

Lifers' Unlimited Club Newsletter Oregon State Penitentiary

Volume 54, Issue 1

Edited by Robert P. Langley

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**As your club,
please know
that we look to
serve you, its
members.
Therefore, we
invite your
feedback on
how we can
best do so.**

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Happy New Year



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Dear Members:

Well, here's hoping 2021 goes better than 2020. Fortunately, we ended the year on a high note thanks, in large part, to the success of the Union Supply Holiday packages and AIC Christmas bags. Notably, the Union Supply Holiday packages arrived on time (2,143 individual boxes) and, thanks to the hard work of many, were timely distributed to 985 AIC at the institution. Given the program's success, let's hope the administration will allow us to do it again in 2021.

On a different topic, a big thanks to Chris for all of his work on the telephone, email correspondence, etc.; which, allowed us to get the deals we needed in order to make 2020's the best Christmas bags ever... And, on that note, I'd also like to thank all of the other clubs for their contributions to the 2020 Christmas bags – their contributions helped us take them over the top. Finally, I'd like to extend my gratitude to our very own Roger Martin for sharing his connections with Pacific Coast Produce, which, allowed us to get the excellent fruit cups. (Thanks Roger!).



Besides the holiday programs, I hope everyone is enjoying the three microwave ovens the Lifers' Club was able to purchase and install in the barn. As an aside, and a forewarning, as of yet, the Lifers' Club hasn't received very many donations to support their upkeep and/or replacement when they burn out. Please remember the only way these microwaves will be repaired and/or replaced is through AIC donations. Thanks for your attention to this matter.

There is no new information on when visiting will reopen, or, for that matter, when our club meetings will be able to resume. I'll let you know when we learn something new; hopefully, everything will get back on track early this year.

Congratulations to Jeff McCarty for being elected Treasurer for the Lifers' Unlimited Club. In an effort to be more transparent, I've asked Jeff to begin publishing a monthly update on the status of the Lifers' Club financial account. That information is included in this newsletter and we hope that you review it. Please note with all of the fallout from the pandemic and state wildfires the Lifers' Club spent more money than we made in 2020. Furthermore, as you may recall, I didn't ask for any grants in 2020 because of the communities' greater needs brought on by the setbacks connected to the pandemic, wildfires and social justices causes. In spite of this, 2020 was a good year and we're in a manageable starting position for 2021. So, with that said, our immediate goals will be to focus on fundraisers and strengthening the infrastructure of our club.

Lastly, as you may know our Vice President (Marty Wendt) decided to take the last two weeks of the year off by getting himself quarantined; which, I can only assume was his way of getting out of the work related to inventorying and distributing the 2,143 Union Supply Holiday packages and over 1,900 Christmas bags! Anyway, here's wishing him the best in health and spirit. (Rest assured that I'm saving some work for him once he's cleared quarantine – he's not going to get off that easy!).

In closing, please take care of yourselves and let's continue to stay focused on doing the things that are necessary to defeat the pandemic and bring some normalcy back to our lives.

Here's wishing you all a safe and Happy New Year.

~ Peace ~

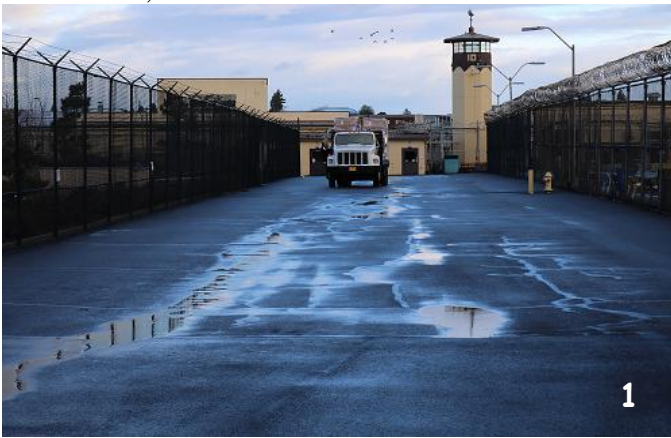
Robert Kelley,

President Lifers' Unlimited Club

Making The Most Out of a Bad Year

I think we can all agree that the year 2020 was, for the most part, a dumpster fire. With that in mind there's an old adage in sports that goes "it's not how you start but how you finish that matters." Accordingly, the Lifers' Unlimited Club extends its gratitude to all the staff and AIC who "finished strong" by coming together and, collectively, turning December 2020 into a huge success. As evidence, we present the following montage that not only narrates the success we experienced; but also captures the spirit of those who worked, unselfishly, for the greater good of our community. (RPL).

**Lifers' Unlimited Club Photo Montage of the Union
Supply Holiday Packages and AIC Christmas Bags –
From Start to Finish**













Here's hoping that everyone enjoyed the 2020 Holiday Season. The Lifers' Unlimited Club extends its gratitude to all of the staff and AIC participants who helped make the Holiday Season a success. Here's looking forward to doing it all over again next year. ~ Peace ~

Photo Numbers:

Photo 1 – Union Supply holiday packages begin arriving on 12/21/2020.

Photo 2 – Marty greeting the holiday packages.

Photos 3-6 – Holiday packages heading to the back dock to be unloaded.

Photos 7-9 – The unloading begins...there were 2,143 boxes unloaded.

Photos 10-12 – Holiday packages being sorted by block and cell number in the Activities Department. 985 AIC received a holiday package.

Photos 13-21 – Reyes, Bob, Jeff and Chris preparing the Christmas bags.

Photos 22-25 – Staff and AIC “production line.” Over 20 different items went into each Christmas bag.

Photo 26 – Brandon Kelly putting the PCP fruit cups in the Christmas bags.

Photos 27-36 – Various staff and AIC working to put the Christmas bags together.

Photo 37 – 1,932 Christmas bags ready for delivery!

Photos 38-42 – Santa and his helpers making Christmas Eve deliveries.

Photo 43 – Santa signing off until next Christmas. (RPL).

A Message of Hope from Oregon CURE

December 2020

“Hello to you on the inside from me on the outside.

I write this in an effort to offer you hope, if you don't have it, and to grow your hope if you do have it.

In 1998, my only two children were arrested and over the next two years, each went through a criminal trial, was found guilty and was convicted and sentenced to prison.

My 14-year old (too young for Measure 11 by one year) was waived into adult court and given a sentence of 30 to life.

My 18-year old was given the mandatory sentence under Measure 11, of 25 years.

It has been a long many years from 1998 till now, and I can tell you it has certainly had its' ups and downs, yet along the way, the one thing that remained the same, is that we never gave up hope.

In 2016, after 18 years of incarceration, my younger son, was released from prison, just a month before his 32nd birthday.

In June of this year, his brother, my older son, was released from prison after having served just under 22 years, at the age of 40. I share this with you for as I say, to offer hope. There never along the way was any reason to believe that my sons would serve any less than the 25 and 30 years that they were sentenced to. We feel blessed, we feel grateful, we know that the hope we kept alive is what kept us moving forward toward the freedom they both now enjoy and the family we are in freedom united as.

Please keep your hope alive, never give up and know that better days await you.

Seasons' Greetings & all the best in the New Year to you & yours, from me & mine & Oregon CURE. Happy Holidays!" Karen

Oregon Department of Corrections director offers new vision for criminal justice – Colette Peters hopes to build a more effective system with help from fellow Catholics

Prisons should be places where punishment is the absence of freedom and community, but where "everything else models life on the outside to every degree possible" and prisoners are treated with dignity, according to Colette Peters, director of the Oregon Department of Corrections and a lifelong Catholic. The faithful, she said, are "a key piece" in creating such a correctional system.

Peters will be one of several speakers at an April 13 prison ministry conference hosted by the Archdiocese of Portland at Mount Angel Abbey.

Linda Showman, of the archdiocesan Office of Prison Ministry, hopes to draw "registrants with big hearts and serious concern about the widespread causes and effects of crime, mass incarceration and Jesus' mandate in Matthew 25 to visit the imprisoned."

As a former victims advocate, Peters knows well the issues faced by both victims

and the incarcerated. "For every person in custody, there is at least one victim, and being victimized is a horrific thing," Peters said. "It is easy for us to be afraid, especially if we watch the 5 o'clock news."

Yet her faith and experience challenge the notion that people must respond in fear or without a sense of an inmate's humanity or potential. "We are so afraid that we label prisoners as monsters and demons," said Peters. "Some in our care and custody, it will never be safe to have them in our community. But they are rare."

While most "have done horrible things or they wouldn't have landed in prison, I believe people can change, make different choices," she said. "And I believe in forgiveness." Peters sees her career as a vocation, and her faith and work are interwoven. "For me that whole notion of taking people in for who they are and helping them from that place where they are at — that's what Jesus did," she said.

In her job managing Oregon's 14 prisons, Peters oversees the DOC's 10-year plan, referred to as Destination 2026. She'll address the plan at the Portland archdiocesan conference.

As part of Destination 2026's aim to build a stronger correctional system, DOC officials have been studying Norwegian prisons — "the best in the world," said Peters. Norway incarcerates far fewer people than the United States, and its recidivism rate is about half Oregon's.

There are a number of ways to calculate recidivism, but looking at the number of convictions or incarcerations three years after release, Oregon's recidivism rate is between 30-40 percent, lower than the national average.

Last fall, Peters sent a group of seven corrections officers to observe the Norwegian system firsthand. Officers now are working to implement what they learned.

Prisons in Norway are "grounded in normalization and humanization," Peters explained.

"They believe that you send people to prison as punishment, not for punishment," she said. The "normalization" means "the absence of freedom and of community — that is the punishment, period," with life inside the prison walls otherwise modeling life outside.

The "humanization" refers to "interacting in a normal human way" with those who are incarcerated, said Peters. It's the belief that "people are not defined by their crime."

Norwegians, she said, see their correctional system as "helping to create good neighbors, because most people are coming back out into their communities."

Catholics can play a role in creating such a system. Peters hires chaplains, "but we couldn't provide the religious foundation and ceremonial opportunities to those in our care and custody without the volunteers" from outside faith communities, she said.

There is a way to go when it comes to offering a full Catholic faith life inside prison.

"It's normal and expected for us as Catholics to go to Sunday Mass and receive holy Communion; it's normal and expected for us to participate in the sacrament of confession regularly, or at least once a year," she said. "We are not offering services to that degree inside our institutions."

Peters, though, is heartened by the Archdiocese of Portland's focus on prison ministry. Expansion of the ministry is one of the archdiocese's pastoral priorities.

"I'm over-the-top excited" about Archbishop Alexander Sample's "vision and that he's putting the passion and resources into creating" a comprehensive ministry, said Peters.

She added that faith ministry not only helps those in her charge but improves the well-being of staff. The stress of the job takes a toll: Life expectancy for a corrections officer is 58 years, according to Peters. For the average American it's 78.

Peters feels hopeful about the future. She pointed to the First Step Act, which reforms parts of the federal criminal justice system. It passed with overwhelming support from Republicans and Democrats, and President Donald Trump signed it into law last December. Pope Francis, she said, humanizes prisoners; he's washed their feet and celebrated Mass in prison. In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown "is learning about and supporting what we do," and there's Archbishop Sample's commitment to prison ministry.

"We now have the research that shows how to do this work," said Peters. "I think that the country is ready to change its thinking about criminal justice." (From 12/14/2020 Oregon Department of Corrections director offers new vision for criminal justice - Catholic Sentinel <https://catholicsentinel.org/MobileContent/Faith-Spirituality/Living-Faith/Article/Oregon-Department-of-Corrections-director-offers-new-vision-for-crimin...> 3/3) (RPL).



SOME INTERESTING LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE NUMBERS

There are approximately 53,200 people in the United States doing Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentences – also known as the “other death penalty.” In addition 44,000 more have “de facto” LWOP sentences – those of more years than the human life span. Racism is clear and obvious in the unequal treatment of Black people at every stage of the police, court and penal system. It’s clear in the decisions made by prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims’ advocates, service providers, juries, judges, prison staff and probation officers. Many studies show that racial disparities increase with the severity of the punishment imposed.

Not surprisingly, while Black people are 13% of the U.S. population, they are nearly 50% of those with LWOP sentences and “de facto” LWOP sentences. In nine states – Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, and South Carolina – Black people make up two-thirds or more with LWOP sentences.

LWOP sentences have existed in this country for well over a century. The U.S. Supreme Court first endorsed them in 1851. Before 1979, however, only seven states had LWOP statutes and they were rarely used. Ironically, LWOP sentences take the lives of more Black youth, women and men across our country than deaths at the hands of police and capital punishment combined. (Source: The Center for Life Without Parole Studies). (RPL).

Update: Time Does Not Fit The Crime (Measure 11 reform)

As you may recall, towards the end of last year Steve Weavill (Facilitator Lifers' Unlimited Club) helped coordinate a fundraiser under the auspicious of the Lifers' Club to raise money for *Time Does Not Fit The Crime* (TDNFTC), a Measure 11 reform group. The fundraiser was a major success, raising \$2,500 to help TDNFTC's grassroots effort to get the legislature to approve “good time” for AIC who were sentenced under Measure 11. Special thanks to the following Oregon State Penitentiary Clubs for their donations: Lifers' Unlimited Club, Latino Club, Uhuru Sasa, Capital Toastmasters, I/M Photos, Car Show, OSP Veterans, Narcotics Anonymous, Asian Pacific Family, Lakota Oyate Ki, 7th Step Foundation and Yard Donations. After TDNFTC received their \$2,500 check they



wrote, in part: “Thank you so much for the \$2,500 donation. It will go a long way in getting Newsletters and information out to AIC’s and loved ones. I also appreciated the pictures. It’s always nice to see who we are talking with and the picture of a large size check, nice! Put a smile on my face. Reasons like this is why I go out of my way and put in hour after hour to fight for all on [Measure 11] to be able to earn good time. Equal rights for all. * * * Thank everyone involved in getting this money together and donating to our cause.”

So far, TDNFTC’s efforts have produced Senate Bill 191, which seeks good time for those sentenced under Measure 11. For more information about how you and/or your friends and family can help TDNFTC get Senate Bill 191 passed, please contact them at reform11@gmail.com and ask them how you can help. Keep in mind; their success is our success. Thanks for your support! (RPL).

Lifers' Unlimited Club
Newsletter

Oregon State Penitentiary
Activities Department
2605 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310-0505

Lifers' Unlimited Club 2021 Calendar

Unfortunately, all events are closed until social distancing restrictions are lifted. The Lifers' Club will do our best to keep everyone advised as events and/or circumstances change.

Thank you for your patience.

Curfew. Where does the word curfew come from? It comes from the French term *couver feu*, meaning, "cover the fire." In other words, "put out the fire and go to bed."

Just a reminder the Lifers' Unlimited Club intends to bring back the Pop-Up BBQs in early April. All purchases will be by punch card only. Also, please know that we're open to suggestions as far as the menu goes, therefore, if you have any ideas please send them to the Lifers' Club for consideration. Thanks.



WE ALL HAVE UNLIMITED POWER

Lifers' Unlimited Club Executive Body

President:	Robert Kelley
Vice President:	Marty Wendt
Secretary:	Juan Solis
Treasure:	Jeff McCarty
Facilitator:	Stephen Weavill

Notice: Every day thousands of innocent plants are killed by vegetarians. Help end the violence. Eat more bacon. To assist in your effort the Lifers' Unlimited Club is currently selling Maple Bacon flavored saltwater taffy. One-pound bags are only \$6.00 – don't delay or the vegetarians win!

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Lifer's Unlimited Club is to unite the incarcerated men of OSP with a goal of improving the quality of life for those inside and outside of these walls. The club will work with charity programs, informational services, youth speaking panels and other positive programs. We cannot change the past, however, we believe through rehabilitation and pro-social behavior we can create a more productive future.