

# THE ECHO

*Created by incarcerated people*

NEWS  
FROM  
THE  
INSIDE



VOLUME X | OCTOBER 2024 ISSUE

EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

PENDLETON, OR 97801

## AFSP SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS WALK

First Event After Five-Year Break



Photograph by Phillip Luna

Participants of the event received wristbands.

**"I WAS IN A NEGATIVE** situation, feeling bad about myself and choices I had made. I decided to end my own life," said Donald Kuehne, an EOCI resident who attended the Out of The Darkness community walk on Sept. 20, 2024. The event allowed incarcerated people to acknowledge those lost to suicide and those who struggle with thoughts of self-harm.

EOCI's community walk was previously held in 2019. The event was slated to reoccur annually, but the Coronavirus pandemic thwarted plans and sent the event on a five-year hiatus.

For Kuehne, and many like him, the return of the annual walk for awareness was welcome. Kuehne recalled completing a "dry run" in his suicide attempt, prior to becoming

incarcerated. He held an empty 45-caliber weapon to his temple and pulled the trigger. "The hammer sounded off. Click ... I thought to myself, 'that was fast, this just might be easy.'"

The annual walk is a reminder and acknowledgment that Kuehne and those like him are not alone – even in the prison setting.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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Direct questions and comments to EOCI Institution Work Programs (IWP). All views and opinions expressed are those of the contributing writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Corrections.

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**The Echo - Mission Statement**

To serve the incarcerated community by providing monthly news and other important information, while highlighting the human experience in the carceral setting.

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# COST OF PRISON PHONE CALLS EXPECTED TO REDUCE

## FCC Issues Rate Caps to Reduce Prices Starting in January 2024

Written by Chris Ainsworth, staff writer

**"I REALLY HOPE** someday we see meaningful change pass through the Oregon legislature, making phone calls cheaper or completely free," discussed EOCI resident Keaton Stephens during an interview with The Echo in January 2024. That day of reckoning may soon be at hand.

In July 2024 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted on implementing a number of new regulations impacting phone and video calling services in prisons and jails throughout the nation. Regulations will reduce the cost of both, saving AICs and their families millions of dollars a year.

Thanks to the 2022 Martha Wright-Reed Fair and Just Communications Act, the FCC is able to require prison phone companies to drop rates. Effective Jan. 1, 2025, phone rates are expected to reduce to six cents per minute while video visit rates will be reduced to 16 cents per minute.

The regulation also prohibits companies from charging additional or hidden fees for "ancillary services" like making a deposit to a calling account.

At the current rate of nine cents per minute in ODOC facilities, if an AIC were to make a 30-minute call every other day, by the end of the month they would have spent \$40.50.

Compared to the average pay of \$45.00 a month for an entry level work assignment, AICs are not left much to purchase necessities such as shampoo, soap and toothpaste.

Often the burden on phone and video calls falls on the families of incarcerated people.

Thanks to new rate caps the burden of communication between AICs and their loved ones will become a little easier to bare.

Another major directive from the FCC prevents companies from appropriating funds that AICs leave behind upon release. The FCC intends to require companies to make "reasonable efforts" to return the funds when they know an AIC has been released or when funds have gone unused for 180 days.

According to the Prison Policy Institute, those unused funds were converted into a form of profit that

amounted to more than 1.2-million-dollars per month for industry giant GTL.

The prison communications business sector of the United States is a 1.5-billion-dollar industry that has long been monopolized by three companies: Securus Technologies, Global Tel Link (GTL) and IC Solutions. The three powerhouses control 90% of the market.

Currently, it is unclear how the rate caps will impact the market or availability of phone and video calls for incarcerated people. For those in ODOC custody, phone calls will potentially reduce in cost by 33% while the cost of video visits may reduce by just over 25%. |ECHO

Tier (ADP)	Audio Rate Caps (Permanent) (Per minute)		Video Rate Caps (Interim) (Per minute)	
	Current Caps	New Caps	Current Caps	New Caps
Prisons (any ADP)	\$0.14*	\$0.06	N/A	\$0.16
Large Jails (1,000+)	\$0.16*	\$0.06	N/A	\$0.11
Med. Jails (350-999)	\$0.21	\$0.07	N/A	\$0.12
Small Jails (100-349)	\$0.21	\$0.09	N/A	\$0.14
Very Small Jails (0-99)	\$0.21	\$0.12	N/A	\$0.25

\*Rate caps issued by the FCC, according to the Prison Policy Institute.

\*\*ADP is Average Daily Population

AROUND EOCI

# COLD SHOWERS AND COLD COFFEE

## Housing Unit Loses Hot Water; Shower Trailer Brought in to Accommodate

Written by Chris Ainsworth, staff writer



### **"YOU TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.**

When you wake up in the morning ... and go to make a cup of hot coffee," reflected Dominic Manson, a resident on housing unit A2. Hot water is something often taken for granted. But it goes beyond the task of making a cup of coffee; it extends to washing dishes and taking showers.

The first week of September, EOCI's A-building lost its hot water. The buildings heat exchanger stopped working, which heats water for the on-unit showers and for sinks inside each cell. The heat exchanger was expected to take eight weeks to replace.

The separate hot water heater for the dayroom sink is still working, which is used for making coffee, other food items or washing dishes.

Unfortunately for AICs like Manson, his work assignment starts at 8

a.m., before the dayroom is open for AICs to use.

Generally, Manson makes his instant freeze dried morning coffee using the hot water from the sink in his cell. Not anymore.

"A heat exchanger is a steam operated water-heater," explained apprentice plumber Brian Hardegger. "It uses copper coils to heat the water." The broken heat exchanger prompted a mobile shower trailer to be brought to EOCI.

The shower trailer arrived and was set up within 36 hours.

The 10 shower stalls are shared by the over 200 AICs of A-building.

In order to take a shower, AICs must sign up ahead of time and are sent to the shower trailer in groups of 10. Once those 10 are finished they return to their housing unit and another group is sent.

Three housing units (A1, A2 and A3) participate in the process of 10 showers at a time. Earlier in the month unit A4 was moved to the empty unit on the fourth floor of B-building. They drew the lucky straw.

"It takes time to find a new heat exchanger," clarified Hardegger. "That's why it normally takes six to eight weeks."

Fortunately, the turnaround time has been quicker than expected. According to Superintendent Dave Pedro, the heat exchanger is expected to be up and running nearly three weeks earlier than anticipated due to the "outstanding physical plant staff and workers."

The new heat exchangers cost \$70,000. Not only is replacing the exchangers time consuming but replacing them is expensive.

EOCI was remodeled in 1986 when it was converted from a mental hospital into a prison.

The disciplinary segregation unit and honor units H1 and H2 are part of the newest constructed buildings in the facility. These building were constructed in the 1990s.

"H unit is newer and gas-powered," explained Hardegger. "The A block heat exchanger is from 1988."

The heat exchangers that support building B, C, E, F, and G are from the 80s as well and could experience the same failures in the near future. |ECHO

# CUCURBIT POWDERY MILDEW

Westside Garden Plots Effected by Fungal Disease; Vegetables Continue to Grow Strong

Written by Walter Thomas, staff writer

**SQUASH, ZUCCHINI** and cucumbers around the compound are looking rather odd and discolored. The vegetables are growing strong, but the leaves are dying.

These plants have cucurbit powdery mildew, or *Podosphaeraxanthii*. The fungal disease can spread quickly and can be identified by its white powdery appearance on the leaves, which looks like flour spilled on the plants.

According to the website Growveg.com, "This fungus clogs up the leaf's pores and blocks light to its photosynthetic cells, so the plants are weakened in their ability to use the light as an energy source."

Unfortunately, the thriving fungus loves hot dry weather, which is common in Pendleton, Ore.



Powdery mildew on plant leafs in the west compound.

Photograph by Phillip Luna

Most plant diseases can be controlled by oil fungicides.

AIC greenhouse workers Brett Lloyd and Joe Tuttle stated that due to the fast growth of the fungi

they were unable to treat in time. Luckily the season is almost over.

"The severity of the disease this year affected the yields, but not the quality and the flavors of the vegetables," said Lloyd. |ECHO

## MOVIE NIGHT

A Welcome Return

Written by Shane Goins, correspondent

**FINALLY! IT'S BEEN** almost five years since the EOCI movie theatre has been available to AICs. COVID-19 halted the monthly movie event in the multipurpose building - but now it's back on a regular basis.

The only difference in 2024 is there are no concessions available for purchase (one free popcorn is offered).

It started on Aug. 25, 2024 with the Bob Marley story "One Love." On Monday, Sept. 30, "The Fall Guy," based on the popular 80s television series of the same name, was played.



Sept. 30, 2024 - The movie "Fall Guy" was projected on the wall in the multipurpose building.

Photograph by Efrain Berrelleza

The upcoming movie will be "The Bike Riders" on Oct. 20.

There is currently no indication of when concessions will be sold again, but movie offerings and

other events are expected to continue.

Flyers for additional events and sign up forms were posted on housing unit bulletin boards on Oct.

3. |ECHO



Photographs by Phillip Luna

Sept. 6, 2024 - Cellist Cheifetz performs in the multipurpose building.

# THE FLORESTAN PROFESSOR OF CELLO

## Hamilton Cheifetz Visits EOCI and Performs Solo Concert

Written by Walter Thomas, staff writer

**ON FRIDAY SEPT. 6,** 2024, Chicago native and cellist Hamilton Cheifetz, performed classical music inside the EOCI multipurpose gymnasium. Several dozen AICs and staff attended this tuneful event.

The solo concert started with a Prelude of Cello Suite No.1 from famous composer Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. The experience was just short of magical; the notes of G major filled the air in a blissful chain of congruence.

"I really enjoyed the experience and how much he has invested into his craft over the years," said John Cook, an EOCI resident who at-

tended the event.

Cheifetz knows that some audiences may find classical music dull, but he believes the artist makes the concert exciting, giving character and changing what he feels is a false perception.

"Classical music is not boring, there's just boring musicians," stated Cheifetz who is the Florestan Professor of Cello at Portland State University College of the Arts.

Cheifetz said he was once apprehensive about performing classical music in prisons.

But recently, Cheifetz started bring-

ing Portland State University (PSU) students to perform in Oregon prisons. After playing for AICs at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, his students told him this was the best audience they have ever played for.

"When you play music for people you can feel their energy," he said.

Cheifetz performed as a soloist at EOCI. His students were not in attendance for the event.

He began playing the cello at the tender age of seven after he was gifted an instrument by his parents. Cheifetz performed his first concert



at just eleven years old.

He studied at Indiana University, and eventually became an assistant to Professor Ttsuyoshi Tsutsumi at the University of Western Ontario.

Tsutsumi is an award winning, internationally renowned Japanese cellist.

Cheifetz received numerous awards over his lifetime, including the Piatigorsky Prize at Tanglewood. Tanglewood is a Boston, Mass., musical venue and home of three prestigious music schools: The Tanglewood Music Center, Tanglewood Learning Center, and Boston University Tanglewood.

The Piatigorsky Prize is awarded for excellence. Anyone who played in the orchestra can be considered for the award.

Cheifetz has blessed the ears of many over the years, with highlights that include playing at the White House for President Jimmy Carter.

In 1977 an anonymous donor sent a substantial contribution to the Port-

land State University art programs and the broader music community. This allowed The Florestan Professor of Cello role to be established at the university.

Cheifetz also plays regularly in a group called The Florestan Trio (Florestan is a character in "Fidelio," an opera by Ludwig Van Beethoven).

After his EOCI performance, Cheifetz opened the floor to questions. AICs were made inquires and shared their opinions of the performance.

Currently the music program at EOCI has a variety of instruments available and teachers willing to assist anyone looking to expand their musical abilities. Students may enroll in two independent studies or song writing workshops. The number of participants is limited but there's a wait-list on the more popular classes.

Recently, a cello and upright bass were donated to EOCI. Unfortunately, there are no current cello classes, but there are beginner bass classes on Wednesdays.

Students must be incentive level three to participate in music classes and can sign up by sending a communication form to the Recreation Department. |ECHO



AIC music instructor Tim Taylor talked with Cheifetz after the event.

## FEATURE



Photographs by Phillip Luna

# AFSP SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS WALK

## First Event After Five-Year Break

Written by Walter Thomas, staff writer

*(...continued from front page)*

AIC peer-support group GOGI partnered with the Correctional Rehabilitation Department to offer the AFSP suicide prevention and awareness walk. The community walk was sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

AICs on both the East and West yards were able to participate by walking the track and wearing bibs with the name of whom they were supporting.

There was an at-cost option to purchase items which included two original pepperoni sticks, two jalapeño pepperoni sticks and one

AFSP bracelet for \$6. Participants could make an additional donation to AFSP.

Booths were set up in each yard. Volunteers from AFSP were in attendance to help facilitate the event.

With a microphone in hand, AFSP volunteer Young Tran spoke to the incarcerated people as part of the opening ceremony.

"Today you joined millions of people worldwide that are walking this month," said Tran. September is suicide prevention and awareness month and often there are community walks in the United States.

The AFSP's mission is to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. They fund scientific research to improve interventions, train clinicians in suicide prevention and advocate for policy that will save lives.

"Suicide affects one in five American families. I was once close to attempting suicide, which fueled my passion to help others," Tran said.

People who struggle with thoughts of self-harm often have a difficult time navigating the emotional ups and downs of life. Despite the large numbers of incarcerated people in

the United States, the prison system can have an isolating effect.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Data & Statistics Fatal Injury Report, "Suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in the United States with an estimated 1.6 million suicide attempts per year." Suicide attempts are exasperated within the carceral setting.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a press release in 2021 which stated that within the last 20 years "The United States has the highest number of prison suicides with 10,453; followed by Russia with 2,408; France with 1,875; and India with 1,556."

Oregon Department of Corrections Behavioral Health Services (BHS) are on-call 24/7. Reporting thoughts of self-harm does not mean an AIC will be placed on suicide watch. Suicide watch is a last resort.

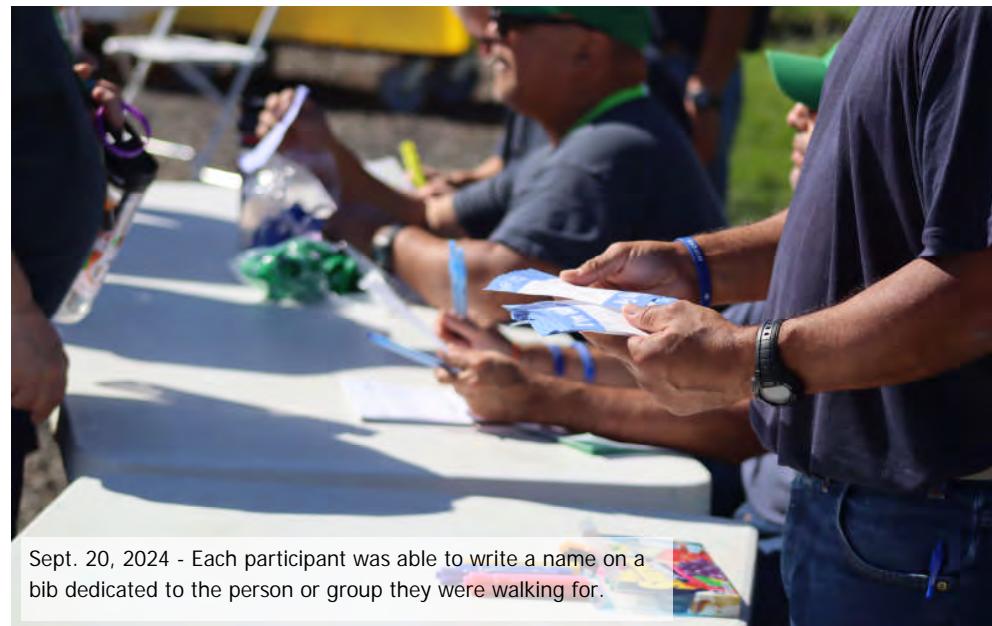
The AFSP national suicide prevention lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. Call, text 988, or text TALK to 741741.

### **Suicide warning signs and things to watch out for:**

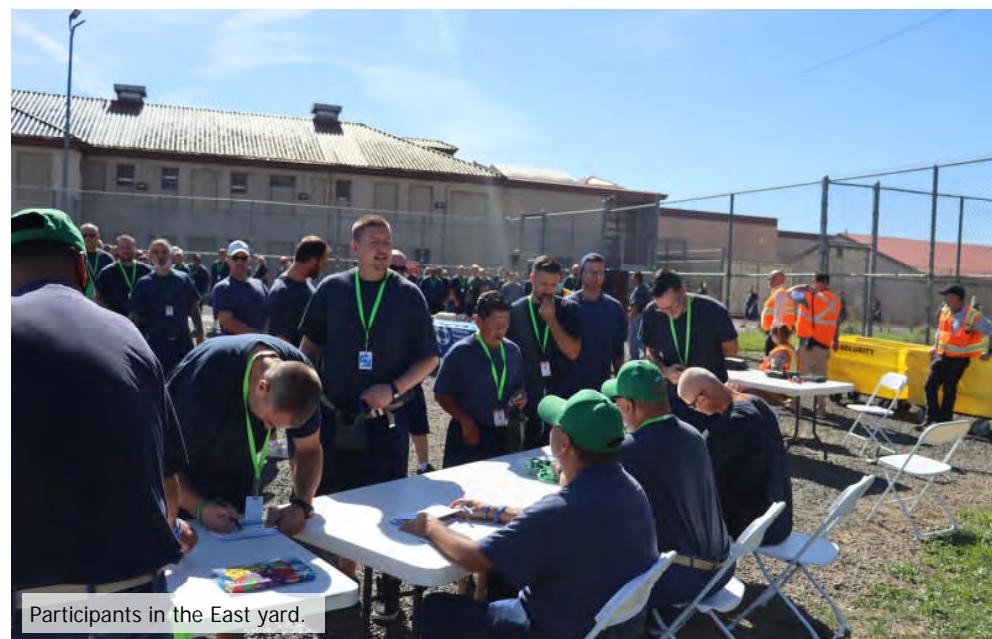
Talking about wanting to die, feelings of hopelessness or having no reason to live, being a burden to others, increased use of alcohol or drugs, or sleeping too little or too much.

### **Tips for those concerned about someone's wellbeing:**

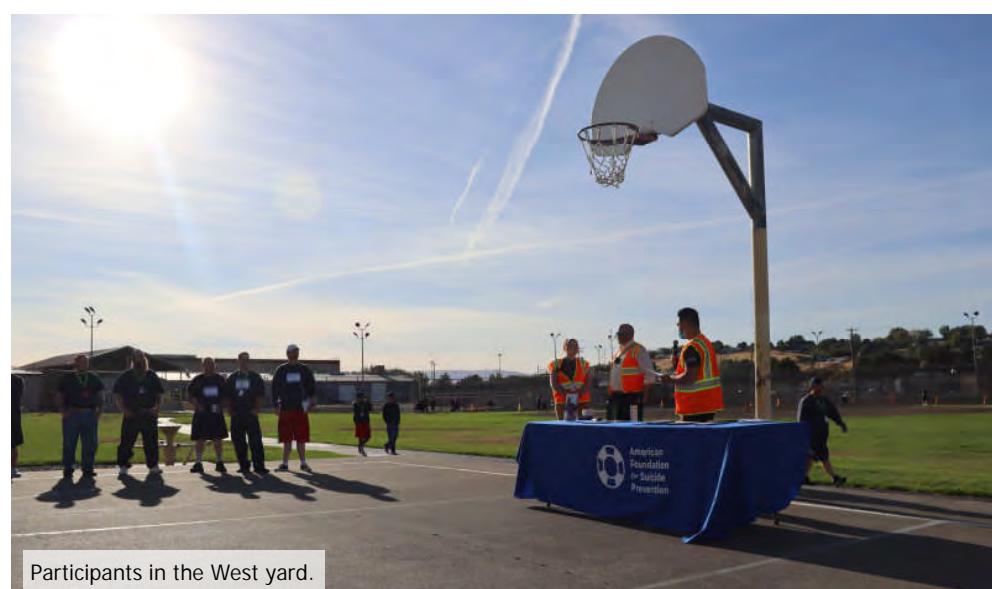
- Talk to them in private and listen to what they say.
- If suicide is the conversation, take them seriously.
- If someone is behaving oddly or may be considering suicide, report it to a staff member. Staff members are required to contact BHS.
- The black bracelets with the text "You Matter" are an indication that a staff member or AIC is willing to speak to someone who is struggling. |ECHO



Sept. 20, 2024 - Each participant was able to write a name on a bib dedicated to the person or group they were walking for.



Participants in the East yard.



Participants in the West yard.



Photographs by Phillip Luna

Sept. 21, 2024.

Seven puppies in the JLAD yard on the east compound. Puppy "White" vies for attention.

# EVERY PUPPY NEEDS A NAME

Puppies Close to Being Named; Four of Seven Expected to Remain at EOCI

Written by Chris Ainsworth, staff writer

**EVERY PUPPY NEEDS** a name. Even a name as simple as Dog. For the first eight weeks of their lives, however, newborn puppies at EOCI have temporary names - if colors can be called names.

For simplicity, each newborn puppy was given a colored collar and that color became their temporary name.

The seven puppies were born on Aug. 5, 2024 and are being raised as part of the JLAD service dog training program.

Of the seven puppies born, four are male and three are female.

The JLAD program expects four will remain at EOCI and the other three will be distributed to other organizations participating in the breeding co-op.

Puppies are not given their official names until they are between six and eight weeks old.

Originally, the puppies were named at random. After some thought, Joy St. Peter, founder of the JLAD program, decided to select names similar to how hurricanes and tropical storms are named by letter.

Each birthing cycles is given names that start with a letter of the alpha-

bet, in order. This is now the third time St. Peter and the JLAD program are cycling their way through the alphabet.

On occasion, naming breaks from this format. A past a birthing cycle landed on the letter "U," but this happened around Thanksgiving so all the puppies were given names that related to the holiday.

For this litter, puppy names will begin with the letter "A." As an added layer, each name is voted on by the public through the JLAD Facebook page.

This naming method allows St. Pe-

ter to know basic info about the dog just by hearing its name. Information like when the canine was born, an approximant age and who the birth mother was.

The seven puppies started as fur balls but have grow into young canines, ready to be trained. However, in the last week of September they were taken out of the institution to receive their required shots and veterinary appointments before starting their training.

Only four will return, two males and two females; when they make their next appearance at EOCI they will have official names—each starting with the letter A.

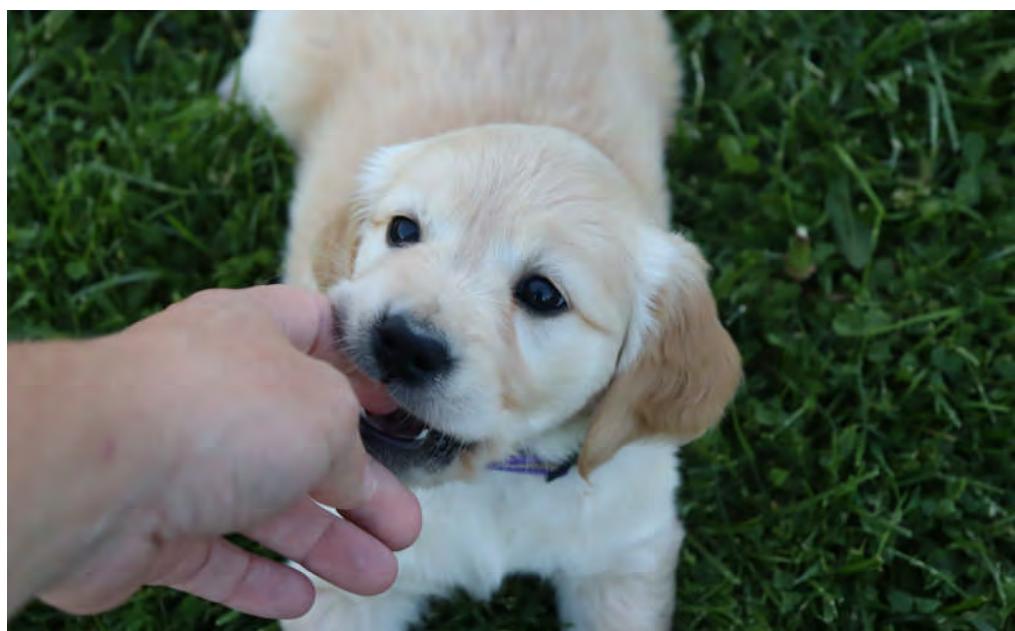
August was a busy month for the JLAD program. The program is one of 160 accredited organizations that fall under the Assistance Dogs International umbrella.

In order to retain that recognition JLAD must successfully complete an audit every five years. That five-year audit took place mid-August, about a week after the puppies were born.

ADI is the leading authority in the assistance dog industry. "It establishes and promotes excellence in all areas of assistance dog acquisition, training and partnership," according to a press release acknowledging the successful completion of JLAD's recent audit.

Next up for JLAD will be a Passing of the Leash ceremony which will occur on Oct. 7. The ceremony is an opportunity to show off the successful training of the service animals to staff and the new owners of the assistance dogs. |ECHO

Puppies play in the JLAD yard on Sept. 21, 2024. Photos from top to bottom: Six-week old "Purple" stared at the camera before charging the photographer; "Purple" refused to be pet, chews finger; Puppies played and interacted.



## AROUND EOCI



Photograph by Phillip Luna

## PALM TREES OR KALE PLANTS?

Harvested Kale Plants Give EOCI Garden Plot a Californian Feel

Written by Chris Ainsworth, staff writer

**PALM TREES** generally find their home in warm dry climates, like those found in California, not in Oregon. However, those who pass by the east gate at EOCI may have noticed mini palm trees in one of the gardening plots.

Upon closer inspection they don't exactly look like palm trees. Mainly they lack the one thing that would classify them as palm trees - palms. These palm tree shaped plants look

more like an oddly grown kale plant. And they are.

When harvesting leafy greens there are a few options. The first is to chop the plant at its base and harvest the entire growth all at once.

The other is to harvest parts of the plant that are the oldest as they become harvestable, letting the plant continue to grow throughout the season.

"With kale, chard and some of those basic greens you always want to harvest from the outside in," explained Master Gardner facilitator Joseph Tuttle, "to take the heart out would kill the plant and it wouldn't grow anymore."

This is how a kale plant can resemble a dwarf palm tree.

"To harvest the whole thing at once you are only getting what you've got there," stated Tuttle. "Harvesting this way, they lasted since May."

Over time the plant continues to grow upward sprouting new leaves while the stock remains bare where the plant was strategically harvested to maximize the yield.

"We've gotten multiple harvests," recalled Tuttle. "At least once a month we have gotten a big bag or two from it."

While it may look like someone was having fun pruning the plant to take on the look of another, it was done with purpose. |ECHO

## GOGI FUNDRAISER

Over Seven Hundred Burritos Sold

Written by Brooklyn Sasso, staff writer

**SEVEN HUNDRED AND** eight, that's how many burritos the GOGI fundraiser sold with an anticipated profit of \$5,000 dedicated to rehabilitative efforts within the facility.

The fundraiser handout, which offered authentic burritos, conchas (sweet bread), bolillos (bread rolls) and beverages from the Super Milton Mexican Store, occurred on Oct. 2 and Oct. 3 in the dining room.

"It was definitely a good turn out," said Juan Diaz, secretary for the GOGI program. "It was different than the typical pizza fundraiser."

GOGI, which is a pro-social peer support group, is also designated as a club with the Department of Corrections. This designation allows the group to propose and facilitate fundraisers at the facility - typically offering Domino's Pizza or a water bottle.

AICs were able to choose from four different burritos - carne asada (beef), alpastor (port with pineapple and citrus flavoring), carnitas (beef), or pollo (chicken).

Carne asada burritos were the most popular with an impressive 312 of the 708 sold.

"I want to give a big thank you to the participants who purchased the items," commented counselor Joe Byrnes, who oversees the GOGI program. "Because of them we [GOGI] are able to do what we do. Also finding a vendor was difficult for the numbers we wanted and we are grateful for the vendor's ability to meet the challenge." |ECHO



Photograph by Philip Luna

## PENDLETON ROUND-UP

### Jets Fly Over; People Dress-Up and Milk Wild Cows

Written by Chris Ainsworth, staff writer

**WHAT COULD CAUSE** a small rural Oregon town's population to swell to three times its normal level? It may be fall classes at a college in a small town like Ashland or the Oregon County Fair held annually outside of Eugene. Each year, however, Oregon holds one of the four major North American Rodeos bringing in an average of 50,000 people - the Pendleton Round-up.

Born in 1910 the Pendleton Round-up was an immediate success. During the second full week of September cowboys and girls come from all over the United States and

Canada to compete in 11 events hoping to bring home the All-Around Cowboy Award.

The festivities start with a parade on a Saturday, where groups from all around eastern Oregon dress up and build floats hoping to win first place. The heart of the event takes place Wednesday through the following Saturday.

Pendleton's Round-up hosts a variety of competitions, such as: bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, calf roping, team roping, steer wrestling, barrel racing, breakaway roping, steer roping, bull riding, Indian relay racing, and wild cow

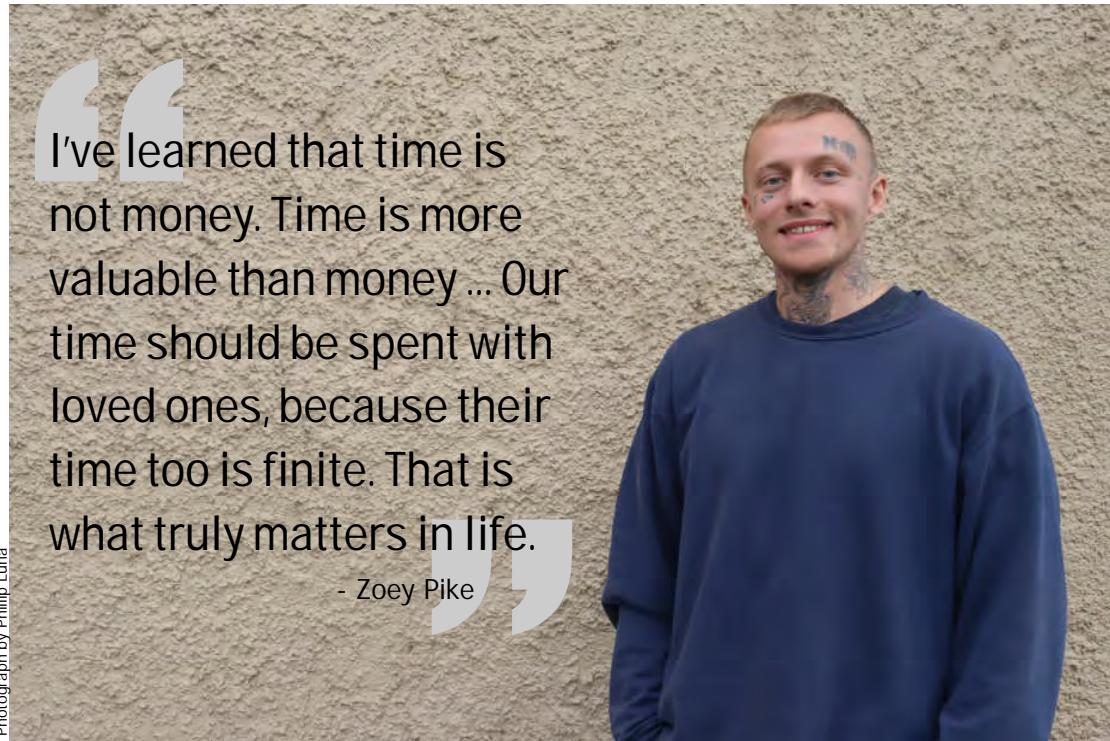
Jets flew over the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution on Sept. 12, 2024, on their way to the Pendleton Round-Up.

milking where teams attempt to lasso and milk a wild cow in specified time limit - an event that combines the unpredictability of a wild cow with quick reflexes, roping skills and laughter.

Each year, a staggering 1,500 volunteers work to ensure the event runs smoothly.

Thanks in part to the tireless work of volunteers the roundup has taken place every year since 1910 with only three exceptions. World War II caused cancelations in 1943 and 1944, while 2020 saw the first cancelation in almost 80 years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

|ECHO



## ABOUT PIKE

Pike has been incarcerated since 2017. The last three years he has been a tutor and Spanish translator in the Education Department. He speaks three languages fluently - English, Spanish, and Portuguese (the latter two he taught himself during his incarceration). He is currently learning Arabic.

Upon his release this December, Pike will be moving to Arizona to be closer to his family. He plans to work in tattoo shops and pursue music as a career.

# WHAT I'VE LEARNED

## With Zoey Pike

Interview by Walter Thomas, staff writer

**One thing that surprised me was...** The amount of intelligent, capable, and kind-hearted people who end up in prison. It proves that someone's worst day does not define them.

**Earlier on, I wish I'd...** Saved money, and let go of my ego.

**The best advice I could give someone is...** Go to sleep every night a better person than you were when you woke up that morning.

**The best item to buy off canteen is...** A pen, so that I can create my own destiny.

**One thing I wish I'd never wasted my money on...** Unnecessary junk food. That money could've been going towards a car, rent, and other necessities today.

**The food I am looking most forward to eating after I release is...** Anything the first woman who I fall in love with cooks for me. Either that or Taco Bell, don't judge me.

**I wish I had spent less time doing...** Complaining. Less time complaining equals more time to actually change my life.

### **The program that helped me the most was...**

New Directions, which allows us to get a higher education while in prison. College is an incredible opportunity that not everyone gets. Plus, they pay most of our tuition.

**Before coming to prison, I would consider myself...** Lost unaware of my own potential. Unaware of how my actions affected others I was ungrateful for the little things.

**Now I consider myself...** Someone who has a positive impact on others. Someone who cherishes every second of life and who appreciates other human beings regardless of our differences.

**The change I'd like to see most in the prison system is...** I'd like to see the communication systems like tablets, phones, and video visits be improved. It breaks my heart when guys can't talk to their family because its too hard to register, they're in another country or money issues. That is not conducive to rehabilitation, nor to society as a whole.

**What I've learned...** I've learned that time is not money. Time is more valuable than money. Money can be spent and easily replenished. Time cannot, while time itself is infinite, the time we have on earth is finite. Our time should be spent with loved ones, because their time too is finite. That is what truly matters in life. The quality time we spend with the people we love. What truly has value is what cannot be replaced. Spend your time bettering yourself, for you and for them. |ECHO

# PRAS RATES ADJUSTED FOR CONSISTENCY

## Interview with IWP Coordinator Ray Peters

Interview by Kurtis Thompson, correspondent

**A MEMO WAS RECENTLY** posted on the tablets about changes to the PRAS Awards that began last January. New tiers and a 25% awards increase were introduced to the PRAS system. Now, ODOC will be updating job position titles and pay-scales to be consistent across all Oregon facilities.

These changes were overseen and voted upon by the PRAS Oversight Committee, a group of ODOC employees from multiple facilities across Oregon.

In short, no matter what facility a person may be at, the name and pay of a job will be the same.

By December of this year, the update at EOCl will be complete and IWP Coordinator Ray Peters answered a few questions about the upcoming changes.

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### **Echo: Are the incoming PRAS changes going to affect the current workload for AICs?**

Peters: No immediate changes are planned as far as shifts or workloads. At this point all that is changing are job titles, and in some cases PRAS Awards will increase slightly.

### **Echo: Will some positions actually pay new-hires less than what was paid previously?**

Peters: In the short version, yes. Depending on how the PRAS Oversight Committee classified job duties, some positions will now have lower PRAS rates than what is currently being awarded.

PRAS awards will essentially be grandfathered in. If you make 11 points and the new classification for that job is now seven points, you will maintain your 11 points until you leave that work assignment.

### **Echo: When does EOCl expect this transition to be fully completed?**

Peters: December of this year.

### **Echo: Do I need to quit and get re-hired to get the new pay-scale?**

Peters: No, you don't need to quit to get the higher pay. Job positions that are currently paying less than the new system allows will automatically receive a raise to reflect the new award.

### **Echo: In the PRAS Revision FAQ it says "if you transfer or leave because of discipline, you'll get the new point level system." That makes the new point level system sound like it's going to be worse than what currently exists.**

Peters: In some cases, the new system will result in lower PRAS points. In those instances, it will be worse. The majority of positions will see a higher PRAS award under the new system. The warning in the FAQ is saying that those who are currently being paid higher than what the new system says will retain their higher pay unless they quit or lose their job due to disciplinary actions.

### **Echo: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

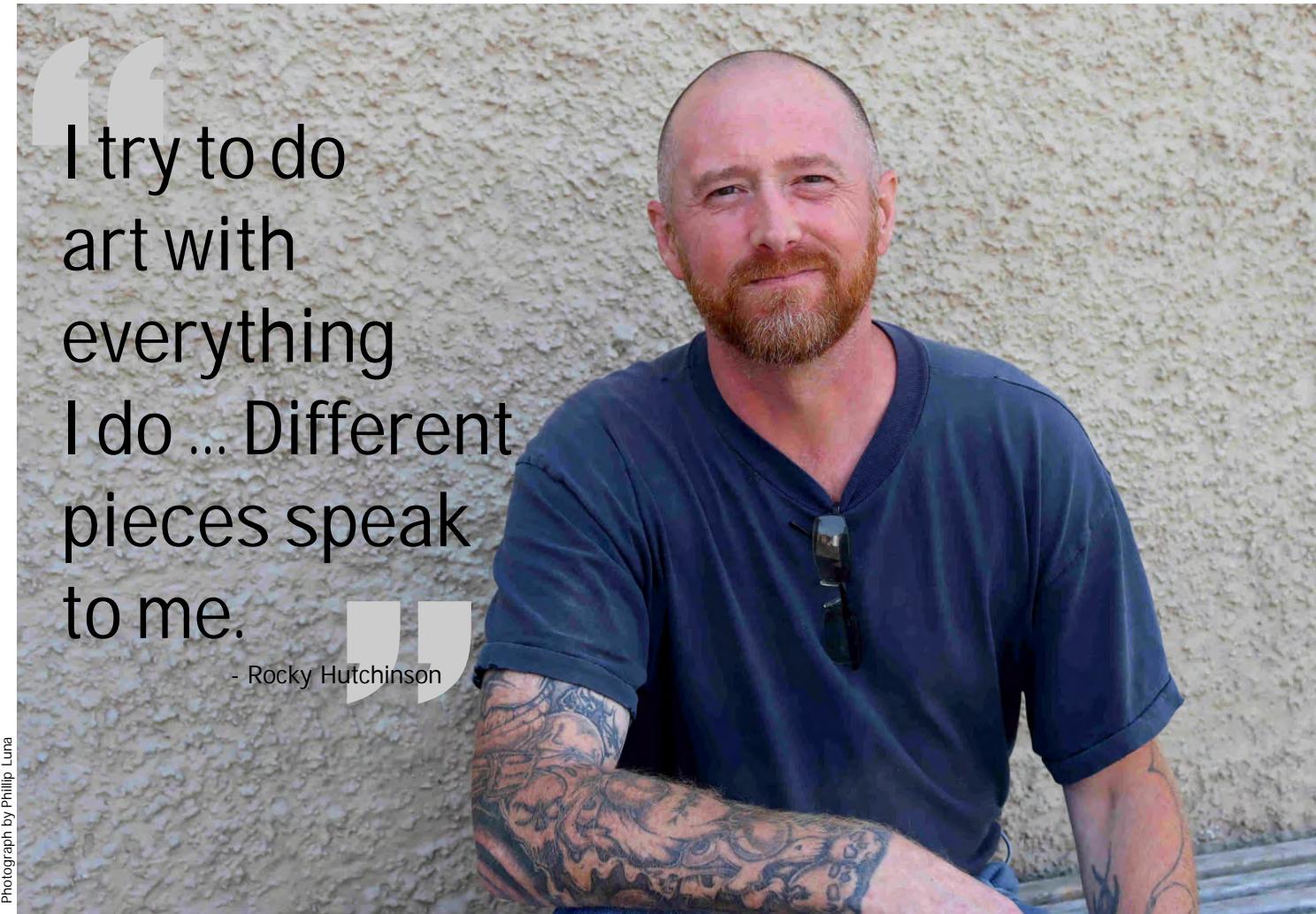
One thing to keep in mind is this new system provides the opportunity for earning PRAS raises in virtually every work assignment. Custodian 1, for example starts out at five points, but can qualify for six points after 90 days, and seven points another 90 days after that.

Raises will also be based on meeting requirements set by the supervisors. Being in a position for 90 days is a minimum requirement, but supervisors are expected to implement goals similar to food services – pass tests, demonstrate skills, perform to a set standard, and then the increase can be earned.

Conversely, the new system gives supervisors the option to reduce PRAS rates for underperformance, which is an alternative to simply being dismissed from a work assignment.

This system levels the playing field. All positions of the same title will start out at the same pay rate. This ensures equality and encourages earned increases based on merit.

Local IWP will no longer have the ability to add positions or change PRAS rates. All changes to things like the number of positions, classification of positions and PRAS rates will be submitted to the PRAS Oversight Committee. They meet regularly to review, approve, or deny changes. This limits our ability to make changes quickly, but ensures consistency among institutions and reasonable input from a diverse number of places. |ECHO



Photograph by Phillip Luna

## A POTTER'S GRANDSON; A PASSING OF OLD BOXCARS; A TIME FOR NEW ART

### Artist Spotlight with Rocky Hutchinson

Co-written by Kurtis Thompson, correspondent and Phillip Luna, editor

**TWENTY YARDS FROM** the razor-wire perimeter of the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution runs a set of heavily used train tracks. The sounds of the Oregon prison are swathed daily in the weighty chug of locomotives transporting goods across the state. Like most trains, graffiti is ubiquitous and sprawling from car to car. Bright colors of chartreuse and fuchsia are outlined with the dripping black paint of a spray can. Some designs are emblematic of the state's growing gang presence, while others offer remarkable prose such as "hi, mom." For many, graffiti is the equivalent of litter - a dirty stain passing through the heart of a

small-town community. For Rocky Hutchinson the passing trains are a fleeting display of artistic talent.

Hutchinson has spent the last 17 years incarcerated but finds art – even graffiti – helpful in keeping him grounded. This creative interest was discovered during his tumultuous childhood.

Born to a 14-year-old mother, he has seen substance addiction and tragedy in the home. Art was a welcome diversion.

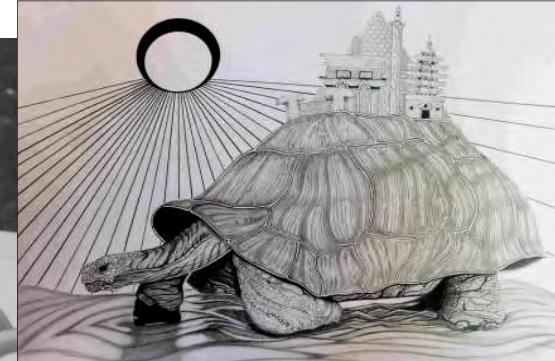
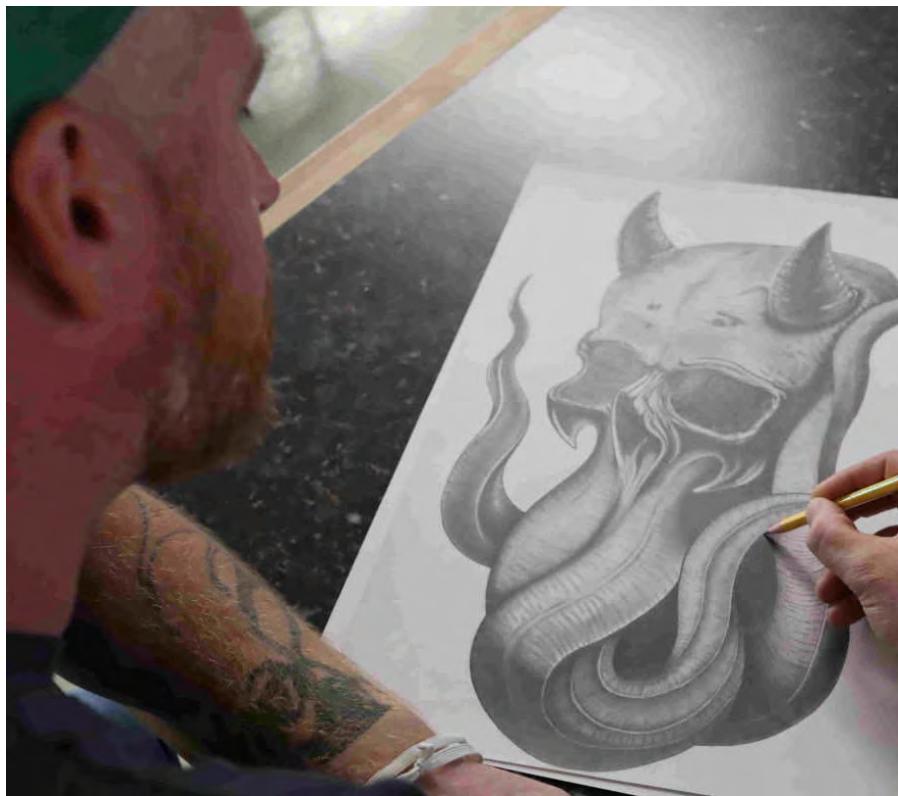
For Hutchinson, his introduction to art came at age nine. His grandmother taught him pottery with her own kiln.

She sold pottery out of her garage and exposed Hutchinson to many other forms of art as well.

"My grandmother introduced me to theatre, arts, music," Hutchinson said. "I got my first guitar when I was ten or eleven. I started playing the piano a bit. Then bass guitar."

"I try to do art with everything I do," he said. "I like drawing for myself. Different pieces speak to me." That even included graffiti.

He recalled that his interest in graffiti started in high school. "My buddies and I had fixed up a car so we could get around. Then a bucket of paint had spilled on the car ... We



Sept. 24, 2024 - photos from top to bottom: Hutchinson works on art piece; A turtle with a city on its back (much of Hutchinson art is abstract). A skeleton with geometric backgrounds. Hutchinson points to details in some of his work; a large planter pot in the F3 appendage which Hutchinson painted - one of many around the facility.

started spray painting the car and trying to make it cool. I realized I had a knack for it."

At the start of his incarceration, nearly two decades ago, Hutchinson found an art with a negative side effect - tattooing wasn't exactly legal in prison.

Hutchinson has spent plenty of time getting in trouble during his incarceration, either from tattooing or fighting. His experience included two back-to-back 180 day stays in segregation.

Now, he said he is done.

"I've done six years [in segregation] total out of 17 1/2 years. I can't think of any reason to go to the hole now. I'm done,"

Hutchinson continues to practice

art now, but uses mediums that are more acceptable. His days of tattooing and graffiti are over.

Staff offices and areas around the compound are decorated with pots and planters he painted in his role as a maintenance worker. In his free time, he draws with graphite - abstract and heavy metal inspired pieces.

Passing trains tagged with graffiti are still artistically an inspiration to him, but he chooses to focus on artwork that keeps him out of trouble.

To other artists, Hutchinson advised, "Strive to perfect your own thing. Find out what you are good at and what you want to do." | ECHO



## Help Shape the Content of 1664

If you are interested in shaping the content of 1664 there are three ways to get involved.

- 1) Submit creative writing in the form of a personal non-fiction essay, poetry, or music lyrics;
- 2) Contribute artwork in any medium; or
- 3) Be featured in one of our person-first profiles. We accept submissions from all people - inside and outside of prison.

*Topics for future magazines*

**Due Dec. 1: Music**

**Due Jan. 1: Culture**

Send a communication form to IWP to learn more.

## Help Shape the Content of The Echo

If you are interested in shaping the content of The Echo there are several ways to get involved.

- 1) Showcase your artwork! Request to be featured in an artist spotlight.
- 2) Pitch an idea to the writing team. We are always looking for new angles.
- 3) Write a letter to the editor. Was there an article that really impacted you? Was there something we missed? Let us know.

Send a communication form to IWP.

# SAVE THE OWLS ... AGAIN

## Plans to Eliminate 470,000 Owls

Written by Brooklyn Sasso, staff writer

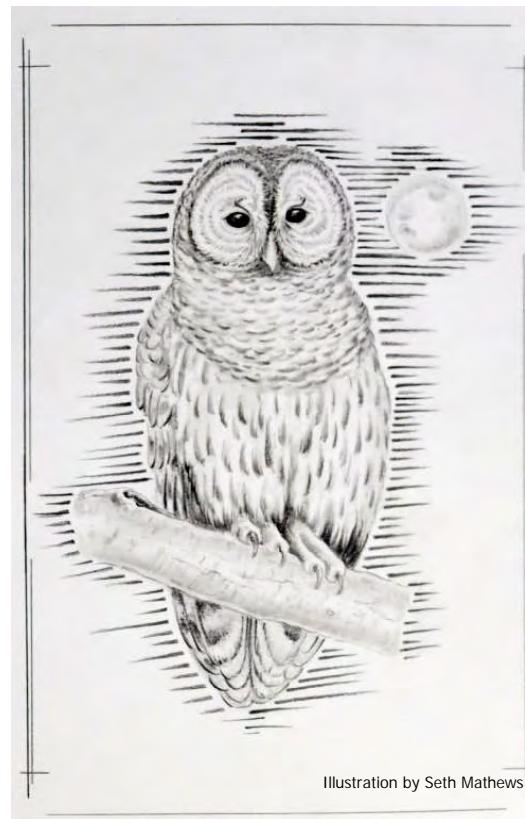


Illustration by Seth Mathews

**"WE ARE AT A CROSSROAD,"** said Bridget Moran, deputy state supervisor of Fish and Wildlife Service, according to the Associated Press. "We have the science that indicates what we need to do to conserve the spotted owl."

During the 1990s there was a rigorous effort to save the spotted owl by banning logging in certain areas of Washington, Oregon and California. Though today this species of owl is federally protected, its population is still on the decline.

The spotted owl is being driven out of its habitat by its more aggressive cousin, the barred owl. The spotted owl is now being labeled as vulnerable.

Earlier this year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a plan to exterminate an approximate

470,000 barred owls throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Opponents of the plan argue that killing such a large amount of the barred owls will negatively impact the forest ecosystem. Opponents have also challenged the statement made by supporters that the barred owl is an invasive species.

Supporters of the plan note that the barred owl was originally a species located in the eastern United States and only began moving west along the Canadian boreal forest, which is now habitable due to the temperature rises associated with climate change.

"Our organizations stand in full support of the barred owls removal as a necessary measure," said supporters of the plan to the Associated Press. "Together with increased habitat protections for all remaining mature and old-growth forests,"

As of 2020, due to the continued decline, the spotted owl was upgraded to a stronger label of endangered in Oregon and Washington. The California spotted owl has been proposed as an endangered species but a decision is still pending.

The plan calls for the destruction of close to half a million barred owls in these states, the collateral effect of which is unknown.

With the eradication of the barred owls, the hope is that spotted owls recover. | ECHO



# MEDITATION OVER RECIDIVISM

## Calm in the Eye of the Storm

Written by Kurtis Thompson, correspondent

**NEXT TO NATURAL** disasters, recidivism is a close rival in costly expenses to the United States. To reduce recidivism, the Department of Corrections implemented education, vocational, writing, and arts programs. Mental health has also been recognized as a primary factor in criminal behavior and has received more attention in recent years. More effort is needed, however, because according to the Journal of Correctional Health Care, recidivism sits at 70% or higher nationally.

What's missing? Some experts believe the roots of crime do not exclusively lie in a lack of education, work skills, or addictions and traumas. In expanding the treatment of maladaptive behavior, experts began looking at a new coping method: meditation.

Dr. Francesca Spina, an associate professor and chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Springfield College, stated, "Research indicates that meditation-based programs

can be rehabilitative for incarcerated populations. Specifically, these programs can help promote positive well-being, reduce recidivism, and help with relapse." Years ago, that assertion would have been met with skepticism.

Fortunately, research and civility of the U.S. penal system has continued to advance. Professionals recognized the need to address emotional skills along with logical skills. Emotional intelligence and the ability to manage emotional stressors in the moment are suggested to be just as important as logical intelligence.

Logical intelligence denotes the measure of a person's overall knowledge, such as reading, writing, job skills and intervention plans.

According to The Journal of Correctional Education, incarcerated persons who participate in education and vocational classes "have 43% lower odds post release of recidivating and a 13% greater likelihood

of finding employment post-incarceration."

Yet, what about moments when logic flies out the window? The ability to cope with high-stress emotions will make or break someone.

Dr. Spina said, "Mindfulness-based interventions ... decrease adverse psychological conditions, including anxiety, depression, and anger, [and] participants were less likely to hit people or throw things than people who did not participate in a meditation program." She also said meditation can reduce substance abuse.

Dr. Spina described "in-the-moment" high-pressure situations where people fail. If meditation provided skills to handle those pivotal moments, then the assertion that meditation should be used as treatment is valid.

At Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, there are options for the practice of meditation and mindfulness treatment. BHS offers classes like Seeking Safety for substance abuse and PTSD, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), DBT with Art Application, and a DBT Garden Group. Contact BHS department for more information.

The GOGI courses also teach mindfulness and self-awareness. For more information send a communication to Correctional Rehabilitation, attention: GOGI.

The Mayo Clinic also gave tips on meditation which can be completed individually: 1) Breathe deeply and slowly from the diaphragm; 2) Focus attention on each body part in turn; 3) Repeat a mantra to prevent thought-wandering; 4) Walk slowly and mindfully, paying attention to each body movement. |ECHO

# REACHING REDEMPTION

## H1 Avenged 2023 Championship Soccer Loss in B3 Rout

Written by Shane Goins, Sports Writer



**ON SEPT. 14, 2024**, under a semi-sunny sky and the grass wet with dew, the EOCl soccer championship three game series started in the East yard. Unit H1 faced off against the unit B3.

Game one was defense, defense, and more defense. Neither team let the other score in the first half. Then, in the second half, a ricochet

off the back of a B3 defender helped H1's Izrael Correa make the only goal of the match.

H1 played lockdown defense for the rest of game one.

After a second half that was longer than usual, much-awaited respite was granted from center referee Maciel Munoz as he signaled a merciful end to an intense (and

physical) game for both teams.

Players were seen in various states of emotion afterward, some in relief, others in disappointment. The victor: H1.

Game two of this slobber knocker was played in the afternoon on the West yard.

"I think it'd be better if they did one game a day for champion-

“ We want to thank the coaches, referees, and everyone involved with making the championship game, and the whole season happen.

- Brian Sierra-Jacobo ”



Photograph by Phillip Luna

ships,” said volunteer referee Juan Diaz. “The horrible conditions of the field made it hard for players to establish grip and made it next to impossible to avoid injury. And even though both teams played their best at the end they were tired.”

Game two was more physical and action-packed. H1’s Ronnie Rios

scored 57 seconds into game two. The ball was put in play to start the game, kicked towards B3’s goalie and then Rios raced to the ball, took the shot and scored.

There were three more goals from H1 in the first half of game two making the halftime score four to zero.

The second half continued with an

offensive onslaught and suffocating defense from H1. However, tragedy would soon strike for both teams.

Near the end of game two the soccer season had its first, and only, major injury of the year. H1’s Carter Bell and B3 goalie Josiah Washington collided. Washington left the field with wheelchair assistance with an undetermined injury.

(continued on next page...)



Hi's Israel Correa, jersey number one, during game two of the series.



H1's James Renfro and B3's Chris Phillips scuffled across the dirt of the baseball diamond, which is part of the soccer field during the season.



H1's Ronnie Rios and B3's Gerardo Lopez chased soccer ball.

The match was called. And H1, with an emphatic seven to zero win, achieved some degree of redemption from last year's loss in the championship game.

Despite the lopsided score, Diaz said, "The championship games both seemed one-sided. Both teams gave their all and played as hard as they could." He also added, "The officiating was good even though most of the players were upset about the very physical play not getting called. But it's soccer, what do you expect?"

As the 2024 soccer season ended, Brian Sierra-Jacobo, B3 head coach and multi-sports commissioner, reflected, "I think we did our best in getting everything well-organized. I'd like to see more get done to help next season and all future seasons run smoother."

The soccer season was full of red cards and all-around pandemonium, the soccer season was fun for all involved.

Sierra-Jacobo said, "We want to thank the coaches, referees and everyone involved with making the championship game and the whole season happen."

B3 had a great season and, even in a decisive defeat, showed sportsmanship and class.

I like the way each team overcame the obstacles thrown at them

"I like the way each team overcame the obstacles thrown at them," said Sierra-Jacobo. "I also enjoyed seeing people that don't typically play soccer going out and having fun. We have a program in the works to get all the players action shots of themselves during championship games. Hopefully everyone will enjoy them." |ECHO

## H1 SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP ROSTER

H1's coaches were Jose Rodriguez-Ramos and Juan Garcia.

The H1 roster included: Daniel McCaleb, Izrael Correa, Ronnie Rios, Luis Alonzo-Garcia, Carlos Ramirez, James Renfro, Carter Bell, Ben Edwards, Sebastian Sanchez-Reymundo, Francisco Acateca-Hernandez, Ruben Garcia-Lara, Selvyn Velasquez-Orozco, Hermelindo Nava-Cortes and Antonio Sanchez-Tista.

## 2024 SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP STATS

### Goals Scored

Carter Bell (H1) - 2

Izrael Correa (H1) - 2

Ronnie Rios (H1) - 1

Ruben Garcia-Lara (H1) - 1

Daniel McCaleb (H1) - 1

Jose Rodriguez-Ramos (H1) - 1

### Assists

Ronnie Rios (H1) - 2

Jose Rodriguez-Ramos (H1) - 1

Selvyn Velasquez-Orozco (H1) - 1

### Shots

Izrael Correa (H1) - 9

Josiah Washington (B3) - 5

Carter Bell (H1) - 4

## IN BLACK AND WHITE

With basketball season starting Oct. 1, here is an explanation of the commonly misunderstood foul of charging:

A charge is committed when an offensive player runs into a defensive player while the defensive player is outside the restricted zone (semi-circle in the paint just in front of the yellow blocks) standing still. When this occurs, a charge is called and the offensive player is assessed a foul. This can occur just about anywhere on the floor and can be called against either defense or offense.



B3 coach Sierra-Jacobo kicked soccer ball.



B3 player Josiah Washington, number 19, is defended by H1's Jose Rodriguez-Ramos.



B3's Gerardo Lopez kicked soccer ball.