

# THE ECHO

Created by incarcerated people



NEWS  
FROM  
THE  
INSIDE

Est. 2018

VOLUME XIII | ISSUE 78, MAY

EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

2500 WESTGATE

PENDLETON, OR

## TAKING A SHOT AT A BETTER FUTURE

Coffee Shop Opens Inside Pendleton Prison with Local Business Partner

Written by Chris Ainsworth, The Echo and Berit Thorson, East Oregonian



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Victor Saravia takes one of the first coffee orders during the grand opening of Prison Brews on April 2, 2025.**

The men scribbled down orders amid the background din of a coffee grinder, timers and an espresso machine.

Three men worked seamlessly, letting their training guide their hands as more people placed their orders. After years of planning and concept development, months of hard work building walls, running electrical and plumbing, installing cabinets and counter tops, and weeks of

training baristas, the first coffee was ready for consumption.

The grand opening for Prison Brews, a coffee shop adults in custody operate inside Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, took place April 2. Prison Brews partnered with Pendleton's Buckin' Bean to provide training for the AIC staff and supply

## FIRST GRADUATION OF 2025

Tutors Praise TVCC's Efforts

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer

EOCI's chapel was packed with more than 70 people on April 4 to celebrate graduates from the GED program administered by Treasure Valley Community College. Each student was garbed in traditional black gowns and caps – a normalized difference from prison blues. The congratulatory body included Superintendent David Pedro, Correctional Rehabilitation Services Manager Bryan Clark, Education Director Greg Jones, teachers S. Schuette, Patty Rasmussen and M. Furstenberg, EOCI's resident tutors, and finally the graduates' family and friends.

The celebration began with "Pomp and Circumstance" playing over speakers as parading graduates strode through the chapel single file.

Before speeches began, Schuette led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance, a tradition some in attendance have not practiced in years. After seating the audience, Schuette thanked those present and introduced the educators, tutors and facility administration, and ODOC Education Director Tracie Hightower, who traveled from Salem

See PRISON BREWS page 6

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**The Echo**  
Est. 2018



## **The Echo Team**

Phillip Luna | Editor in Chief

Chris Ainsworth | Staff Writer

Kurtis Thompson | Staff Writer

Shahid Baskerville | Correspondent

Juan Sanchez | Proofreader

Seth Mathews | Illustrator

## **ODOC Staff Support**

Ray Peters | IWP Coordinator, Supervising Editor

J. Stewart | OS2, Research and Support

## **Advisor**

Berit Thorson | East Oregonian, Journalist

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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.

Friends can receive a digital version of The Echo by texting the word "CORRECTIONS" to the phone number 22828.

The Echo and 1664 are sponsored by the Pollen Initiative. The publications can be found online at [www.pollenpress.org](http://www.pollenpress.org). Incarcerated people can access both publications on EDOVO.

## **Sponsored by**



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## **EDITORIAL**

# **EOCI'S PUBLICATIONS REACH 30,000 ONLINE VIEWS; HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

## **Foot Traffic So Far**

Last month, EOCI's two publications, The Echo and 1664, received sponsorship by Pollen Initiative. The publications became accessible on [www.pollenpress.org](http://www.pollenpress.org) in March.

The Echo has had more than 22,000 online views and 1664 has had more than 8,000 views in the first month.

The publications are also available on Edovo, which is accessed by more than a million incarcerated people in the United States. Traffic on Edovo will be collected over the next few months.

## **15-Week Journalism Course**

In the next phase of sponsorship, we will seek ODOC approval to start the Pollen Initiative's 15-week journalism training program.

This course will become a requisite to work in EOCI's newsroom, but will be open to general population.

An advertisement for the course will be in The Echo when available.

## **First Co-Published Article**

In this edition of The Echo, the page 1 feature story is a co-published article about Prison Brews, EOCI's new coffee shop.

The article, "Taking a Shot at a Better Future," is written by The Echo's Chris Ainsworth and East Oregonian's Berit Thorson.

Ainsworth covered the article from within EOCI, while Thorson covered the outside angle.

East Oregonian's Managing Editor, Phil Wright, worked with The Echo's Editor, Phillip Luna, to edit the piece and the team collaborated to

produce the final product.

The article will appear online with the East Oregonian and in their print edition in early May. For The Echo team, the process has been an incredible learning opportunity.

## **Now Hiring Correspondents**

EOCI's newsroom is currently hiring correspondents with potential for advancement. Applicant criteria is listed on the back page of The Echo.

Correspondents work weekdays, either mornings, 8-11 a.m., or afternoons, 12:30-3:45 p.m. PRAS starts at 11 points and tops out at 15 points.

Correspondents have the opportunity to work their way up to staff writer. A staff writer works full-time, and may be assigned additional duties (photography, photo editing, or other clerical work, for example).

The newsroom is also looking to create positions for a copy editor and for design and layout clerk. Both positions will be promotions from within — every new hire will start as a correspondent.

## **Contribute to The Echo**

Staff and AICs can contribute to The Echo without being on the payroll (book, movie or music reviews, for example).

For anyone interested in contributing, contact The Echo for instruction.

Unsolicited articles are almost never published, so it is best to contact The Echo for direction and guidelines prior to writing a draft.

Staff or AICs can also contact The Echo with an idea for an article, which can then be reviewed and, if pursued, will be assigned a writer from the newsroom. | **ECHO**



# GARDEN PROGRAM RETURNS TO F2 PLOT

Program Restarted on March 27

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

The **Dialectic Behavioral Therapy** Gardening program, offered by BHS, restarted on March 27 and has returned to the garden plot outside F2. The program had been moved near H1 while roofing repairs were completed on F-building. Qualified Mental Health Pro-

fessional A. Whitbread is leading the group with support from QMHP S. Rich, and classes are currently held Thursdays from 8 to 10 a.m.

Whitbread said DBT Gardening provides a place to learn cognitive skills and practice mindful activities.

“It’s really good for people to ground themselves and take time to be present and focus on the DBT skills,” Whitbread said. “Focusing on the aspects of gardening gets your mind off other things.”

B2 resident Skyler Easley participates in the DBT Gardening group, something he said people should try even if they are hesitant.

“It’s kind of like GOGI in a way,” Easley said. “Try it out, for sure. A lot of people are hesitant because they’re not sure who they’re going to be there with, but what you put in is what you get out. It’s good.”

Whitbread said her groups typically have no more than 11 people, but she encourages those interested to apply. AICs are not required to have BHS cases to participate in groups.

Non-BHS residents will undergo an evaluation to determine their motivations and best-fit programs. BHS staff Hernandez-Matuzak said interested residents can kyte BHS for more information on available groups. | **ECHO**

# WELDING SHOP COMPLETES ART PROJECT

Intricate Work On Decorative Pieces

Written by Phillip Luna, Editor in Chief



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Workers in the welding shop created unique, decorative art pieces in April.

The circular piece of the OHMS formulas was made for the electrical shop. The star shaped piece was made for the physical plant. Each individual star within the design is meant to represent the various shops in the physical plant.

Both were made with stainless steel metal that was intended for the scrap bin. The metal was cut with a plasma table and polished with a DA sander.

A welding shop worker, who asked not to be identified by name, said, “I came up with the idea. It stems from the bosses being there for me. I wanted to recognize the chance they took on me and show my appreciation.”

Each art piece took approximately one week to complete. | **ECHO**



## AROUND EOCI

# RED VINE DAY

## EOCI Administration Hands Out Licorice for National Licorice Day

Written by Phillip Luna and Antonio McCaw



Staff volunteers separate Red Vines from large tubs into sandwich bags of ten on April 10, 2025.

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

On April 11, 2025 administrative staff members at EOCI handed out Red Vine licorice, free of charge, to the incarcerated population. The event was planned, paid for, prepared, and handed out by ODOC in celebration of National Licorice Day.

The event was proposed and organized by office specialist Jaylene Stewart.

“I really wanted to do hot tamales, but they didn’t have a national day for it,” Stewart said.

She said the cost was \$650-\$700 for 14 cases of Red Vine licorice, which was enough to provide ten pieces each to the more than 1,300 person general population residents of EOCI.

On Thursday, April 10, the day prior to the hand out, six administrative offi-

cials gathered at the IWP building to sort Red Vine licorice from large 3.5 pound buckets into groups of ten pieces wrapped in plastic sandwich bags. The staff members participating in the event were volunteers.

“I like seeing people smile and bringing joy,” said Taylor Greene, office specialist. “I volunteer outside of work as well.”

At 8 a.m., on the day of the event, Stewart and office specialist Claudia Bethel handed out licorice on the west side of the facility. Units were called down individually.

“I wanted to try and get most people before they went to morning yard,” Stewart said. Morning yard opens at 8:30 a.m.

A few participants requested black

licorice, which was not available at this event.

Simultaneous to the west side hand-out, qualified mental health professional Whitbread and office specialist Hernandez-Matuzak handing out licorice to residents on the east side of the facility.

Whitbread said, “Having something to look forward to is good.”

“It’s really nice and out of the ordinary to do,” Hernandez-Matuzak added. “It’s also nice to have something sweet.”

The volunteer crew made the facility rounds, handing out treats in education, the multi-purpose building and the food service areas where workers may have missed their unit’s pick up time. Stewart and Greene concluded the handout



in front of east gate, setting up a table and waiting to catch the remaining physical plant, garment factory, and call center workers as their shifts ended at 2:45 p.m.

The event was popular among the AIC participants.

Stewart said events like this are great ways to foster positive interactions between staff members and incarcerated people.

## “Who doesn’t love licorice?”

- J. Stewart

“It’s just something nice to do,” she said. “Who doesn’t love licorice?”

The national day was created in 2004 as a way of celebrating the history and unique flavor of licorice, derived from the licorice plant which has been used for centuries for its medicinal benefits. It was not until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the plant was made into a candy.

Red licorice does not contain the plant and is primarily made from corn syrup, leading licorice enthusiasts everywhere to reject its authenticity.

National Licorice Day is technically April 12, which fell on a Saturday this year. Stewart said the staff decided to hand out the treats on Friday, during the regular work week to avoid any unnecessary staffing complications.

| ECHO

**Top:** Staff members Jaylene Stewart, left, and Claudia Bethel hand out licorice on the west compound on the morning of April 11.

**Middle:** Gloved staff members sort licorice into bags of ten on the afternoon of April 10. More than 1,300 bags were made.

**Bottom:** Hugh Crow collects licorice from Stewart and Taylor Greene when leaving work.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



## AROUND EOCI

**PRISON BREWS** continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**On April 2, 2025 ODOC Director Mike Reese places a coffee order after the grand opening of Prison Brews, EOCI's new coffee shop. Reese was one of dozens of members of staff and ODOC administration in attendance at the event.**

the coffee it sells to correctional staff within the facility.

"I think that (Prison Brews) creates an opportunity to do things differently than we have ever done before," said Department of Corrections Director Mike Reese, who attended the opening. "I think it breaks down stereotypes from community members about what it is like in prison, who is incarcerated there, and allows, when people leave (prison), for better reentry."

Not only will the coffee shop offer a new set of skills to the baristas, it also makes life easier for staff members hoping to get their caffeine fix. Liza Emory, EOCI's Food Services manager, said it took months to set the pro-

gram up, but she believes the shop will be a good resource.

Emory also said she's excited to be partnering with a local business to provide the shop's beans as well as training and support to the men working behind the bar.

### **Pulling Shots with Purpose**

The training started March 12, when Kirbie Hill, co-owner of the Pendleton coffee shop, began teaching the newly-hired AICs the ins and outs of brewing coffee and how to serve it with a smile.

Kirbie said walking into the prison the first day was a little intimidating.

"I didn't know what to expect, but honestly, we're all people and they've been super respectful to me," she said. "Actually, they have better manners than a lot of people on the outside. They've been very nice, very gracious hard workers."

The first day of the seven-day training included basics and provided AICs the opportunity to froth milk. Her husband and co-owner, Winston Hill, taught the baristas the history and theories behind coffee roasting and brewing. During the next six days of training, Kirbie taught the adults in custody how to grind, pull, flavor and serve espresso-based drinks, chai lattes and blended beverages.



Pulling a good shot of espresso is the basis for any well-made latte, the Hills said.

They taught the incarcerated baristas how to look for three layers in the shot as well as the length of time a proper shot should take to pull. Kirbie said the baristas are “more eager to learn than, I’d say, 90%” of people on the outside — one of the men even made flash cards so he could quiz himself on different drinks.

“I think it’s a pretty neat deal, so we don’t mind helping out if we can,” Winston said. “And really, hopefully that means something good for some of those guys.”

Winston pointed out that barista skills are “employable in any city in the country” because there’s coffee everywhere.

“It means everything to be offered an opportunity like this. I’m learning a lot of different skills,” said Michael Morris, one of the Food Services clerks who cross-trained as a barista. “It’s nice having professionals come in and train us, it’s been really helpful.”



Photo by Berit Thorson/East Oregonian

**Kirbie Hill, co-owner of Pendleton coffee shop Buckin' Bean, trains baristas. Buckin' Bean will also be the supplier of coffee beans for Prison Brews.**

Learning skills that are useful outside of prison has kept the new baristas busy.

“Training has been a lot of hands-on, practical experience,” said Alek Wright, who went through training by Dutch Bros Coffee at the juvenile facility he was housed at prior to EOICI.

“The training here was a bit more complete, not just make a shot and dump it in here.”

Prison Brews also serves pastries and bagels the facility's bakery makes. The bakery produces pastries for the prison’s population served on a rotation every Friday. The bagels, however, were a first for the AIC bakers.

“I was a little stressed out at first,” said Devin Killion, Prison Brews’s resident baker and now a barista. “Now that I have (made bagels) a few times it is easy enough, and fun.”

### Building Toward Success

Before pulling the first shot of espresso, months of work went into building and preparing the shop for employees and customers. The coffee shop, equipped with a live-edge wood bar and leather lounging chairs, was constructed in the corner of a multipurpose room used for support group meetings, outreach events and even karaoke nights.

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution is home to a number of trades that



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**An Italian model espresso machine in the new Prison Brews coffee shop. The 250 volt, 20 amp machine has water directly piped in and is a similar model and set up to what might be seen in a Starbucks or high end coffee shop.**

*Continued on next page...*

## AROUND EOCI

...continued from previous page



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Superintendent Dave Pedro places coffee order with newly-trained barista Devin Killion during grand opening of Prison Brews on April 2, 2025.**

provide AICs an opportunity for on-the-job training similar to what they may experience in society, including workshops and apprenticeship programs.

EOCI offers four main programs that, upon completion, grant AICs the same certifications or journeyman accreditation they would receive if they participated in such programs outside of prison. The prison has operated electrical, plumbing and welding apprenticeship programs for years, and in 2024 accepted the first painting apprentice. There also are nonapprenticeship programs focused on carpentry and auto repair.

“I get emotional about the apprenticeship programs because of the difference they make in people’s lives,” said EOCI’s Superintendent David Pedro. “It is our job as an agency and department to provide opportunities.”

The carpentry shop was first on the scene at the site for Prison Brews, framing walls with aluminum to give the space its layout. Next, AICs participating in the electrical apprenticeship

program installed wiring for the coffee shop’s refrigerator, espresso machine, other appliances and even two phones baristas will use to take orders from staff from around the facility. Plumbers ran water and drain lines for appliances and sinks.

Once the plumbers and electricians were finished, the carpentry shop installed drywall. Members of EOCI’s paint shop gave the space its wheat and cardboard two-toned paint job using atypical tools for work orders within the institution, such as a laser level. The paint shop also was responsible for applying the vinyl logo — which Creative Signs in Pendleton digitized and printed — on the door leading into the coffee shop.

“I’ve never used a laser level before so I was kind of curious, because none of the floors in this place are level,” said Zach Schrader, an EOCI paint shop worker with 12 years of experience. “It was actually pretty cool. To get (a) precise line for a homeowner or in a residential area, a laser level is

good so the line looks better to the eye.”

The carpentry shop also built and installed custom cabinets and countertops once the painters were finished. The wood for the live-edge counters came from a silver maple tree that was cut down in front of the facility. The carpentry shop milled the boards, sanded the counters and coated them with epoxy, giving the two countertops a mirror-like finish.

“We hired Kelsey Garton Tree Service to cut down the trees, and we milled and planed the boards,” carpentry shop manager Jay Bartlett said. “Around 200-man hours went into building the cabinets and countertops between the five AICs involved.”

Fellow adults in custody even helped with the baristas’ uniforms. Oregon Corrections Enterprises, the organization responsible for making Prison Blues clothing — the brand upon which the Prison Brews name riffs — assisted with printing the shop’s logo on blue aprons.

### Brewing Positive Change

Development of Prison Brews was not limited to AICs or staff associated with the various shops that helped build the coffee shop. The facility held a contest, open to all EOCI staff, to pick the name and logo for the shop.

Of the 144 entries, seven people recommended the name Prison Brews. Then people submitted concepts for the logo, and human resources business partner Cynthia Rodarte, with the assistance of artificial intelligence, created the winning design. She was one of a dozen or so staff members present at the grand opening.

“It’s teaching them customer service,” said Tami Clark, an office spe-



cialist overseeing the program. “It’s teaching them how to interact with different personalities and different people.”

Staff said during one of the training days the barista skills are useful, but the regular interactions with staff will be invaluable. The baristas feel they’re gaining skills, too.

“A life skill we learned is accountability,” Wright, the barista, said. “When I get out, I will have spent half my life in prison. So, having an opportunity to give me employment and a skill set I can use in the outside world means a lot.”

Of the six-person barista team, one or two will be on shift at a time. The shop will have three shifts per day. Except for a break 6-9 p.m., Prison Brews will be open for business from 5:30 a.m. until 12:15 a.m. Eventually, they plan to expand the hours further for staff on overnight shifts.

Emory, the Food Services manager, said success of the shop, to her, is just being open and giving the AICs skills to use upon release.

“I mean, that’s what the successful piece of this is, that we’ve trained these guys for a skill set for when they get out and so they can have an income and they can build their lives (and) become part of the community,” she said.

Prison Brews only offers variations of lattes — including different flavors and milk options — as well as chai, americanos and cold brew. For people who aren’t looking for coffee or tea, the shop offers energy drinks and smoothies, too. Eventually, Food Services staff members said they hope to expand the menu.

The coffee shop only serves facility staff for now, but in the future, Food Services would like to serve the visiting room once a week and eventually serve AICs who have clear conduct for a minimum of 18 months. |ECHO



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**Top:** AICs from the paint-shop use laser levels to tape off areas for painting.

**Middle:** A carpentry shop worker planes a silver maple board that will serve as the live-edge countertop in Prison Brews.

**Bottom:** A bracket made in the welding shop holds up a counter top in the coffee shop. The decorative cut-out reflects on the underside of the countertop.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



AROUND EOCI

# OPEN MIC NIGHT PRACTICE RUN

Event Expected to Include Full Audience in the Future

Written by Chris Ainsworth, Staff Writer



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Larry Wilt, vocals and guitar, Jacob Harper, bass, and Justin Waldrip perform at the open mic night on April 9 in the multi-purpose building.**

**“This is the last** [open mic night] with limited attendance,” said recreation specialist Jerrad Templin as he addressed about 25 AICs. “Next month will be open to level 3s. So, use this time to get your courage up.”

The final participant-only open mic night took place April 9, starting close to 6:30 p.m. and wrapping up around 8:15 p.m. Held in EOCI’s multipurpose building, the event was limited to AICs who participate in one of the facility’s various music programs.

Open mic nights returned to EOCI in February, after a hiatus of several months. The April event was a little more intimate than the event earlier this year. The collection of instruments basked in a yellow glow from the limited lighting set up around the stage.

Treshaun Thomas emceed the event, leaning into a collection of dad jokes and interacting with the crowd. He even questioned the credentials of a heckler throughout the evening. Tho-

mas’ jokes and banter provided smooth transitions between the various participants.

There was a mix of experience sharing the microphones at the open mic night. Some, like the house band, have

years if not decades of experience playing and performing. Others like, Jacob Wittren, performed for the first time.

“I performed so everybody could hear what I went through,” said Wittren, who read a faith-based poem for the audience. “I hope it inspires people to look at their past and future. And change their life.”

With his release in early May, Wittren will not have a chance to perform in front of a non-musician audience, but that did not stop the first timer from sharing his work.

A few AICs performed covers of their favorite songs, and several played original pieces. Many of the bands have been practicing during independent study offered by the recreation department’s music program in preparation for the event, while others recruited the house band to accompany them on stage.

“Besides the love of music, I participate because I love performing, I love the atmosphere, and I like to share my creative expression,” said tenured participant, D’Jay McKenzie. “On the outside I would attend open mics, nothing big, but it’s a little taste of that – a little reminder of home.”

Treshaun Thomas was not the only



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**The open mic night is viewed only by other artists. The April 9 event is the last event without a general audience.**



person eliciting smiles from the audience. Jacob Pomerleau recited a poem, with musical accompaniment that had hints of Monty Python influence, tossing his note cards aside as he progressed through his piece.

Two other AICs performed spoken word pieces providing a mix between musical and non-musical performances.

The event showed the support AICs have for their fellow performers. Every performance was met with applause and cheers. And multiple performances received standing ovations.

For a few hours recreation staff, correctional officers and AIC musicians shed their titles and sat in a room sharing the event as audience members giving the event a feel rarely experienced inside a prison.

“We are all in the crowd cheering for everyone in support of whoever was on stage. It doesn’t matter if you are an AIC or staff, we are all there for



**Treshaun Thomas makes jokes during the open mic night.**

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

the same goal,” said EOCl’s newest recreation specialist, Zach Hall. “There are some very talented musicians here. It felt like I was at a concert.”

Hall said the goal of the recreation specialists is to “grow and expand”

events and make things “better than previously.” Look for postings on the unit to attend upcoming events. Participation does not always mean standing behind a microphone, it can mean experiencing the event from the audience too. | **ECHO**

## NOW HIRING

### OCE Work Opportunity Print Shop Printing Press & Prepress Operator

The OCE Print Shop is recruiting to fill open positions for qualified Printing Press & Prepress Operators. Applicants must be able to adhere to a high standard of quality in a fast-paced environment while meeting deadlines. The OCE Print Shop is located at OSCl in Salem. This position awards 10 - 16 PRAS points, with the opportunity to earn a matching Team Goal Award.

#### Printing Press Operators

Preference will be given to Press Operators with prior knowledge and time spent operating printing presses. Practical experience with knowledge or exposure to XMF, Prinect, Fiery etc. Exposure to working with Variable Data.

Job duties include the ability to learn how to run various types of presses, learn and follow process flow and ability to apply it, and keep presses and press area clean.

#### Prepress Operators

Preference will be given to Prepress Operators with prior knowledge and time spent operating Prepress software and

equipment. Practical experience with knowledge or exposure to Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, XMF, Prinect, Fiery etc. Exposure to working with Variable Data is a plus.

Applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- Must have a valid social security number or equivalent.
- At least 6 months’ time incarcerated with clear conduct.
- Must have a release date after June 2030.
- Cannot be in any programs/activities which would conflict with the assigned shift.
- Must have ability to lift 40 lbs.
- Be willing to sign a 24-month retention agreement.

All applicants will need to pass a DOC/OCE security screening and OCE interview before being considered.

If you are interested in applying, please complete a DOC Work Application referencing OCE Print Shop programming specialist as the position, and a cover letter describing you and your experience. Submit paperwork to your counselor or the OCE General Manager at your institution to forward to Jerry James at OCE Print Shop at OSCl.

Application must be received by May 31, 2025. See housing unit bulletin board for more details.

**GRADUATION** continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**The graduating class: Angel Oseguera, Alonso Acosta-Ayala, Isaak Blocker, Stephenic Hall, Shaley Kidd-Lovest, Devin Killion, Lorenzo Lopez-Gordillio, Alexander Mosqueda-Rivera, Johnny Widerman and Daniel Williams. Emerson Brewer-Crull, John-David Gispert and Gavin Nelson were unable to attend.**

to join the celebration. In addition to her duties of overseeing all education departments in Oregon's non-federal prisons, Hightower regularly visits each correctional facility to commend students for their achievements.

After Schuette, Furstenberg took the podium to deliver the first speech. She is the newest addition to EOCI's education team.

"These men have proven their dedication and determination time and time again on our education floor," she said. "It is a great privilege that I have seen them grow ... thank you, everyone, for coming to support your friends and family members as we celebrate their wonderful accomplishment today – they have made you all very proud."

In order to attain their GEDs, stu-

dents had to pass preliminary exams in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science. After the pre-tests, students were then required to pass actual exams in those same categories. Altogether, there are approximately 10 hours of testing covering 13 years of schooling a student would receive throughout childhood education.

Furstenberg said her pupils worked harder than average students to succeed academically. She said many of them have not been in classrooms for years and, due to facility schedules, they only get five hours of class instruction per week – less than one-fifth the of time public school students have.

EOCI Education Director G. Jones, who stepped into his position after predecessor Eddie Alves announced his re-retirement for June, credited EOCI in

helping students get needed help despite scheduling limitations.

"I want to thank all the parts of this facility that work together to place students in their seats to succeed," Jones said. "Everyone wants the same thing – to be safe and do great things."

Graduate Angel Oseguera was selected to deliver a speech.

"I came to the realization that I wanted to further my education," he said. "The GED tests are not easy. There are many nights I stayed up learning new things before I tested. I took the reading test two or three times before I passed ... If I can do it, I know anyone can get their GED."

Oseguera's grandparents, father, brother and best friend were there to witness his graduation.



His best friend Matt Duff traveled from Hermiston for the event. He said, “It’s my turn now. I gotta get my GED as well.”

**“We’re proud of him ... He is doing something with his time.”**

- Javier Tobias

Javier Tobias, Oseguera’s grandfather, said, “We’re proud of him ... he’s doing something with his time.”

At the ceremony’s end, educators and staff shook the hands with student while GED certificates were presented.

“You’ve graduated,” Jones said. “You have a different perspective now – you see things differently. Marcel Proust said, ‘Discovery is not in seeking new landscapes; it is having new eyes.’ Congratulations on improving your vision, gentlemen. Thank you.”

Graduate Johnny Wideman has been slowly working towards his GED since 2013. He said he greatly bene-



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Graduate Angel Oseguera delivers a speech at the graduation ceremony. “I came to the realization that I wanted to further my education,” he said to the audience of more than 70.**

fited from the tutors and teachers providing extra help, adding that Furstenberg’s instruction helped him pass GED math.

“I feel successful,” he said. “I want people to know the hard work and dedication I put in. Math was the hardest part. It was pretty much Miss Furstenberg who helped me do it.”

Several graduates said they struggle with math most. Graduate Shaley Kidd-

Lovest said geometry was his most difficult subject. After a year he was able to complete his GED.

“I feel blessed to be able to finish my GED,” Kidd-Lovest said. “I got lucky and was able to do it in here.”

The ceremony concluded and graduates spent time with their families and friends, enjoying cookies, drinks and taking photos. |ECHO

EDUCATION – BEHIND THE SCENES

## WAVE OF NEWLY HIRED TUTORS YIELD RESULTS

### A Job Spotlight on Education Tutors

Written by Correspondent Shahid Baskerville and Staff Writer Kurtis Thompson

**After Blue Mountain** Community College declined to renew their contract, Treasure Valley Community College began providing education at EOCI in January 2024. Education had been on a year and a half hiatus during this contractual change and there were only three resident tutors. An almost entirely new group of tutors had to be hired and trained. As of March 2025, the number of tutors is 15.

#### A Typical Day

On March 10, it was a typical day in EOCI’s education department, and classes ran from 8:15 - 11 a.m. and 12:30 - 3 p.m. The floor was full of AIC tutors, some working with students and others mingling with education staff. The atmosphere appeared positive overall as staff and tutors created a welcoming environment by as-

sisting students without discrimination, be it about race, crime of conviction or any other reason.

“You don’t feel the pressures of typical prison politics,” said tutor Steve Jamison. “That’s really cool to see – people just leaving [politics] at the door. They know this is not the place for it.”

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## EDUCATION – BEHIND THE SCENES

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Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**TVCC educators and 14 of the 15 tutors pose for a photo after the graduation ceremony on April 2, 2025.**

TVCC employs three teachers at EOCI – Schuette, Rasmussen and Furstenberg. They teach English as a second language, adult basic education and general educational development. Tutors work during all class periods, assisting both students and teachers.

Several tutors have classes of their own because there are a limited number of teachers. Resident Robert Davis, a tutor since April 2024, teaches a class of four.

His day begins assisting teachers in first and second periods before he works his own tutoring class during third period. During the school week, he teaches three days of reading and language arts, a day of math and a day of computer technology.

Davis is an experienced tutor, but new tutors start by receiving general and specialized training.

### Tutor Training

AICs are tested to assess their math and reading skills prior to being hired as tutors. If their performance is sufficient, the aspiring tutors are given a one-week training on working in EOCI's classrooms.

"We're trained on three areas which prepare students for GED testing – reading and language arts, math and social studies," tutor Vincent Debellis said.

The testing process helps determine a tutor's academic strengths and weaknesses. After being assessed, the education team continually teaches tutors to increase their effectiveness.

Regular training sessions are provided for teachers by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, who train them on special needs, GED, ESL

and other areas of learning expertise. Teachers bring back their trainings and share them with AIC tutors to develop their skills.

Studies show incarcerated people are more likely to have learning disabilities, so with specialized training and an approximate 1-to-1 tutor/student ratio, EOCI's education department has an advantage in helping learners achieve what they might not in a public-school.

"Every month we have team meetings and skill building training," tutor Jorge Copado-Bravo said.

### The Value of Tutoring

Resident Alexander Addoms has six years of tutoring experience.

He became a tutor in 2018 after hearing positive comments about the job from a friend. Addoms knew very



little about tutoring when he began, but was quickly brought up in skill through help and training.

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**“I broaden my knowledge base through practice, determination and help from other tutors.”**

- Alexander Addoms

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“I broaden my knowledge base through practice, determination and help from other tutors,” said Addoms. He said helping people better themselves was a good thing and has made him a better person.

According to Addoms, the last six years have had many proud moments, but what brings him the most joy is that not a single person he tutored has returned to prison.



**TVCC Teacher Rasmussen and tutors pose for a photo on March 10, 2025.**

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Addoms believes education plays an important role in lowering recidivism.

According to a 2013 study by the RAND Corporation – a nonprofit research organization focused on public policies – correctional education programs lower recidivism rates of AIC participants by 43%.

“I am proud of myself to be contributing to that positive impact in their lives,” Addoms said.

### **How to Join the Team**

AIC tutors are hired in groups of five or six. Applicants must take an exam similar to GED testing, scoring higher than average. An interview is conducted to determine a potential-hire’s general knowledge, how they might help struggling learners and how they might react in a hostile situation. Once tutors are selected, they will begin their one-week introductory training.

Positions are open to incentive levels two and three. Beginning PRAS awards start at 14 points and cap at 16 points. AICs interested in tutoring can apply by sending an application to IWP.

Providing opportunities for experience as a tutor gives AICs more options upon release. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported tutor salaries as \$48,060 in 2023. | **ECHO**



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**TVCC Teacher Furstenberg talks with her tutor team on March 10, 2025.**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Then-Education Director Eddie Alves gives a speech during the October, 2024 graduation ceremony. Alves recently re-retired.**

# THANK YOU ALVES

An Interview with Former Education Director Eddie Alves

Interview by Phillip Luna, Editor in Chief

**Eddie Alves was hired** by Treasure Valley Community College in 2007 as the Education Director. In 2013, he went to TVCC's main campus to be the Dean of Career and Technical Education. After retiring in 2023, Alves was approached by TVCC to fill the role of Education Director as they contracted with EOCI, TRCI and PRCF to re-open education. He recently re-retired.

Alves was interviewed by The Echo. Following is an excerpt from that interview, edited for clarity and length.

**The Echo: How long have you worked in the education department?**

**Alves:** I have worked full-time in Corrections since 1981.

In 1999, I went to work at the Washington State Penitentiary as the Assistant Director of Correctional Education

for Walla Walla Community College. I have been affiliated with Correctional Education ever since.

**The Echo: I think I heard that you retired once before, but came out of retirement?**

**Alves:** I became the Vice President of Academic Affairs at TVCC. In June 2023, I retired and stepped away from TVCC.

In September 2023, TVCC called me, as they were considering coming to EOCI, TRCI and PRCF to re-open education after BMCC elected not to re-new their contract with ODOC.

I agreed to come back in October 2023, to re-start education at EOCI, TRCI and PRCF and work until June 2025. Now that my replacement has been hired, I will continue to work to bring college classes to all three institutions over my final few months.

**The Echo: Is there a time you find memorable from all your work?**

**Alves:** I have a lot of great memories from my work in education. In corrections, I helped build a welding and an HVAC program at the Washington State Penitentiary and helped build a Building Construction program at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center. At TVCC main campus, I brought the Aviation program to that school, which is one of the most successful programs at TVCC.

At EOCI, I have brought the first online college classes to your institutions. These types of programs and expansion of opportunities are the items that are most memorable and most rewarding.

**The Echo: What is your hope for the future of the EOCI education department?**

**Alves:** The goal is simple: make EOCI a place where people can change if they desire, with a focus on education. My hope is that we not only offer Associate degrees, but provide opportunity to obtain a Bachelor's, Master's or Ph.D.s.

In addition, I think there is opportunity to bring Career and Technical Education programs to EOCI.

**The Echo: From your experience, is there one piece of advice you have for students?**

**Alves:** Yes – stay “uncomfortable.”

What it takes to be successful is a willingness to be “uncomfortable” with facts. You don't know what you don't know and that skills develop over time. You must stay uncomfortable and stick with it.

I have seen person after person be educated while incarcerated and successful after release because of the work they put in. Start slow - read a book today! | **ECHO**





Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**Education Director Greg Jones hands out the first GED certificate as Education Director during the April, 2025 ceremony.**

## HELLO JONES

### An Interview with New Education Director Greg Jones

Interview by Phillip Luna, Editor in Chief

**Greg Jones is the new Education Director.** He has worked in correctional education for 25 years.

Jones was interviewed by The Echo. Following is an excerpt from that interview, edited for clarity and length.

**The Echo: What made you become an educator in the incarcerated setting?**

**Jones:** I love learning and found a way to college and graduate school. Not only have I never taken that chance for granted, but I also can't think of anything better than to play a role in its provision to others.

In practical terms, it was a random opportunity. A teacher was needed to substitute teach ABE/GED at Lane County CC for a couple of weeks. I was just out of graduate school and

welcomed any opportunity in education — but was completely sold when I saw how hungry students were — and are — for the chance to grow intellectually.

**The Echo: When you are not molding young minds what are you doing? Fishing? Hiking? Karate?**

**Jones:** I love to fly-fish, and I love to travel, so I usually try to combine those two activities as much as possible. In the winter, when I am tired of breaking the ice out of the guides steelhead fishing, I love to cross-country ski.

**The Echo: I understand you are a sports fan? Specifically, in the college arena, I believe an Oregon State fan. If so, can you tell us about all the unfortunate life choices you made that led you to support Oregon State?**

**Jones:** As an upstanding and decent human being, it was a no-brainer to

choose Oregon State. I spent many happy years there — and witnessing the good, bad, and the ugly of college sports left an indelible mark. It is an allegiance that is felt at the core but difficult to articulate. It is authentic — and few understand that as well as Beaver fans.

**The Echo: As a serious question, what is your hope for the future of the EOCI education department?**

**Jones:** We have phenomenal faculty and staff, so doing all I can to support them is my immediate priority. Continuing the incredible work of my predecessor, Mr. Alves, is another focal point. A one-stop education shop is what I am used to and want to continue here.

The idea that a single student can come into education here at EOCI and improve his language skills to the point of completing a GED, take college courses, and graduate with a degree all in the same department is an extraordinary opportunity I hope will become increasingly commonplace.

**The Echo: What are the differences between your previous role and education director?**

I do not teach adult education and GED anymore, but I do, occasionally, get to torment students taking college courses here at EOCI and other facilities. The main difference, however, is the ability to interact with more and greater entities within a facility all working together to provide the most productive educational experience possible.

**The Echo: From your experience, is there one piece of advice you have for students?**

Take advantage of the opportunities you have — as soon as possible and to the best of your abilities. **JECHO**



Photographs from Chalkbeat Colorado

**David Carrillo, 49, stands in front of his class. Carrillo is the first incarcerated professor in Colorado.**

# THE INCARCERATED PROFESSOR

## Colorado Prison Hires First Incarcerated Professor

Written by Phillip Luna, Editor in Chief

A **Colorado University** recently became the subject of conversation as they took an innovative approach to address staff shortages post-COVID. Adams State University became one of the first colleges to employ an incarcerated professor.

David Carrillo, 49, from the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility was hired as an adjunct professor by Adams State University, teaching as part of the prison's college education program.

The idea was almost unheard of in prison. But with post-COVID teaching vacancies affecting college prison programs, why not fill the gaps with qualified incarcerated people? Students who had completed their MBA with the university were qualified to teach, regardless of whether or not they were incarcerated.

Carrillo earned his MBA from Adams State in 2021 and has been teaching Intro to Macroeconomics.

Carrillo's first students were his peers and neighbors.

In an interview with Chalkbeat Colorado, Carrillo stated, "To be able to help these guys realize that they are capable of doing so much more - that's a reward right there."

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**"To be able to  
help these guys realize  
that they are capable  
of doing so much more  
- that's a reward  
right there."**

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- David Carrillo

Adams State had only one stipulation – that the correctional facility must allow them to pay Carrillo the wage of an adjunct professor. The university is

paying Carrillo \$3,600 per class, which is astronomical considering the average incarcerated person in the U.S. works for less than a dollar per day.

The philosophy is that helping an incarcerated person financially prepare for release increases their chance of successful reentry. Poverty is often a driver of recidivism for many formerly incarcerated people.

Carrillo, who was sentenced to life without parole, was granted clemency by Colorado Governor Jared Polis and will walk free after 29 years. He credits his education for his second chance.

Carrillo's story highlights the transformative power of education and serves as an inspiration to incarcerated people everywhere.

Earning an MBA through Adams State University costs around \$12,600, plus textbooks. There is no state or federal funding for incarcerated students to earn an MBA. Students must pay out of pocket. | **ECHO**



# MISSING MANGA MYSTERY

## Library Checkout System Returns Amid Controversy

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer

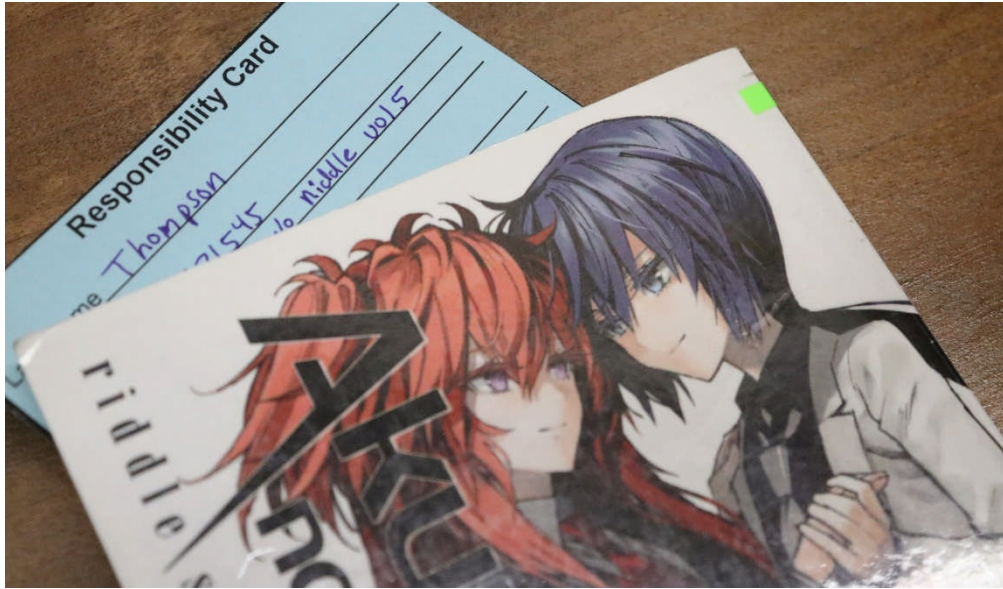


Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

**A Manga book, available for checkout, is pictured here with a responsibility card, which reminds the reader of their return date.**

Many residents of EOCI rejoiced when the book checkout system was restarted after a six-month pause that began September 2024. The shutdown by administration was initiated to address security concerns that have since been resolved. There was an unpleasant surprise for returning program participants, however, because approximately 65 of the Japanese manga previously

checked out were not returned and are missing.

The general belief of library staff is those 65 books are permanently lost because they have been gone for over six months.

In addition to the 65 un-returned manga, many other books had been removed by staff due to orders from

ODOC headquarters, according to Library Coordinator M. Johnson.

“Some books are just missing. The only reason we pulled books from our shelves is because we were instructed by ODOC administration to take down any titles on the rejected book list,” she said. “[The library staff] are not banning anything.”

A growing list of rejected books is kept in the library and can be reviewed by any AIC who sends a kyte to the General Library requesting to see it. Library coordinators will place requestors on a callout.

Library staff are encouraging AICs to check their shelves, unit and personal property for any misplaced books part of the library checkout system and return them. They said proper management and respectful use of the checkout system helps ensure future readers will have access to EOCI’s limited art and manga resources. They added that without the checkout system, all books would be on general shelves where there is little oversight to ensure materials are not being vandalized or destroyed. **ECHO**

# THE ELUSIVE EXTENSION CORD

## How to Obtain an Extension Cord if Your Television is Too Far Away from the Outlet

Written by Antonio McCaw

When an AIC purchases a television, their power cable may not reach the outlet depending on what bunk they are assigned. The solution is to request an extension cord from Institution Work Programs.

First, AICs must fill out a kyte with their request. The unit officer must sign the kyte verifying the need of the extension cord. Staff from IWP said “to

please be patient as we can only issue them when we get them.” Security purchases the cords, but will not be purchasing anymore. IWP hands them out to those who need them.

When assigned an extension cord, AICs must sign an agreement form. Rules of the agreement state a person will not misuse the extension cord and it is only authorized for the bunk it was

issued to. Should the AIC move, the extension cord is to be returned or must be re-requested.

After moving, AICs must have their unit officer verify the continued need for the extension cord by signing a new request submitted via kyte. If an AIC is moved to disciplinary segregation, the agreement will end and the extension cord returned to IWP. **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

# A KENTUCKY FRIED FUNDRAISER

## Second Successful Fundraiser of the Year; GOGI Hands Out Buckets and Buckets of Chicken

Written by Chris Ainsworth, Staff Writer



**Juan Diaz poses with KFC bag and a Sprite on April 4, 2025.**

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**GOGI handed out** over 3,200 pieces of chicken, almost 1,100 sides and nearly 2,200 biscuits as part of its second fundraiser of the year. It took place on April 3 and 4 in Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's east and west dining halls. The event helped raise money to cover costs experienced when printing handouts, certificates, supplying the population with GOGI self-help books and other maintenance and housekeeping expenses.

"I really liked getting the KFC, I haven't had it in forever," said resident of housing unit B3 Jamane Smith. "I participate in GOGI and saw a way to give back to them. I hope they continue to do these events."

The GOGI club partnered with KFC to provide six pieces of chicken, two sides, four biscuits and two sodas. According to Keaton Stephens, the GOGI club treasurer, 11 employees from the Hermiston and Pendleton KFC loca-

tions pooled together to provide food for the 544 participants in the fundraiser. Stephens said he received praise from an AIC who had not had KFC in 25 years.

"Partnering with KFC went really smooth, the point of contact was really helpful," said Stephens. "I am actually working on 11 thank you cards to send to the employees who helped."

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**"Partnering with KFC went really smooth. The point of contact was a really helpful"**

- Keaton Stephens

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The club sets up fundraisers and organizes events for the institution's population that supports its operations within the facility. GOGI provides an array of services from self-study workbooks to support group-style meetings.

GOGI members can also work towards becoming a facilitator and leading

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Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**Gerardo Cabrera-Cabrera shows off KFC during GOGI fundraiser on April 4, 2025.**



groups or even becoming a certified GOGI coach which requires a few years of service and a special project to give back to the program. As a certified coach GOGI will help start weekly support meetings within the community, known as PowerUp! meetings.

The first GOGI fundraiser this year offered the AIC population options to

purchase their favorite Girl Scout cookies. Both of the fundraisers provided AICs the opportunity to purchase items that have not been offered in the facility in a number of years.

“Seeing the happiness on people’s faces means a lot,” said facilitator Juan Diaz. “To offer something different to the AIC population has been great.”

This summer GOGI plans to offer clear expandable folders and a new style of water bottle as part of the same fundraiser to maximize participation.

The water bottles will not possess the GOGI logo or sasquatch offered previously in an effort to reduce costs for AICs. | **ECHO**

## BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

### OCE Laundry Room Gets Repainted, Multiple Murals Added

Written by Chris Ainsworth, Staff Writer



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**A silhouette nature scene with a sunset background in the OCE laundry building on April 17, 2025. The mural, which wraps around the wall and is nearly 70-feet long, was painted by Neil Watford as part of beautification efforts in the laundry area.**

In January the Oregon Correction Enterprises’ laundry facility at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution started receiving a face lift by updating old paint and adding murals around the building. The project was started to improve the aesthetics of the working environment that a handful staff and 15

AICs spend as many as 8 hours a day in. Neil Watford, the artistic mind who has brought the walls to life, has invested over 200 hours in the project so far and plans to invest even more.

According to Mark Jackson, OCE Laundry Manager, when he first started working in laundry the look was out-

dated. The facility’s machines ranged from 50 to 70 years old. And none of them matched. To start, the AICs refreshed the walls with a new coat of white and used a green that matched to OCE logo to paint all the trim and machines, tying everything together and giving it all a new look.

“He wanted to do the floors. He wanted to do the walls. He wanted to do the machines,” said Neil Watford, the laundry employee Jackson tasked with painting the murals. “Jackson

had a laundry list of things to do.”

Instead of bringing in a painter from a different shop Jackson set to work with one of his own employees to give the plain white walls an updated feel. Because OCE is an Oregon based company, Jackson and Watford decided on

*Continued on next page...*

## AROUND EOCI

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Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**Neil Watford paints the University of Oregon "O" in the OCE laundry building on April 24, 2025.**

murals with an Oregon theme.

"This is Oregon and just about everybody loves wildlife. The murals improve moral," said Heath Trotter, who started working in laundry before the improvements started. "It brings back good memories and puts us in a different place."

Watford, with the aid of a few AICs who work in laundry, has completed multiple large murals depicting Oregon landmarks and scenes. In the beginning, Watford and two other AICs began covering a 60 to 70-foot wall with bright yellows, reds and oranges. Large blocks of bright colors made it difficult for some to see the finish line.

"The criticism was heavy at first," said Watford. "When you walk into a room and you have an eight-foot strip that goes around the room in bright colors it is a little scary."

The completed mural is an interpretation of an Oregon coastline and includes lighthouses, sea creatures and underwater scenes that transitions into a forest scene with silhouettes of bears,

deer and even a sasquatch hiding in the trees. Many of the laundry workers were granted the opportunity to suggest what they wanted to see painted in their work environment.

Watford saved time by painting silhouettes instead of detailed images

allowing him to complete projects much faster than if he had spent time making the work extremely detailed. The thought process behind this decision also gave his artwork an interactive touch.

"A silhouette lets you visualize what you think a bear, octopus or a whale looks like. You interact with the painting," said Watford. "When you go home you visualize a sunset with a momma bear and her cubs. You don't think of it as a painting with a bunch of silhouettes."

As the mural came together the criticism from outside staff turned to surprise and support. Some staff told Watford they thought he was crazy when he first started he said.

"I was a little worried at first, but I had faith in the guy," said Jackson. "I just let him do his thing and everything worked out."

Watford was responsible for mixing his own colors. He repurposed red, yellow, blue, black and white paint that had been purchased for different projects and created the range of colors



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**A lighthouse silhouette, part of the nearly 70-foot mural depicting Oregon nature.**





Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**A lion silhouette with a sunset background is photographed on April 24, 2025. Neil Watford mixed primary colors and basic paints to create the variations in color.**

required to paint sunset scenes, water-scapes, forests and reflections off of some of Oregon's most notable lakes. The paint shop and multipurpose departments helped out by donating some of the base colors used in the project.

"Any color we needed, like the pinks and purples in the Crater Lake scene, I had to mix myself," said Watford. "It was a lot of trial and error and most of the mixes are one-off colors, making touch ups difficult. It is not something we can get off a shelf."

Watford was surprised by some of the compliments he received from AICs, especially when it came to the color scheme. There are a lot of stigmas in prison he said. The coolest thing for him was when AICs told him the murals looked amazing instead of asking why he was painting the wall pink and purple. Those are not colors common in a prison, he added.

While there may have been some reservations in the beginning support and praise were quick to replace the



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**In addition to murals, Watford repainted the facility walls and equipment.**



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

**Crater Lake is painted on the inside of the eastern garage door of the laundry area.**

uncertainty. Jackson said there has been interest in painting murals in the OCE garment factory and call center. As for now, however, there are no plans to paint murals in the other OCE parts of the facility.

"I think it is absolutely amazing to see that caring goes into our workplace," said Trotter. "I love laundry and the camaraderie here."

For now, the completion of the murals in the laundry facility is priority.

The next project in the pipeline for laundry will be stripping and waxing the floors. However, in the future they hope to add a painting of a famous Pendleton statue of a cowboy and his horse – a collaborative project that was built at EOICI by an outside sculptor and AICs a few decades ago. **JECHO**

## AROUND THE STATE

# BRaille CERTIFICATION TRAINING

## Program Offered at Oregon State Penitentiary

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer



Photo provided by La'Stasha Kellog

**Jason Cizek, a resident of Oregon State Penitentiary poses for a photo at his desk in April. Cizek is part of the Braille certification course.**

**Oregon Correction Enterprises** is looking for AICs from any ODOC facility interested in becoming certified Braille transcribers. Selected participants will be transferred to Oregon State Penitentiary for training and certification. Called “The Braille Cell” by OSP residents currently participating, trainees will learn how to transcribe braille for the visually impaired while getting certified.

The position begins at 10 PRAS points and comes with the opportunity to earn a matching PRAS Team Goal Award, effectively doubling standard monetary awards.

There are opportunities for advance-

ment as well after the initial Unified English Braille literary certification is earned. Once certified, AICs will move from training into producing braille transcriptions while meeting deadlines.

Jason Cizek, a resident at OSP, is halfway through the National Library Service UEB Literary Braille Certification Course, a program offered by the National Federation for the Blind. According to Cizek, the job has taught him valuable skills and inspired him to start his own business.

“Having been incarcerated for 13 years, this is the first time I’ve ever felt that I’ve been given a real opportunity to learn a new skill that will truly

change my future for the better,” said Cizek.

Cizek said he will be 54 years old when he returns to the community. He said the skills he learned will create job opportunities for him that will be viable during his later years in life, as opposed to manual labor.

OCE’s hiring staff said applicants must have a valid social security number, six months of time incarcerated with clear conduct and no program failures in the previous six months, must have no convictions for ID Theft, Fraud, and/or Computer-related crimes, be willing to sign a 12-month retention agreement, have a high school diploma or GED and have a release date after June 2030.

OCE said the work environment is similar to an office-setting with potential interruptions and background noises. AICs must remain seated at a monitor and operate a computer for extended periods of time throughout the workday, all while staying on task when working with a team or independently depending on the project. Workers will receive training and quality-control advice from other AICs and staff, and respectful communication is a requirement. AICs must also balance multiple time-sensitive projects while meeting project deadlines.

Interested AICs may submit a work application to their facility’s Institution Work Program referencing the OCE Braille Program and La’Sasha Kellog at the OSP Contact Center. IWP will forward the application to OSP, and AICs selected for hire will be notified of their acceptance. | **ECHO**

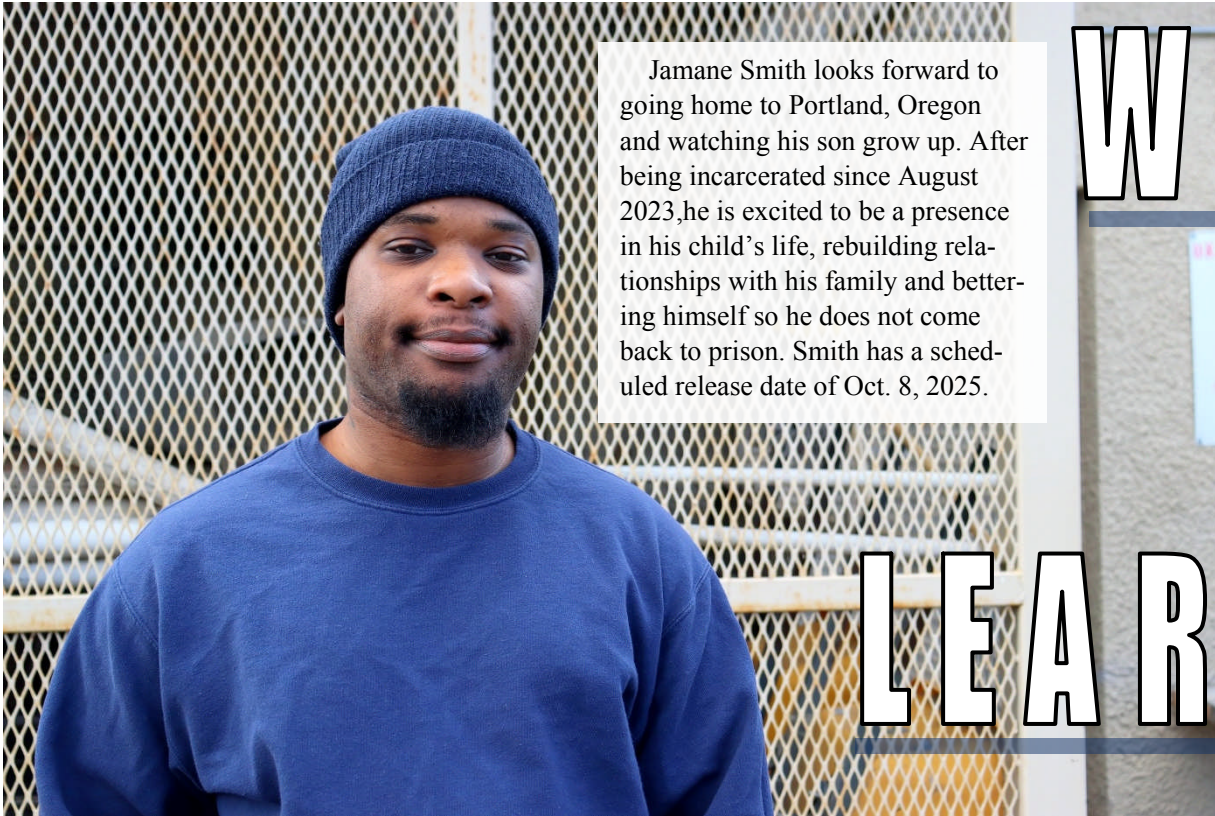
## Help Shape the Content of The Echo

NOTICES

**For AICs:** If you have a story you think should be covered in The Echo, send a communication form to IWP and let us know. The Echo is always looking for new and interesting story ideas.

**For Staff:** Have an idea for a story? Have a program or class that is graduating? Are you implementing a new process or policy in your area? Send an email to Ray Peters or J. Stewart.





Jamane Smith looks forward to going home to Portland, Oregon and watching his son grow up. After being incarcerated since August 2023, he is excited to be a presence in his child's life, rebuilding relationships with his family and bettering himself so he does not come back to prison. Smith has a scheduled release date of Oct. 8, 2025.

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

## With Jamane Smith

Interview by Antonio McCaw

**One thing that surprised me about prison was...** How much it feels like high school.

**The best advice I could give someone is...** Stay out of the way and do your time.

**The best item to buy off canteen is...** For me it's the \$1.15 oatmeal.

**One thing I wish I had never wasted money on was...** I wish I didn't waste so much money on the tablet.

**The food I'm looking forward to eating the most is...** Sea food boil when I'm home.

**I wish I had spent less time doing...** Pointless, non-beneficial things.

**Before coming to prison I would consider myself...** Someone that was always blaming others for my mistakes.

**Now I consider myself...** Someone who is trying to be the man my son and wife need me to be.

**The program that helped me the most...** GOGI.

**The change I would like to see the most in prison is...** Not seeing and hearing about the same people coming back.

**What I've learned...** I've learned that your family is doing your time with you. It just looks different physically, but mentally the same.

**I am looking forward to...** Getting home to my son and being the dad he deserves.

**A piece of advice I could give to someone new to prison is...**

To stay out of the drama and do programs to benefit yourself. Do things to make you a better person.

|ECHO

## SEEKING ARTISTS

NOTICES

The Echo is seeking incarcerated artists to feature in the next artist spotlight. Art from all genres is welcome, including, but not limited to: pencil, graphite, pen, paint, origami, food (if food is art to you), and any other medium. If you are interested in being featured in the next artist spotlight, send a communication form to IWP.

Please include a brief description of your art style.

Interested artists will be placed on a call out to IWP.

IN MAY

# THE REAL MVPS

## A Look at Sports Most Valuable Players

Written by Shane Goins



Shutterstock/AI generated

**Football, soccer,** basketball and baseball - sports are played all over the world from Pop Warner to the professional level. Sports can build character, pave the way for a college scholarship, or for the very select and talented few provide a lucrative career. From playing catch with dad after school, to a team coach or even a high school history teacher who helped them keep a C average, every athlete has mentors and support along the way.

But there is one figure whose support stands above all the rest. The unsung hero of any and every sport: **Mom.**

Mother of NBA superstar Kevin Durant, Wanda “Mama Durant” Pratt, has become a fixture in the NBA. Durant’s biggest fan since he started playing sports, she attends nearly every game (home or away).

Pratt was a single mom and raised her two sons on a postal worker’s salary. She had no qualms about putting her son’s needs before her own.

“My goal wasn’t to get my son to the NBA,” said Pratt, in an interview with ESPN. “My goal was to push my

son towards his dream.”

Her compromises helped Durant go from a high school phenom to a future NBA hall of famer.

In 2014, when Durant won his first MVP award, he called his mother the “real MVP.”

Former NFL Running Back Marshawn Lynch and his mom, Delisa, share a very close bond but are polar opposites in certain aspects.

While Lynch is a man of few words (noticeably so in postgame interviews) his mom is outspoken and has been known for calling out coaches over bad play calls (see Super Bowl XLIX).

When Lynch was a teenager, around 12 or 13, his mom would give him Skittles before his Pop Warner games calling them “power pellets” to boost his spirits.

He was often seen with Skittles at games throughout his college career at Cal-Berkley and into his NFL career with the Bills, Seahawks and Raiders.

Super Bowl LVII (57) between the Chiefs and the Eagles, was heavy with frequent cut-away shots of “Mama

Kelce” cheering for both of her sons who were on opposite teams (Jason Kelce was center for the Eagles and Travis Kelce a tight end with the Chiefs).

Travis and Jason’s mom has become a celebrity in her own right, appearing in numerous commercials with her sons.

MLB All-Star third baseman Manny Machado is someone sports fans know all too well from his Mother’s Day letter a few years ago.

Machado wrote:

“Mom, thank you for everything you’ve done for me. I can never repay you for all the sacrifices you made ... to support our family. I’m thankful for who you are and for helping me accomplish my goals. Thank you for reminding me every day to be strong and keep striving. I wouldn’t be the man I am today if it wasn’t for you.”

Moms are the best. I know that firsthand as a two-sport athlete in my younger days. I played baseball (catcher and DH) and football (tight end). My real mom, Teena, supported me during my football days (from Pee-Wee all the way through high school) and was my biggest fan and greatest motivator.

My adoptive mom, Lisa, supported me during my short time playing baseball. Even if I had an off game she gave me nothing but positive affirmations and encouragement.

You know how usually dad plays catch with their kid? My mothers did that for me. I accredit all my success in sports, and in life, to both of them.

To all the moms out there, as Mother’s Day approaches, your sacrifices, hard work and dedication should be acknowledged. You have helped create some of the biggest and brightest stars the world has ever seen.

Thank you. |ECHO



## 1664: NEW ISSUE TO PUBLISH IN MAY

### HOW TO CONTACT 1664

#### For incarcerated people in Oregon:

Send a communication form (a kyte) to IWP at EOCL.

#### For non-incarcerated people or those outside of Oregon:

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution C/O IWP  
2500 Westgate  
Pendleton, OR  
97801



### WHERE TO FIND 1664

#### For incarcerated people in Oregon:

1664 is available in limited print copies and on the free section of state-issued tablets at every Oregon prison. Incarcerated people can access the publication by selecting the “notices” icon on tablets.

#### For incarcerated people in the United States:

1664 is available on the Edovo app at more than 1,200 prisons in the U.S. Incarcerated people on Edovo can type “1664” into the search bar to access current and previous editions.

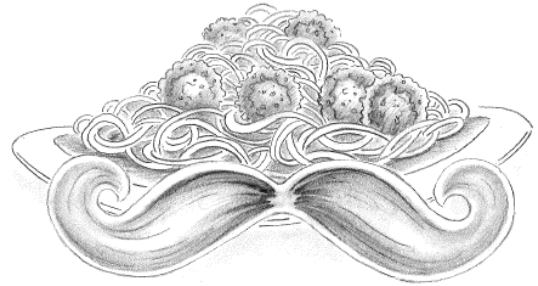
#### For non-incarcerated people:

1664 is available at [www.pollenpress.org](http://www.pollenpress.org). The magazine is sponsored by Pollen Initiative and can be accessed on their online directory of sponsored prison publications.

## COMICS OF THE MONTH

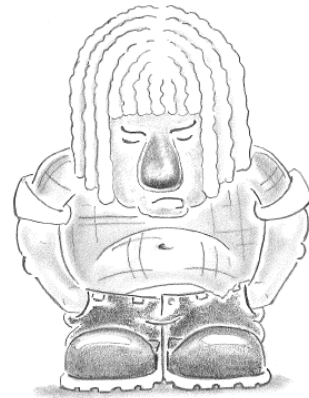
Created by Seth Mathews, Illustrator

What do you call a spaghetti in disguise?



An impasta!

I have an inferiority complex, but...



...not a very good one.

## ASPIRIN NO LONGER OFFERED ON HOUSING UNITS

NOTICES

April 21 Notice from DOC Health Services Division

Beginning May 1st, aspirin will only be offered through an order from a provider or through commissary. For those patients who are suffering from mild to moderate pain from headaches, muscle aches, menstrual periods, colds and sore throats, backaches and other associated symptoms, ibuprofen and acetaminophen are available at the housing unit. In addition to calcium carbonate (Tums®) for acid indigestion, heartburn and upset stomach, these products are available for self-use. If your health care needs are of a greater need, please see your medical provider.

Comenzando el 1 de mayo, la aspirina solo se ofrecerá por orden de un proveedor o a través del comisariato. Para esos pacientes que padecen dolor leve a moderado de dolor de cabeza, dolores musculares, periodo menstrual, resfriado y dolor de garganta, dolor de espalda y otros síntomas asociados, ibuprofeno y paracetamol están disponible en la unidad de Vivienda. Además del carbonato de calcio (Tums®) para indigestión acida, acidez y malestar estomacal, estos productos estarán disponibles para uso propio. Si sus necesidades de atención medica son mayores, por favor vea a su proveedor médico.

## GAME KEEPER



The dart throwing ninja "Butterfly" and the team face off against Bane Tide in this screenshot of *Mato Anomalies*, which is available for purchase through Fully Loaded Electronics.

## AN ASIAN-THEMED, CYBERPUNK GUMSHOE MYSTERY

### Game Review: Mato Anomalies

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer

**Mato Anomalies**, released March 2023, is an Asian-themed, cyberpunk, dual-dimensioned gumshoe mystery, best described in one word: odd. Played as a turn-based RPG, *Mato* is like a B-rated Japanese Bladerunner. It may not be the highest quality game, but the Dick Tracy-esque storyline mixed with Final Fantasy combat offers a unique angle. Plus, it is one of the more affordable games available from FLE for \$51.

The story follows private investigator Doe after he was hired by Mato city's biggest intelligence network operator, Nightshade. According to Nightshade, a new product appeared on the black market which is paradoxically "all the rage" but cannot be traded. Smelling trouble, she sends Doe to check out the commodity known as HANDOUT.

Doe's first stop is a shipping harbor where he finds two shady-looking men loading what is apparently HANDOUT

into cargo containers. After they leave, he goes inside to investigate only to stumble into a dimensional rift. He lands in a strange world known as a Lair and is beset by violent creatures called Bane Tide.

As death looms, a mysterious sword-wielding man named Gram comes to his rescue. Doe discovers Gram has been hunting the creatures. Since the two men's objectives seem to align,

*Continued on next page...*



Detective Doe searches for clues in the city of Mato in *Mato Anomalies*.



they form an alliance and continue investigating Bane Tide, HANDOUT and a slew of other mysteries in Mato.

Players switch between controlling Doe and Gram. Doe performs multiple investigations outside the Lairs, follows up on leads and questions people across Mato. During his investigations, he will sometimes use something called mind/hack; a persuasion technique. With unique decks of cards similar to Slay the Spire, gamers will play attack and defense cards each round to convince their opponents to reveal information.

When players dive into a Lair, they will be controlling Gram, who later on will lead a team of combatants. The Lairs have progressive complexity, but are relatively linear with obvious objectives and occasional simple puzzles. Bane Tide are fought here in turn-based combat.

There are multiple combat skills to choose from, with abilities unique to each character. Their stats and abilities

can be enhanced in a skill tree-format after leveling up. New equipment can be found and used to further customize playstyles, with two weapon types per character to equip.

One unique trait of this RPG is a shared health bar. Each party member contributes to the total health of the team rather than having individual hit points. There is also party equipment called Gear, which applies to all members when equipped.

The game's development budget seemed limited. Conversations between characters are mostly done in visual novel format with occasional comic book-style panels, and bystander NPCs are heavily duplicated.

Still, Mato Anomalies will probably be appealing to gamers who like the weird – similar to B-grade movie enthusiasts.

Estimated play time: approximately 26+ hours for speed run, 44+ hours for 100% completion. | **ECHO**

## BLOCKING OUT STRESS

### How Video Games Can Block Out External Stressors

Written by Kurtis Thompson, Staff Writer

**Blocking out external** stressors in prison environments is difficult. Even during quiet times, security radios, patrolling officers with jangling keys and other prison noises puncture the silence. With no quiet place to turn to, some incarcerated people seek refuge in their headphones.

Usually, those headphones are connected to a television, radio or an MP3 player, but one device often overlooked is the Nintendo Switch.

Virtually every videogame has audio. By changing in-game sound settings, a user can sometimes isolate rain storms, gentle breezes and other nature sounds which were recorded in the real world and put into a videogame.

Using the Nintendo Switch's built in 30-second screen capture button, those nature sounds can be recorded and played on loop.

In addition, many game titles have professionally-produced music which can be played like MP3s. The games Monarch and Crymachina are two examples.

Mato Anomalies has background sounds of a busy restaurant and electric railways. Combining these pre-recorded audio clips with Koss noise-cancelling headphones can create an artificial isolation, providing much-needed mental alone-time despite unnatural prison conditions. | **ECHO**

## PREA INFORMATION

Sexual abuse and harassment are never okay. Tell Someone. GET HELP.

Call the Inspector General's Hotline:

1. Pick up a handset
2. Press \*999 to leave a message

All PREA Calls are confidential.

Send a letter to the Governor:

Governor's Office, State Capitol, Room 160, 900 Court St., Salem, OR 97301

The Oregon Department of Corrections has a zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse and harassment. AICs family can report on their behalf by contacting the Inspector General's public hotline at: (877) 678-4222.

El Abuso sexual y el acoso sexual nunca son aceptables. Avisele a alguien. CONSIGA AYUDA.

Llame al Inspector General:

1. Al numero de ayuda:
2. Levante el teléfono, marque \*999.

Todas las llamadas a 'PREA' son gratis y confidenciales.

También puede reportar a la oficina del Gobernador por escrito.

Governor's Office, State Capitol, Room 160, 900 Court St., Salem, OR 97301

Sus amigos o familiares pueden hacer un reporte llamando a la linea del Inspector General al 877-678-4222.

### PREA Advocate:

You may write the PREA advocate at:

ODOC PREA Advocate

3601 State St.,

Salem, OR 97301

PUZZLES

SCRABBLE CHALLENGE

See how many points  
you can score in one word!

Scrabble Board: May, 2025

Scrabble Basic Rules

No proper nouns like names or  
places

No contractions like “it’s” or  
“that’s”

No abbreviations like “app” or  
“spec”

Board Scores

TW = Triple Word Score

DW = Double Word Score

TL = Triple Letter Score

DL = Double Letter Score

TW			DL					TW				B <sup>3</sup>	E <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>1</sup>	N <sup>1</sup>
	DW				TL				TL			R <sup>1</sup>		DW	
		DW				DL		DL				A <sup>1</sup>	DW		
DL			DW				DL					K <sup>5</sup>			DL
				DW				S <sup>1</sup>	E <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>1</sup>	U <sup>1</sup>	E <sup>1</sup>			
	TL					TL		P <sup>3</sup>		TL					TL
		DL					DL	O <sup>1</sup>	DL				DL		
TW			DL					R <sup>1</sup>					DL		TW
		DL					DL	T <sup>1</sup>	DL					DL	
	TL		N <sup>1</sup>	O <sup>1</sup>	U <sup>1</sup>	N <sup>1</sup>	S <sup>1</sup>			TL					TL
			O <sup>1</sup>	DW								DW			
DL			T <sup>1</sup>					DL				DW			DL
		DW	A <sup>1</sup>				DL		DL				DW		
	DW		T <sup>1</sup>		TL					TL				DW	
T <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>1</sup>	M <sup>3</sup>	E <sup>1</sup>					TW				DL			TW

PLAYER 1

L<sup>1</sup>

C<sup>3</sup>

I<sup>1</sup>

E<sup>1</sup>

U<sup>1</sup>

B<sup>3</sup>

PLAYER 2

E<sup>1</sup>

D<sup>2</sup>

E<sup>1</sup>

A<sup>1</sup>

L<sup>1</sup>

C<sup>3</sup>

SUDOKU FOR MAY

Puzzle 1: Demanding

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

Puzzle 2: Very Challenging

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



1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13					14					15				
16					17					18				19
			20					21						
22	23	24				25	26					27		
28					29				30	31	32			
33				34				35		36				
		37	38					39						
40	41					42					43	44	45	
46					47		48				49			
50					51	52				53				
54			55	56				57	58					
59							60					61	62	63
	64					65					66			
	67					68					69			

Puzzle created by: Joy M. Andrews

- ## ANSWER KEYS

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

### Puzzle 1: Demanding

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

Puzzle 2: Very Challenging

1 Shoat's mom  
2 It's about five feet long in some halls  
3 Israeli-designed weapon  
4 Canine world  
5 Minuscule amount  
6 Diminishes in importance  
7 "\_\_\_tu che macchiavi"  
8 Famous muscle man  
9 Lonelyhearts' title  
10 Ancient serf  
11 Bond, once  
12 2.471 acres  
17 Part of HRH  
18 D-Day transports  
19 Orange-to-red star, as Aldebaran  
22 21st Greek letter  
23 It's followed by a bull in some circles  
24 Spur-of-the-moment purchases  
26 Relative of a nautilus  
29 Quantity of bricks  
31 '60s protest singer Phil  
32 "... we fear \_\_\_ evil" ( Burns)  
34 "\_\_\_ Hand Luke"  
35 Litigation  
38 It may be housebroken  
39 Microscopic  
40 Like a lizard's skin  
41 Pudding choice  
44 Talker's gift?  
45 Have creditors  
47 "\_\_\_ Cowgirls Get the Blues"  
49 Become overcast  
52 Barrino and Hicks  
53 High-collared type of jacket  
55 Formerly, formerly  
56 Mother of Apollo and Artemis  
58 My Boys or your boys  
60 It must be crossed to become more than one  
61 Anger  
62 Say no to  
63 Garner

## ANSWER KEY

[illegible]

THE ECHO, VOLUME XIII - ISSUE 78, MAY

[www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/](http://www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/)

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

2500 Westgate

Pendleton, OR

97801

## COME AND WORK FOR THE ECHO

The Echo is currently seeking to add a correspondent to the masthead, with potential for advancement. This position starts at 11 PRAS points.

### Criteria:

- Must be NCI level 2 or higher
- Must work well with staff and AICs of many different backgrounds

### Duties include:

- Incorporating writing feedback and taking direction
- Will include article writing, conducting interviews, and researching various topics
- Attending training sessions with outside journalists and other field experts
- Completing weekly homework assignments on AP style writing, news article structure and grammar and punctuation
- Work within the guidelines of ethical journalism, as set by the Society of Professional Journalist
- Ability to be impartial and to look at a topic from multiple angles
- A positive attitude and outlook. The Echo does not publish articles that are unnecessarily disparaging to the institution, the Department of Corrections or other incarcerated people

### Hours of Work:

Correspondents are scheduled on weekdays. They may also be sent on assignment during evenings and weekends (covering sporting events, multi activity nights, religious service events, etc...).

### To Apply:

Send a communication form (kyte) and a job application to IWP.

If you have not completed an application in the last three months, please resubmit.

## HELP SHAPE 1664

1664 is currently seeking AICs who are interested in talking about or sharing their experiences on the following topics:

**Culture:** How do you observe your culture in prison? Are there certain foods to make that represent your heritage? How do you express your culture?

**Addiction:** How has addiction impacted your life? Are there certain triggers in prison that are difficult to avoid?

If you are interested, send a communication form to IWP and let us know.

## WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Are you interested in sharing what you've learned during your time in prison? Edging closer to that release date?

Send a communication form to IWP and let us know. You may be featured in next month's "What I've Learned" section.

The Echo and 1664 are publications of the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

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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