on to the wrong base. Many people are perched on the pedestals of drugs, gangs and criminality. It’s the reason why we are where we are today. Still, that does not mean that it has to continue to be so. We can change.

**With change, though, comes conflict.** When you step out and become a pilot light, you will be buffeted by many winds. There will be winds of anger, lust, pain and regret. Currents of treachery will come from people and directions that you never expected them to come from. Dangerous winds will blow in from oceans of family or friends over money, jealousy and pride. If you are an unprepared pilot light, those winds will twist and destroy you. Winds will blow into your life with the fury of a tornado and snuff you right out.

Still, we can take heart in the fact that pilot lights will light the fires of others. Pilot lights will be the beacons of warmth and safety for those lost and tossed about by the world. Although tiny in the measurements of man, pilot lights are actually as bright as huge lighthouses blazing in the dark night. Our light beckons people across the deadly shoals of sin and death and pulls them into the warm embrace of someone who cares. Alone, we do no good, but together, we can withstand anything.

**Pilot lights are small. They seem insignificant even.** But, when left to burn, pilot lights can light the biggest stoves of the most magnificent castles. Pilot lights create

the opportunity to enjoy a sumptuous meal with the King! It’s through our steadfast determination that simple pilot lights will become blazing torches of salvation for everyone.

My question to you is: Will you be a pilot light, or will you continue simply being a torch that will eventually just flame out and never help anyone? ♣



# Feeling poorly — think thyroid

By Jennifer Toon  
Contributing Writer

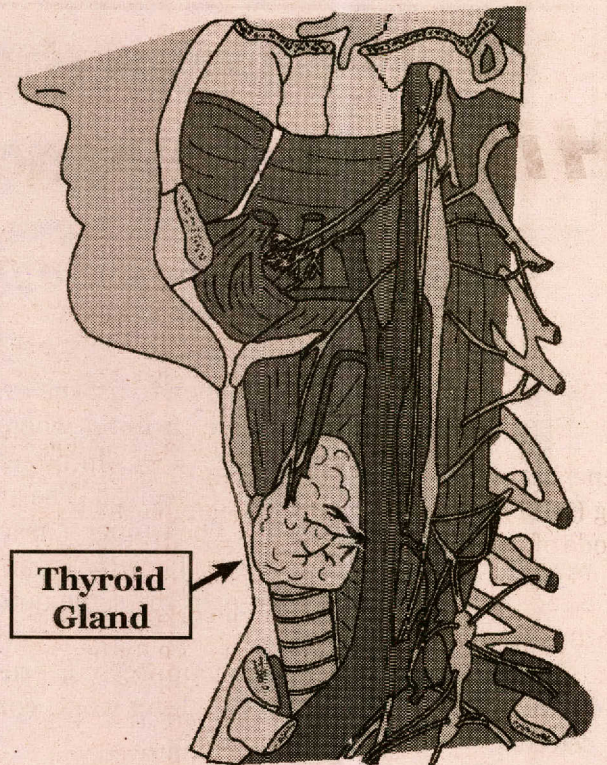
**I know** the frustration involved in not having enough energy. According to DK Publishing's "Women's Health for Life," I am not alone. Thyroid disorders are 10 times more common in women than men. Many of the tired faces around me may not realize there could be a medical reason behind their chronic irritability, weight problems and depression.

The thyroid gland, located at the front of the neck, is responsible for regulating the body's temperature and metabolism. In order to function correctly, many of our cells need a hormone the gland produces called thyroxine. If the gland produces too little, body function slows down, resulting in a condition called hypothyroidism. If the gland produces too much, body functions speed up, resulting in the converse condition, hyperthyroidism.

Hypothyroidism, or underactive thyroid, is usually due to inflammation of the gland caused by an autoimmune response known as Hashimoto's Disease. Symptoms include extreme tiredness, weight gain without overeating, feeling cold, dry skin, hair loss, irritability, depression and mental slowness. Hyperthyroidism, or overactive thyroid, is commonly caused by an autoimmune response called Grave's Disease. Symptoms include heart palpitations, poor sleep, weight loss despite increased eating, feeling hot, excessive sweating, thinning hair, bulging eyes, irritability and anxiety. Both conditions are diagnosed with a blood test that will check TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) levels, as well as thyroxine levels. Treatment includes medication that will bring these levels into the normal range. Medication must be taken as prescribed or it will not work. Symptoms rapidly improve once these levels have been stabi-

lized. Medication is usually lifelong: thyroid disorders are classified as chronic care. As with any chronic care condition, taking your medication is only part of the story. We should follow our healthcare provider's advice with regard to regular exercise, maintenance of a balanced diet, and minimizing stress.

Before being diagnosed and treated, I thought I was just getting fat, depressed, and lazy. However, no amount of self-help books changed how I was feeling. I thought my problem was my lack of will power and my depression got worse when nothing seemed to work. I was relieved, though a little doubtful, when my doctor explained how my thyroid gland was the source of the problem. Such a tiny gland could cause that amount of fatigue and moodiness? Medication and a healthier lifestyle gave me my energy back, not to mention my normal weight, and lifted that once unshakable cloud of depression. Perhaps it could do the same for you? Contact your healthcare provider if you think you suffer from any of the above mentioned symptoms. ➔



## Bill Glass roars into Duncan Unit

Jim Brannen  
Duncan Unit

**"The roar** was deafening as a Harley Davidson motorcycle rumbled through the hallways of the Rufus H. Duncan Unit," Duncan Unit reporter J. Brannen said.

**"Is it a dream?"** thought the 600 offenders on the Duncan unit.

Not a chance. It was the Bill Glass Champions for Life riding in on Harleys of Faith. Twenty-six volunteers arrived for the regional Bill Glass weekend.

"Bill Glass is a former NFL player with the Cleveland Browns. He founded his ministry in 1972 and has been striving to change negative behavior by changing hearts in prisons," Brannen said.

"The NASCAR man with the ministry is Jack Meeks. At 86, he is still going strong. Jack has been invited to over a thousand prisons across the United States. He brought along the '93 Monte Carlo, which he drove to win the Day-

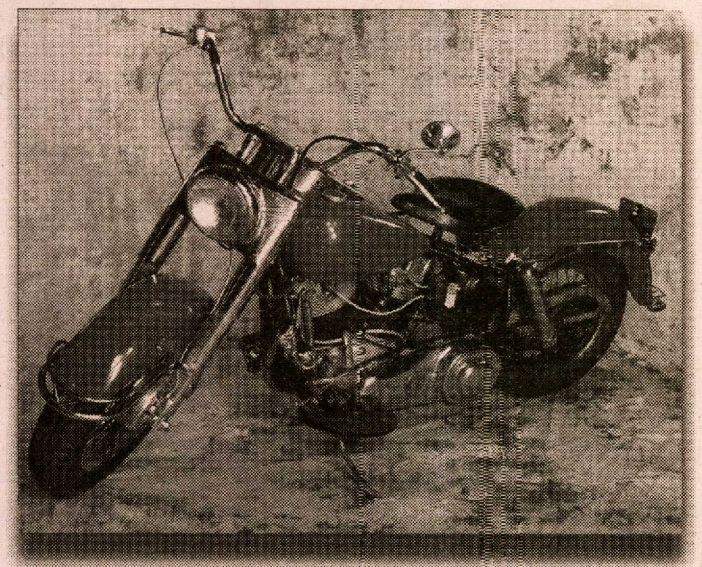
tona 500 that year," Brannen said.

Jack's daughter, Robin, also spoke to the offenders about the painful memories of growing up with a drug-dealing con-man

for a father, one who eventually ended up in prison. She called prison "the great attention getter" — and told us of the powerful change in her father once he made the decision to walk the straight path and devote his life to doing spiritual work.

"James Henderson, a world champion weight-lifter, was also there," Brannen said.

With a voice like Flip Wilson, Henderson had the offenders laughing at his good-humored jokes. As he related the story of his wild journey through the criminal justice system in Georgia, the men in attendance could easily relate to those experiences. Henderson spoke on how important faith is in changing a willing heart. ➔



### Famous Quote:

**'Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts will inevitably bring about right results.'**

— James Lane Allen



# Workout of the month: High intensity interval training

Ismael Mendez  
Wynne Unit

**A**re you tired of just laying around? You want to do something about it? Do you want to change the way you look and feel? Are you up for a challenge?

I'd like to introduce you to something that has benefited me greatly: High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). Many of you may be familiar with this mode of exercise: body weight exercises done in sequence with little or no rest in between sets. One of the things I love about this style of workout is that you can accomplish a great deal in 30 minutes or less, and it requires a minimal amount of space. So the days when your unit fails to call recreation, you can still work on building a new and improved you.

HIIT has a great effect on excess post-exercise oxygen consumption which refers to increased oxygen intake after the workout ends experienced by someone who undergoes intense exercise. The process of restoring the body to its rested state can boost the metabolism for up to 24 hours after a hard workout. Minute for minute, HIIT burns more calories than steady state cardio (such as jogging). If you're looking to burn fat, gain stamina and tone up your body, this is definitely one way to get there.

Consistency and effort are crucial, so if you can only squeeze in 20 to 25 minute sessions it's important that you push yourself to the max. A watered-down effort will get you nowhere.

This first workout I'm introducing you to is for time — complete the following exercises as fast as possible. Beginners shouldn't sweat the clock so much — let the goal be to finish the workout.

Later, after you've improved, you can begin to time yourself and then try beating it or adding reps to the exercises to make it more difficult. For

you workout warriors, its pedal to the metal with the advanced workout; each set is done back-to-back with minimal amount of rest — the goal is to complete the workout as fast as you can to "get'er done."

Let me explain how to do the exercises I've chosen for this particular workout. The following four exercises make up the first interval:

1. **Burpee with push-up and jump:** start from a standing position. Squat down and place the palms of your hands on the ground in front of your feet. Kick your feet back into a plank position. Do a push-up. Pull your feet back under you and from that squatting position explode up into a vertical jump. That is one repetition.
2. **Basketball jump:** start from a standing position. Squat down as if you are picking up a basketball then pretend you are taking a jump shot. That is one repetition.
3. **Push-up with punch:** start from the plank position, do one push-up then from the top of the push-up, throw a punch parallel with the floor. Bring your arm back into the plank position do another push-up then throw another punch parallel with the floor but with the other arm. This is one repetition.
4. **Squat jump:** start from standing position legs shoulder width apart. Squat down so thighs are at least parallel with the floor and then explode upward into a jump. That is one repetition.

The next four exercises make up the second interval:

1. **Frog Jump:** Start from a squat with thighs parallel to the floor, fingers touching your toes. From that position, jump forward, keeping your feet apart. Then jump back to the starting

position. That is considered one repetition.

2. **In and Out:** Start from a plank position, legs out and feet together. From this position pull your legs towards your arms, tucking your knees underneath you. Then kick your legs back out putting you back into the plank position. This is one repetition.
3. **High Plank Oblique:** Start from the plank position, legs out feet together, bend your right leg and bring it out from underneath you, keeping it parallel with the floor. Try to touch your elbow with your knee. Go back to starting position, repeat with left leg. That is one repetition.
4. **Regular Burpee:** This is the same as the Burpee with push-up and jump, minus the push-up and jump. From a standing position, squat down, place palms on the floor, kick your legs back into a plank position. Pull legs back underneath you then stand back up. That is one repetition.

Before we begin the actual workout, I like to do a little warm-up, followed by some stretching. I usually jog in place, do jumping jacks, high-knee jog, side to side jump and air jump rope for 30 seconds each, totaling five minutes or more. Follow this with some stretching, then it's time for the real fun to begin. Perform each exercise in the first interval back-to-back until all four are finished. That's one round. Rest 30 seconds (or less), then repeat, for a total of two sets (Repeat two times, for a total of three sets, for the advanced workout). When the first interval set is done, rest 30 seconds (or less), then do the second interval in the same way you did the first. How did you do?

It took me and the guys I train with 16 minutes and 33 seconds to complete the advanced workout. See if you can meet or beat our time! 🏆

## Beginner's Workout

### Interval #1

Repetitions/Exercise

- 6 burpees with push-ups and jumps
  - 12 basketball jumps
  - 5 push-ups with punches
  - 8 squat jumps
- } 2 times

### Interval #2

Repetitions/Exercise

- 6 frog jumps
  - 12 ins and outs
  - 10 high plank obliques
  - 10 regular burpees
- } 2 times

## Advanced Workout

### Interval #1

Repetitions/Exercise

- 15 burpees with push-ups and jumps
  - 25 basketball jumps
  - 12 push-ups with punches
  - 20 squat jumps
- } 3 times

### Interval #2

Repetitions/Exercise

- 15 frog jumps
  - 25 ins and outs
  - 20 high plank obliques
  - 15 burpees with push-ups and jumps
- } 3 times



## The close call

Submitted by L. Sunshine Courter  
Released

After becoming accustomed to being a gentleman's wife,  
she now walks alone in a solitary life.  
Turning to drugs just to stay in the game  
and soon, prostitution with no sense of shame.

Her family cannot find her — their paths will never meet  
for she lives just like the homeless, lost out in the street.  
Waiting for some nice man to come and take her in  
it's just as well he doesn't — she'll end up robbing him.

She watches the homeless; there's no place to hide.  
Gangsters pick one up — they take her for a ride.  
Newspaper reads: Woman found shot;  
body found in dumpster in a parking lot.

It could easily have been me that was shot that night  
but the Lord arrested me to show me the light.  
Before he sent the police to sweep me off the beat  
I was just another junkie — lost out in the street.

## A thought in time

Submitted by Jason Gaitan  
Rudd Unit

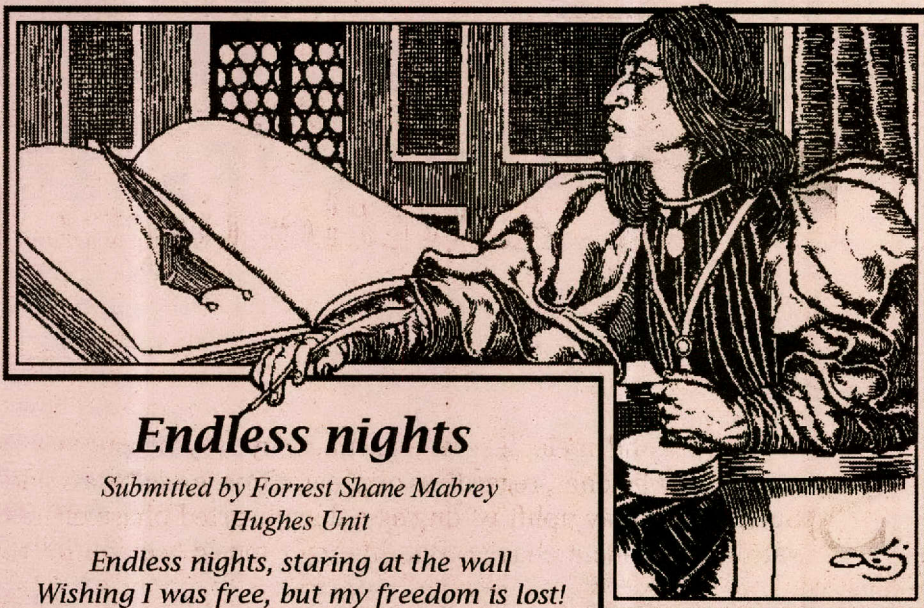
As I watch the sun set  
on the razor sharp fence  
I think deep down inside  
and remember things I miss.

Watching my kids play  
having lots of fun.  
Sipping a cold drink in the shade  
away from the sun.

Working hard for my family  
to put food on the table.  
Being here in prison, I let  
them down, 'cause I am not able

To hold them tight, tell them  
it will be alright when it rains.  
It hurts me inside just to know  
that I cause my family so much pain.

I pray to God that he hears my cries  
and fulfills my request  
to show me the right way of  
living so I can do my best.



## Endless nights

Submitted by Forrest Shane Mabrey  
Hughes Unit

Endless nights, staring at the wall  
Wishing I was free, but my freedom is lost!  
Addicted to meth, living in sin  
I want to start over — where do I begin?

Endless nights, staring at the wall  
I see a reflection, yet the mirror is fogged!  
A life of drugs I swore was cool  
Now I'm down in prison, who's really the fool?

Endless nights, staring at the wall  
Tears steadily falling, for I miss you all  
Memories come, then they fade  
Please, forgive me? I promise I'll change

Endless nights, staring at the wall  
I'm sober now, hope is not lost  
The days are passing, I shall be free  
Do I really have the strength?

Endless nights, staring at the wall  
No matter what happens, I love you all!  
They say time passes in the blink of an eye  
Tell that to someone who lies awake all night!

## Color Blind

Submitted by Glendon Girard  
Pack Unit

Some days I wish there was no color,  
That the world was simply black and white.

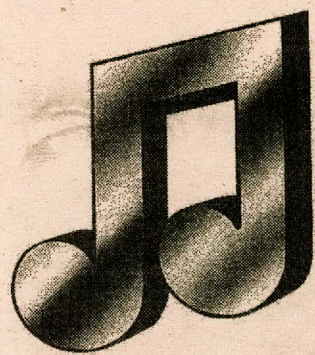
Too many ways to see things,  
Other than simply wrong or right.

We see too much in color and age,  
All that matters is what's in the mind.

To see the world and all it holds,  
I've found it best to be color blind.

Creative Corner





## Dealing with incarceration:

# A little light from Bob Marley

John W. Flagg  
Staff Writer



Some lyrics and melodies have an uncanny way of piercing the heart of the listener, regardless of generational or cultural divide. Such a song may uplift us during a downhearted phase or motivate us to make a change. Bob Marley's music exemplifies this influence.

Bob Marley is easily one of the most recognizable figures in the world. Rising up out of the worst kind of third world poverty in Jamaica, Marley was catapulted into the heights of fame through his sheer creative brilliance and fearless integrity. His music has inspired many millions of people for more than 40 years, from Shanghai to Sao Paulo to San Francisco.

But what makes a guy like Bob Marley tick? How did he overcome his limitations? Where did he find the courage to peer outside the box? What follows is a humble attempt to untangle the hidden methods which Marley used to advance his life and career, applicable to an offender's situation.

**Know the rhythm of the moment** — In 1950s Jamaica, adversity was the norm for a vast majority of the population. But a new musical trend was fast on the rise that gave the people a medium by which they could express their strife while easing the sting of hardship. It was called *reggae*, for its ragged beat and hypnotic cadence. A young, impoverished Kingston boy by the name of Bob Marley was immediately enamored by this fresh sound. Knowing the rhythm of the moment, Marley was able to seize the opportunity by giving voice to his personal struggles in storytelling form through reggae music. Like Marley, offenders must take note that there is a rhythm to every situation. Rhythm comes in all shapes and sizes: there are great ones and small ones, slow ones and fast ones, those in the forefront and those in the background. Learning all the critical rhythms of life is a necessary step toward growth and awareness. Being able to distinguish between positive and negative rhythms is often the determining factor in one's success or failure. Knowing the rhythm of the moment as Marley did, offenders can seize the opportunity to dance over adversity.

**Memories (even painful ones) can be stepping-stones of inspiration** — When Bob Marley sang of oppression, ignorance and belly-bloating hunger, he was actually recounting his memories. Using the painful imprint left by his memories as a creative source, Marley had an endless supply of inspiration to draw from. Sadly enough, many offenders possess painful or troubling memories. Perhaps it is the result of foolish choices that haunts you? Or the distress brought on by lost opportunities, rejection or incarceration (past and present)? Being pulled down by memories, or held back by the past, is an all too common affair in an offender's life. Learning to let go of painful memories is a tremendous challenge and is not something that can be fixed in a day — in fact, it may take a lifetime to achieve. Nevertheless, striving to view past shortcomings as temporary setbacks can enable an offender to successfully rebound from an adverse

situation and move forward with renewed boldness. Setting the pain of the past to a tuneful sound, as Marley did, offenders can transform their memories into stepping stones of inspiration.

**Self-improvement begins with the power of belief** — Surrounded by violence and poverty day in and day out could overwhelm most people. But Bob Marley had a steadfast belief in the power of music, and that was all he needed to elevate himself above all the negativity around him.

An offender's plight is also just as precarious: each day can be likened to walking a tightrope over an abyss of uncertainty. It is not uncommon for offenders to have difficulty believing in themselves. The pressures and anxieties of incarceration can obscure an offender's idea of self-worth, and motivations can easily get sandpapered away by time and stagnation. But offenders must not allow their daily encounters with negative people or environments to effect how they perceive life and the world. There were many obstacles in Marley's path to success, but he never allowed them to undermine his aims and goals. With music in his heart, he pushed on forward and greeted each new day with a positive attitude. Similarly, offenders must strive to believe wholeheartedly in their own innate ability to change their thinking and behavior, while not permitting negative forces to weaken their intentions. Belief is the first step that will get offenders on the path to self-improvement.

**'Setting the pain of the past to a tuneful sound, as Marley did, offenders can transform their memories into stepping stones of inspiration.'**

**Know your limits, but do the best you can with what you've got** — Bob Marley emerged from a disadvantaged background, but that never discouraged him from aspiring to rise above adversity. Having no instruments at all, Marley simply used whatever was handy: tin cans, wooden buckets, coconuts. Marley was well aware of the limits on his knowledge and skill. Yet he never succumbed to the reality of these deprivations. He simply did the best he could with

what he had. Offenders face harsh realities as well. It can be quite discouraging to discover that there are certain lines offenders cannot cross due to the consequences of their criminal past. This may result in specific occupations an offender may not be qualified to perform, or particular goals an offender may not be equipped to reach. *Accepting* this reality is one thing, but to be *defeated* by it is another.

Focusing on his strengths, Marley did the only thing he could do: *he made music*. And through his music an entire world of creativity and vision unfolded. Likewise, offenders must focus on the strengths they *do* possess and the goals they *can* reach. Because knowing your limits can in fact *expand* your limits. Learning how to do the best you can with what you've got *can allow you to have more*.

### Sources:

"No Woman, No Cry: My life with Bob Marley," by Rita Marley  
The World Book Encyclopedia, 2013, Vol. 11, "Jamaica"  
The World Book Encyclopedia, 2013, Vol. 16, "Reggae"  
Rolling Stone magazine, "The Life and Times of Bob Marley: How He Changed the World," by Mikal Gilmore, March 10, 2005

# HELP WANTED:

## WYNNE LICENSE PLATE FACTORY MAINTENANCE MECHANIC

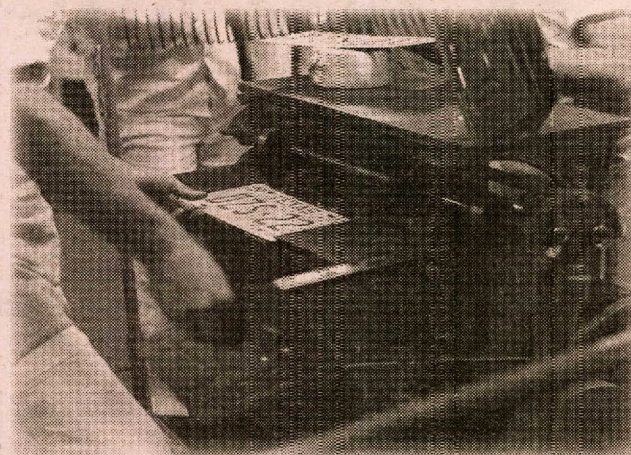
The Wynne Unit license plate factory is seeking an experienced maintenance mechanic.

Qualifications and skills required:

1. Must be a G2 custody status
2. Basic knowledge of the following:
  - a. Fundamental ideas of machinery; experience with punch presses or ram-driven machines helpful
  - b. Basic mechanics and hydraulics
  - c. Electrical and pneumatic controls
  - d. Preventative maintenance procedures
  - e. Quality control standards
  - f. Ability to diagnose needed repairs on plant equipment
  - g. Maintaining inventory on assigned tools and equipment.

Interested offenders should write via truck mail or regular mail to:

Mr. Dawson, Wynne License Plate Factory, 810 FM 2821, Huntsville, Texas 77349. ♣



# TDCJ/Windham bulletin board



Clements Unit handball tournament winners are E. Carmago, V. Chavez, M. Andrana, J. Hernandez and S. Parker.



Crain Unit Parenting and Family Wellness graduates are M. Potocki, S. Jackson, J. Alvarado, S. Luedecke, L. Lee, L. Wilson, R. Parish, S. Giles, D. Simkins, S. Miller, L. Locker, R. Triana, M. Castanuela, T. Smith, V. Zuniga, K. Wingate, and B. Patterson. (J. Dickens' class).



Crain Unit Riverside Campus Cognitive Intervention Program graduates are A. Heil, B. Harvey, P. Morgan, L. Lewis, J. Simkins, B. Giddens, A. Perkins, L. Locker, M. Gaona, B. Covington, P. Jackson, C. Brown, L. Newton, J. Hawkins, S. DeMalade, B. King, E. Berry, C. Matthews, S. Maxie, and C. Romero. (J. Dickens' class).



Stringfellow Unit chess tournament winners are A. Ellis, S. Smith and J. Neff.

# The Great Zambrano

Raymond Trinidad  
Connally Unit

*Editor's Note: This story won second place in the fiction category of our latest writing contest.*

**F**reddy Zambrano's mother swore his father had been eaten by a pack of wild chupacabras, while his older brother said he was probably in Mexico fighting bulls.

Either way, he'd been missing for a week now, and there was still no sign of him. Freddy wasn't worried though. His father was a magician by trade; he made things disappear for a living. Certainly he could make himself disappear. And that's exactly what Freddy believed — that his father had pulled off the ultimate disappearing act.

It was going to be a tough act to follow, but Freddy had been his father's stage assistant for several years. He knew a few tricks of the trade. And since his father had always told him that no matter what, the show must go on, Freddy decided to become The Great Zambrano. He was only 15 years old.

He started out by doing a lot of practicing at home. When things suddenly started coming up missing around the house, his mother questioned him first. With a smug look on his face, he would put his hands up in the air and snap his fingers: "I am The Great Zambrano, and I have made it disappear!"

His mother tried to be patient with him. She knew he had taken his father's disappearance pretty hard. But when her beloved chihuahua disappeared, The Great Zambrano suffered the indignity of being spanked in front of his neighbors. And that's when he realized it was time to take his show on the road.

After school the next day, Freddy made his debut as a magician in the parking lot of Luna's Famous Tacos. A make-shift sign of cardboard and spray paint announced his magical existence: The Great Zambrano! Teenagers eating chalupas and tacos watched in awe as he juggled bottles of soda before making them disappear in midair, one by one. Then he lit the end of a mop on fire and waved it around like a torch before making it vanish, smoke and all.

The crowd grew and started cheering him on. Books, old tires, trash cans, stray dogs and cats — he made them all disappear. From time to time he looked out at the crowd and raised his hands high above his head and snapped his fingers.

"I am The Great Zambrano, and I have made it disappear!" he would proclaim. The crowd went wild every time.

Luna's Famous Tacos did such good business during Freddy's debut that the owner hired him to do several shows a week. The crowds grew bigger at each show and other businesses jumped on the bandwagon. His mother did too, becoming his stage assistant

and manager. From quinceañeras to bar mitzvahs, she booked him wherever she could. In no time his fame swept across the city like a magical breeze. The *Houston Chronicle* even ran an article about him entitled "The Great Zambrano". Bookings for his shows increased tenfold after that and the money started rolling in.

There were some snags along the way. It became apparent that while Freddy could make things disappear, he couldn't make them reappear. At a show for the opening of a comic book store, the owner dared Freddy to make a giant statue of the Incredible Hulk disappear. It quickly vanished. When he couldn't make it reappear, the owner and a bunch of Hulk fans — adults and kids — were traumatized and went home in tears. After several such incidents, Freddy's mother no longer allowed requests or dares.

It wasn't long before videos of Freddy's shows started popping up on YouTube. The Incredible Hulk clip alone garnered more than a million views. His mother was suddenly inundated with calls from TV and radio shows; everybody wanted The Great Zambrano on their show. He did the Jose Luis Show first, appearing on an episode with zombie midgets and members of a doomsday cult. Freddy was on numerous shows after that, from Ellen to the Queen Latifah Show. He knew he'd hit the big time when Jimmy Kimmel invited him to his show in Los Angeles.

Freddy appeared on the Jimmy Kimmel Show with Jennifer Lopez as the superstar guest. J. Lo was seated next to him as they swapped funny anecdotes with Jimmy. It was all surreal to Freddy. His meteoric rise to fame had taken him completely by surprise. Only three months earlier he was just a regular kid from the barrio, and now here he was basking in the limelight.

"So tell me, Freddy, how is it that you're able to make things disappear?" Jimmy asked, a hint of skepticism in his voice.

Freddy looked at him and smiled. "Sorry, Jimmy, but a true magician never gives up his secrets."

"I'll tell you what then, Freddy," Jimmy continued, "if you can make that car disappear, it's yours to keep," Jimmy said, as he pointed at the brand-new Rolls Royce being driven onto the stage.

Freddy looked at his mother out in the audience. She gave him a stern look and mouthed one word: "NO."

He then turned to J. Lo sitting next to him, and she bestowed upon him the most enchanting smile he'd ever seen. Freddy smiled back at her, and the Rolls Royce vanished into thin air.

The audience went wild, and J. Lo yelped in delight as she high-fived Freddy.

The camera zoomed in on the astonished look on



Jimmy's face as he stared at the empty stage. That's when Freddy walked out to the middle of the stage wearing his father's black magician's cape and top hat. He raised his hands high in the air, snapped his fingers and proclaimed to all the world, "I am The Great Zambrano, and I have made it disappear!"

The ratings for Jimmy's show went through the roof and offset the cost of the new Rolls Royce. Jimmy booked Freddy for another show, and J. Lo gave him VIP passes to her upcoming concert in Houston. On top of that, a YouTube clip of the show went viral and further enhanced The Great Zambrano's renown.

Freddy should've been ecstatic; he was on top of the world. But instead he was in the dumps. His father was still missing, and his success meant nothing to him without his father there to share in it. So for several days Freddy had been focusing on making things reappear. Turns out he was pretty good at it.

His mother's chihuahua materialized first. Then came the giant Incredible Hulk statue, followed by the new Rolls Royce. An assortment of things followed after that. But when he tried to make his father reappear — nothing. And just when Freddy was starting to lose hope, his father walked into the living room.

"Dad!" Freddy ran to his father and hugged him.

"Freddy, it's good to see you again."

"Mom said the chupacabras ate you, but I told everybody it was your best disappearing act — that it was magic."

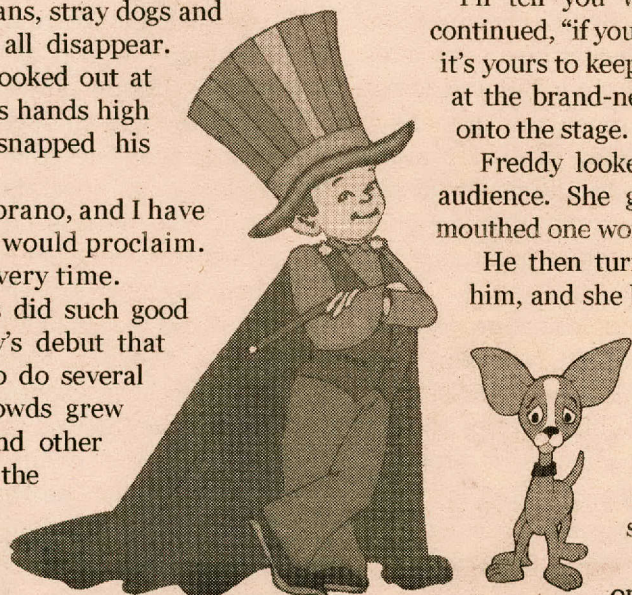
Freddy's father laughed. "No, mijo, it wasn't magic. It was *la migra*. The immigration mistakenly deported me to Mexico. You know, like in your favorite movie *Born in East LA*. But everything is cleared up now, and I'm home for good."

*La migra*, chupacabras, magic — none of it mattered anymore. Freddy's father was home, and it was like Christmas and Cinco de Mayo all at once. An effusion of happiness rushed through him as he told his father all about the rise to fame.

"That explains the giant Hulk statue in the front yard and the new Rolls Royce in the driveway," Freddy's father said nonchalantly.

They had a good laugh about that. When Freddy's mother and older brother came home, a grand reunion ensued. After dinner at a four-star restaurant and a lavish shopping spree, the Zambrano family cruised around the city in their new Rolls Royce.

Vibrant *tejano* music flowed from the speakers, and Freddy's parents sang along loudly in the front seat. The floral scent of his mother's perfume wafted the air as Freddy closed his eyes and savored the moment — such a wonderful, magical moment. ♣



# Relative entity

Ross Hartwell  
Clements Unit

*Editor's Note: This story won second place in the non-fiction category of our latest writing contest.*

Once or twice a year my small immediate family would travel from North Texas to a little town in Arkansas. I hated the trips but worshipped the destination. After arriving at grandma's and resting up a day or so, we would venture into the deeply rural areas in order to make the rounds visiting relatives.

**One of my favorite stops was my great aunt and uncle's house.** No matter what time of year it was, Uncle Bud would be on the front porch either puffing a Prince Albert or chewing gum while perpetually rocking in his chair. He was there no matter what.

We spent most of the time just sitting and waiting for a breeze. Cars and old pick-ups passed by every now and then on their way to the lake up the road, and we would lift a hand in salutation. I was always under the impression that he personally knew everybody who drove by because they never failed to return the gesture.

I don't believe Bud ever started a conversation with me, but was always quick to respond to any of the multitude of questions I forever seemed to ask. He may have joked a little or maybe even mixed in a tall tale or two with the answers, but he would never lead me astray or into danger. Guess you could say I learned the birds and the bees from this kind, gentle and patient person from the past. Not the metaphorical ones concerning reproduction, but other facts about animals and insects. Facts gained from years of scrutiny compounded with trial and error. His word was the gold standard, and I almost always took it to be inarguable fact.

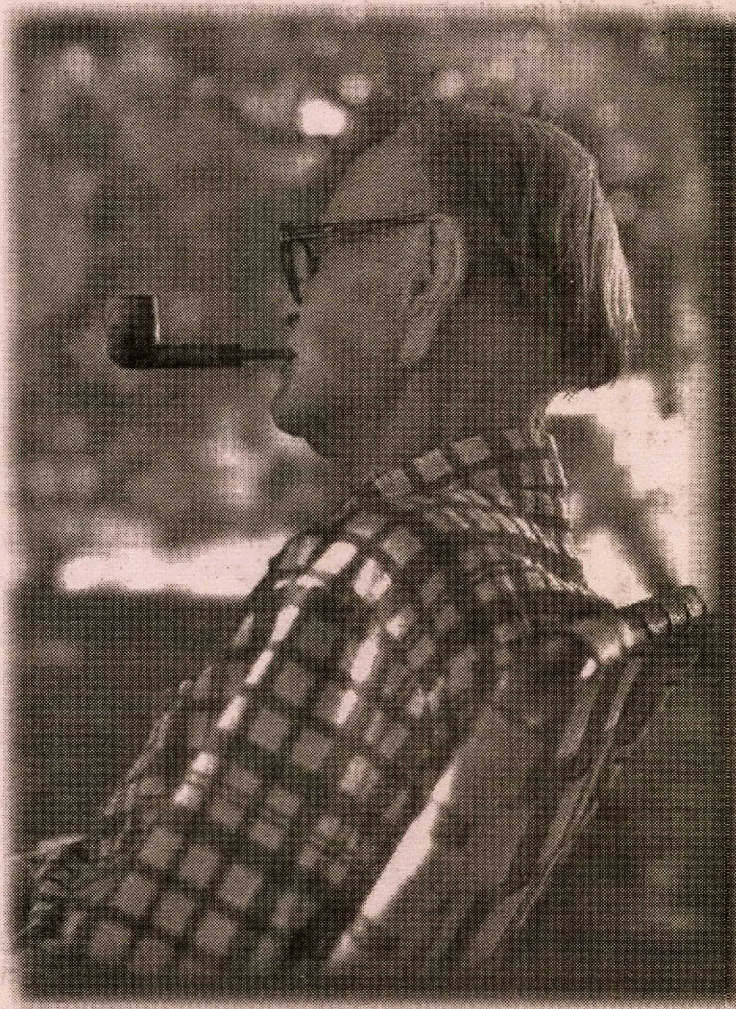
"The boys are red, while the girls are mostly gray," he said, teaching me the difference between male and female cardinals.

Once after I stomped on a spider, he responded with, "Now why'd you go and do that? The only ones that'll hurt you are the ones you'll never see."

He also told me why dirt daubers were always packing mud and bugs, paralyzed by their stings, into the wind chimes, and that they too are harmless. "It's so their babies can eat and less you sit on one, the daubers won't sit on you."

**Although the rocking chair never creaked, ol' Uncle Bud sure did when he unfolded his lanky six-foot-plus frame** from it and led me around the house. Letting go of my hand and pointing at the wasp nest way up in the eave, "As long as you don't mess with the yella' jackets, they won't mess with you," he'd explain, while singlehandedly rolling a smoke.

I cried after he told me why the dove always perched unaccompanied on the windmill. His simple response – "Boy, don't ever be sad about dedication" – was comforting.



**'Boy, don't ever be sad about dedication.'**

Finally, he'd laugh at my insignificant swatting of the little bees who forever hovered hummingbird-like around us and all of the porch flowers. "Oh, don't worry about them, all they're doin' is bringin' the good news." Thus the moniker "news bee" forever comes to mind whenever I see the little guys darting around.

**In the late 70s, after over 50 years of rolling his own,** he quit smoking and set his dentures in the ashtray. From then on he was never without a mouthful of Dubble Bubble chewing gum. After a piece would lose its flavor, he'd stretch his neck forward turkey-like and spit it half way across the yard. It always landed in the mound of monkey grass surrounding the gardenia bush. He never missed a beat while rocking and he never missed the target. I once questioned why the monkey grass and not the flower pot doubling as a garbage can right next to his chair.

"The gardenia marks the bubble gum graveyard." Of course I pestered on, wanting to know why there in particular. "Well, son," he said, seeming to ponder around a huge bubble. "Even though gum could figure on being chewed, it probably never imagines where it'll end up when it's done with. I reckon restin' in some grass beside a pretty gardenia is as good a place as any and much better than the garbage."



Uncle Bud taught me a lot in the limited time I was able to spend with him. Now that I knew most bugs and spiders were harmless, I was no longer afraid to crawl into the old broke-down barn and run my hands over the ancient and dusty farm implements. I would have never sat on "the hole" in a million years, but now the inside of the outdated outhouse became a new source of fun. Rocks and Star Wars action figures made their own distinctive sounds whenever they hit bottom. Heck, with my newfound bravery, I could now go down alone into the formally terrifying root cellar. After sidestepping the big cottonwood's feet dangling from the packed dirt roof, I'd swipe a jar or two of Aunt Rachel's pickled okra, apple butter or muscadine jelly.

These excursions only created more time on the front porch, recounting my discoveries or asking my great uncle what this or that was. But I would have never gone into any of those places if not for his reliable testimony on the creepy crawlies.

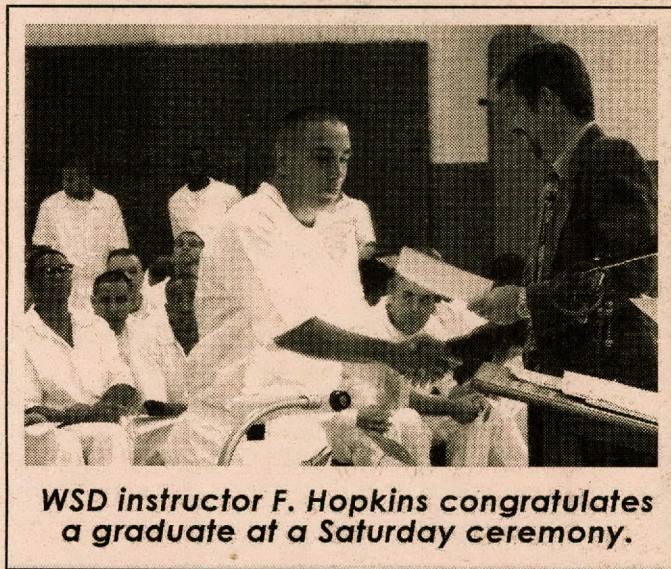
**As I wrote earlier, I almost always took his word without question.** I tested his wasp theory by throwing a tennis shoe at the nest before I learned "the hard way" to leave them alone. Even after not obeying one of his commandments and venturing out on my own, he was still merciful enough to show me how a little gnawed-on chewing tobacco would take away most of the stinging reprimand caused by disturbed yellow jackets.

"If you stick it on there right away, it'll take away the swelling," he said as I felt the sticky sweet brown juice running down my forehead and chest.

I always thought courage was a survival instinct related to getting backed into a corner. I now know that audacity can be applied to any situation, but fears can also be lessened through information from those who came before us.

Without my uncle's direction, I would have never entered those places like the barn, outhouse and cellar. Because of him, I am probably more trusting of those who have experienced things before me and believe that they too can teach me about facing the creepy crawlies of life. After it's all over, and if I'm lucky, I, like the Dubble Bubble, will have the honor of laying amongst some soft grass and smelling sweet gardenia when this old world is through chewing on me. ♣

# Briscoe and Cotulla's graduation: A step in the right direction



WSD instructor F. Hopkins congratulates a graduate at a Saturday ceremony.

Lion M. O'Neil  
Staff writer

Windham School District (WSD) strives to provide appropriate educational programming and services to meet the needs of the inmate population and reduce recidivism by assisting offenders in becoming responsible members of their communities.

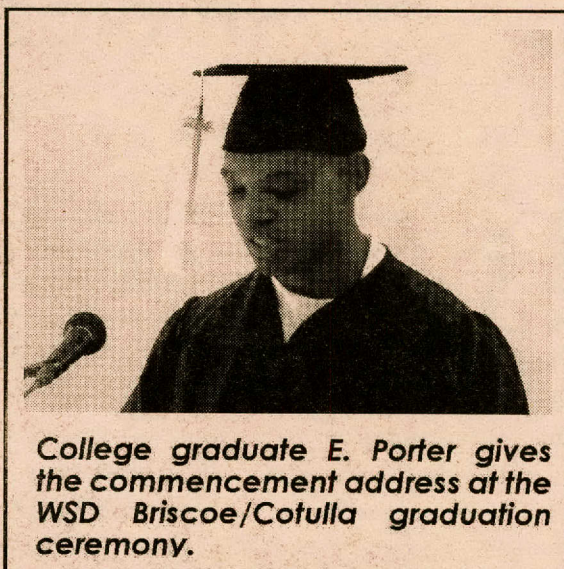
WSD, in partnership with Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC), is helping reduce recidivism through education. The fruits of this labor were seen at the Briscoe and Cotulla units' GED/vocational and college graduation ceremony recently held at the Briscoe Unit.

The program began when the graduates entered in procession to the harmonies of the Briscoe Unit choir and band. As they marched toward their seats, visitors could see pride and honor on the faces of the graduates and hear excitement from family members and friends.

"I know that pursuing your education in this environment was tough and took a lot of commitment," said M. Daughtry, WSD principal at the Briscoe Unit. The same sentiment was echoed by other staff in attendance including teachers, counselors, correctional officers and wardens.

The ceremony acknowledged accomplishments of graduates from various educational programs offered in TDCJ/ WSD. Vocational certificates were awarded for trades in construction carpentry, landscape design, and electrical work, along with GED certificates. SWTJC, in partnership with WSD, awarded graduates certificates in college level construction carpentry, as well as associate degrees. In addition to awarding the graduates certificates and degrees for successfully completing their respective programs, the youngest graduate, the oldest graduate, the salutatorian and valedictorian were also acknowledged for their accomplishments.

"I'm sure that there are some of my peers who didn't plan on graduating this way and may think of this graduation as being less than the



College graduate E. Porter gives the commencement address at the WSD Briscoe/Cotulla graduation ceremony.

real thing. But the same amount of hard work that you put into these classes is no different than what they are doing in schools outside of these gates," said E. Porter, the college graduate who gave the commencement address.

"You should be proud of your accomplishments and understand that this was not given to you by chance. You all took the necessary steps required to go to the next level of your lives. You stayed focused in the midst of what can sometimes be a hectic and confusing environment and did what needed to be done," he said.

The college presentations then highlighted the accomplishments of vocational students who strengthened construction carpentry skills by building a double-wide sized model home on the grounds of the unit. The house will be relocated upon completion.

"The structure had to be built small enough to fit through the gates upon completion, but large enough for practical use because it will be converted into a church. We once offered a one-year certificate but now we offer a two-year associate degree that covers more aspects of the trade," said J. Lopez, who teaches the college carpentry program.

Final remarks reiterated the impact of the partnership between WSD and SWTJC.

"This is a great partnership. It's a golden opportunity for the guys here to pursue their educations and prepare to return to society with something that can help themselves and their families," Daughtry said. ♣

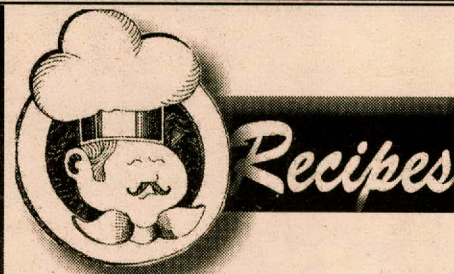
## Sudoku Solutions

Easy

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

Difficult

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



## BUTTERSCOTCH TEA

Justin Wiggin  
Middleton Unit

### Ingredients:

- 4 butterscotch candies
- 1 tea bag
- 3 sweeteners
- 8 oz. hot water

### Directions:

Crush candies into cup, add tea bag. Add 1 oz. really hot water, let sit until candies dissolve, about 20 minutes. Add 7 oz. more hot water, stir and enjoy!

## MOM AND DAUGHTER'S S'MORE LOVE

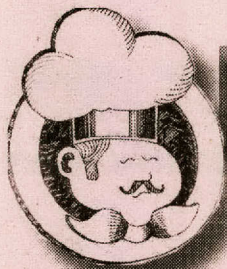
Jen and Rhonda Taylor  
Marlin Unit

### Ingredients:

- 1 package graham crackers
- 3 Almond Snickers
- 10 to 15 vanilla cream filled cookies
- 4 generous spoonful of hot cocoa
- 3 spoonful of hot water
- 1 spoonful of coffee
- (2 spoonful of peanut butter optional)

### Directions:

Take graham crackers and break into 18 squares. Soften candy bar in container (hot pot insert) with hot water. Spread warm melted Snickers on graham crackers. Crumble vanilla cream cookies with the cream inside, sprinkle over melted Snickers and graham crackers. Mix hot cocoa, hot water and coffee to make a warm drizzle; drizzle over cracker, cookies, and Snickers. Add a warm drizzle of peanut butter for extra yummy goodness. Eat and enjoy!



# Recipes

## BUCKALO WINGS

Buck Barrera  
Garza Unit



### Ingredients:

- 1 bag of pork skins
- 2 spoonful of BBQ sauce
- 2 spoonful of habanero sauce
- 1 ranch dressing
- 1 large white bowl

### Directions:

Leave pork skins in bag, while spooning the BBQ sauce on top of them. Add the spoonful of habanero sauce. Shake ingredients thoroughly in bag. Allow the pork skins to absorb the sauce. Pour into bowl and douse with ranch dressing. Bon appétit!

## RICE PUDDING

Francisco Prieto  
Stiles Unit



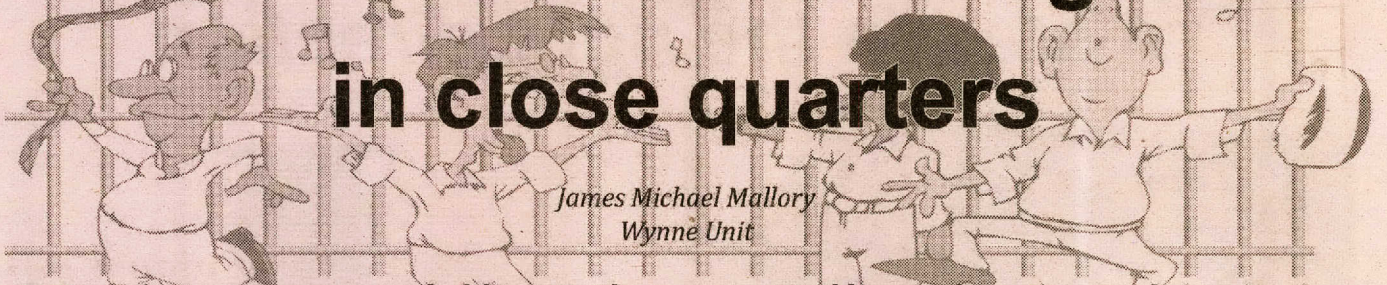
### Ingredients:

- 1 bag of rice
- 1 vanilla Chike
- 8 cream cookies (vanilla duplex)
- 2 packages of apple cinnamon oatmeal
- 1 package of maple & brown sugar oatmeal
- ½ hot pot insert of rice
- 8 packages of sweeteners
- 1 large white bowl
- 8 ounces of water

### Directions:

Pour all 3 packages of oatmeal, with the 8 sweeteners, into a large white bowl. Pour Chike into bowl and mix well. Scrape the cream filling from the cookies into hot pot insert. Add mixture and heat inside of hot pot until hot. Cook rice inside of bag and let sit until done. Pour rice into bowl when done. Mix ingredients together and let sit in bowl until it cools and solidifies. Lastly add cream from cookies as a topping. Texture should be firm yet moist. Enjoy!

# Seven lessons for living well in close quarters



James Michael Mallory  
Wynne Unit

**D**uring my tenure as a ward of the state, I have had the company of some good cellies and a few bad ones. Each was a learning experience. As I look back on the past, I realize that some of the negativity I experienced was at least partly my own fault.

From these and other misadventures, I have culled a few simple lessons for living well in close quarters. By no means should the following list be thought of as comprehensive, nor am I a professionally trained psychologist. Certainly there are situations that are beyond the scope of this article. It behooves everyone concerned to remember that our safety must come first. A good rule of thumb is to err on the side of caution, and when in doubt, contact a staff member.

So, without further ado, here are my seven pieces of sage advice for cellies:

- **Communicate: people are not mind readers.** If something your celly does bothers you, talk to them about it in a civil manner. This would also be a good time to invite your roomie to let you know if you are doing anything that irritates them. Accept the fact that no one is perfect and, from time to time, you two are going to get on each other's nerves.
- **Small disagreements are not the end of the world.** Try to keep things in perspective. Is it such a big deal that your celly uses more than their fair share of the toilet paper? In the grand scheme of things, the toilet paper issue is small potatoes.
- **Cut each other some slack.** Prison can be a challenging environment and having a friend can make a big difference in the quality of your day-to-day experi-

ence. Would you rather enjoy your living situation or have every day be a chore to get through? A light mood starts with you.

- **Cleanliness is everyone's responsibility.** Taking care of your personal hygiene, cleaning up after yourself, and attending regularly to basic housework — think scrubbing the toilet and sweeping the floor — is a way to show courtesy and respect. Let's make things easy as possible on each other.
- **Be considerate.** Your celly works late and is still asleep. Would it kill you not to make so much noise early in the morning? Life is about making choices and we can choose to be kind and generous. Besides, the time-tested maxim of "what goes around comes around" is as true now as it was a thousand years ago.
- **Try to take even a small interest in them as a person.** Okay, so your celly is cranky and generally not a big conversationalist, but what about those letters he gets from his mom once a week? Offering a "How's your mom doing?" can give you two something agreeable to talk about. Building a bridge starts with one small section.
- **Establish appropriate boundaries.** It is critical for us, as healthy human beings, to have boundaries. That is, we all need to have a clear and reasonable idea of what behaviors we will and will not put up with. For example, I can tolerate a cluttered desk but I cannot abide dirty dishes left in the sink. Again, communication here is key.
- **Your health and safety come first.** If you feel that you are in danger, contact a staff member immediately. ♣

**Famous Quote:**  
**'Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.'**  
— Dale Carnegie

# Sudoku

### Easy

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

### Difficult

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