



JOE SCHMIDT
COMMISSIONER, DOC

Commissioner's CORNER

"Enhancing the Safety of Our Communities, Providing Secure Confinement, Reformatory Programs, and a Process of Supervised Community Reintegration"



A report by COMMISSIONER JOE SCHMIDT
Alaska Department of Corrections
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WELCOME TO THE COMMISSIONER'S CORNER:

Thanks for continuing to check in with this column. If you have ideas, issues or suggestions from institutions or field offices for the Commissioner's Corner, please submit them to

Richard_Schmitz@correct.state.ak.us or call 465 4640.

HILAND MOUNTAIN BRIGHTENS CHRISTMAS SEASON IN TELLER:



This year, Hiland Mountain's annual Adopt-a-Village program will help bring a brighter Christmas to the 286 men, women and children of the Village of Teller. Each year inmates handcraft items and raise funds for the effort. This year, each child will be given a backpack with school supplies. Elders will receive handmade quilts, blankets, teddy bears, hats and mittens. Kudos go to CO Veeann Schrock who coordinated the effort.

PCC INMATES PARTICPATE IN COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS:

Inmates at the Palmer Correctional Center Medium Facility have donated their funds and labor in providing handmade blankets for Alaska communities. The materials are purchased from the profits generated from the Inmate PCC Medium Club Sales Store. The inmates then crocheted coverlets for a Christmas donation to local charitable organizations.

Each inmate designed the pattern and color scheme of their blankets. Many inmates tapped preexisting artistic talent while others discovered new skills. Through their commitment, dedication, and effort these individuals displayed compassion, caring, and kindness for others, which are integral positive changes for self-advancement.

The Palmer Correctional Center offers other opportunities for educational and vocational curriculum that inmates can use in the workforce, but this new community program provides inmates with innovative skills which can be utilized in their domestic lives and homes. PCC's aim is to provide unique positive outlets for inmates to continue to give back to our community while learning innovative skills and qualities.



In addition, inmates finished 675 wooden toys to be given to needy children, just in time for the holidays! Over the course of this past summer and fall, inmates at the Minimum Facility have been hard at work providing the labor required in the manufacture and assembly of these toys. Now that they are finished, they will begin distributing the toys to a variety of community organizations including Alaska Family Services, Palmer Food Bank, Providence Children's Hospital, Claire House, AWAIC, Good Sheppard Lutheran Food Pantry, The Community

of Sutton, the Special Santa Program and the Salvation Army in both Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.



Pictured are Lieutenant Tim Routen, Superintendent Cindy Betts, Sergeant Marty Steinriede and inmate volunteers..

DOC REMEMBERS, HONORS LONG-TIME CO JOHN GALLANT:

Former longtime Alaskan, A. John Gallant, died unexpectedly November 5th of a brain aneurysm at his home in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. John was born on June 27, 1954 in Kansas City, Missouri to Joe and Alice Gallant. John graduated from Kodiak High School in 1971 and spent the next year working as a police intern with the Juneau Police Department.

For the next 22 years John worked as a Correctional Officer for the Department of Corrections in Juneau, Anchorage and Palmer. John served as the President of the Alaska Peace Officer’s Association for a number of years, and he assisted with the promotion and production of their annual concert in Juneau. He was chosen to be Peace Officer of the Year in Juneau twice. Since his relocation to Hawaii he had become very interested in the Hawaiian culture and music; in particular, Israel “Iz” Kamakawiwo’ole.

John had a great sense of humor and loved playing practical jokes on his

family and friends. Laughter was important to him and he had a knack for always being able to put a smile on everyone's face. He and his children spent many hours of laughing and having fun at Disneyland and other amusement parks. John was a loving and devoted father and will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

He is survived by his three children; John Thomas of Seattle, Washington; Joshua Joseph of Sheridan, Oregon; and Carli Marie (Robert Gross) of Anchorage, Alaska. His brothers Greg (Terri) of Juneau, Robert (Cynthia) of Australia; nieces and nephew: Megan and Joi Gallant, and Allison Murphy of California, and Mike Murphy of Washington. Upon his arrival in Hawaii, John quickly formed a friendship with the Mohrs. John considered Sandy, Tina, Natalie, and June Mohr his "hanoi" family (in Hawaiian that word means chosen), and is survived by them as well. John was preceded in death by his parents, Joe and Alice, and his eldest brother Joe.



Department leadership visits Ketchikan Probation/Parole field office: PO Jessica Mathews, center, stands with Commissioner Joe Schmidt (r-l), Director of Institutions Garland Armstrong, Deputy Commissioner Dwayne Peeples, Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards, Deputy Director Bryan Brandenburg and Probation/Parole Director Donna White.



BIRTHDAY AND CHRISTMAS PARTY IN ONE SHOT:

Emmalee Sims celebrates her first birthday at the Juneau Central Office Christmas party on December 7. Emmalee is the daughter of Accounting Clerk II Karie Murray. About two dozen staff members from JCO and Lemon Creek participated.

INAUGURAL CLASS GRADUATES AT PALMER ACADEMY SITE:

Despite some bumps and grinds, the 24 students of Correctional Officer Academy Class 105 (Oct. 1-Nov. 9) was the first to graduate from the department's new academy at Palmer. The students were from six facilities. Weather conditions in Juneau prevented the commissioner from attending the graduation, but he was able to spend 30 minutes or so with the students one afternoon about mid class – much of it a Q&A session. Afterward, the commissioner commented that the students had asked very probing and thoughtful questions.

A special thanks to our Adjunct Instructors: Chief Time Accounting Officer Lori Okuley, Sgt. Rebecca Cowart ACC, Sgt. Mary Wells ACC, Mental Health Clinician IV Laura Brooks, PO II Amy Abbott Anchorage Probation, PO II Steve Imoe Palmer Probation, Nurse Joyce Degroot, Sgt. Chet Williams ACC, Gloria Johnson and Dave Beaulieu, HMCC, Gail Voightlander Department of Law, Katie Tepas Department of Public Safety.

Graduation was conducted in the Palmer High School theater on November 9. , Sgt Kurt Reichard conducted the graduation, the invocation was given by DOC Chaplain Sam Humphreys, and the Keynote speakers were Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards and Director of Institutions Garland Armstrong. Also present were Director of

Probation and Parole Donna White and Deputy Director of Institutions Bryan Brandenburg. Correctional Officer I Marcela Lunares of Ketchikan Correctional Center received the Academic award. The Student Speaker was Correctional Officer I Suzie Pyle from Spring Creek. The Code of Ethics was read by Correctional Officer I Randy Parker from Ketchikan.. while Deputy Director Brandenburg, Sgt Reichard and Probation Officer III Dan Traxinger presented the Diplomas and Badges. Director Armstrong administered the Oath.

Academy Director Doug Lloyd extended special thanks to his administrative staff: Sharron Wessels and Kathy Gregg. As the Academy was short one staff person, the director commended PO III Dan Traxinger and Sergeants Jake Wyckoff and Kurt Reichard for filling in in excellent form.

Graduates are as follows: Jonathan Barcus, Loren Jacobsen, Matthew Posey, Ruben Garcia, Renato Saturnino, Russell Collins, and Mark Snyder, ACC; Robert Bressler, Scott Long, David Judd, Derek Bringhurst and Nicolas Skrip FCC; Brian Calvin and Marcela Lunares, KCC; Caitlin McCallister and Randy Parker, LCCC; Michele Edlin, Suzie Pyle, Gregory Barmer, Edward DeFreest and Daniel Neis, SCCC; Robert Delgado, Christopher Kline and Carl Kincaid, WWCC.