

LEMON CREEK JOURNAL

CHRISTMAS 2023 ISSUE



INSIGHTS & IMAGES OF CORRECTIONS ON THE LAST FRONTIER,
LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER, JUNEAU, ALASKA



Volume XX, Christmas 2023 Issue

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To our readers:

The Lemon Creek Journal is a quarterly e-Publication of Lemon Creek Correctional Center, Juneau, Alaska. The Journal's mission is to inform, engage, and challenge Corrections professionals and the public to think critically about the challenges facing Alaska's correctional system. So that we can be more responsive to our readers, please share with us your impressions and suggestions by emailing the Editor at daryl.webster@alaska.gov.

Forward to Volume XX

Christmas 2023 Issue

On December 2, 2023, LCCC officers, administrative staff, retirees, command staff (and Santa) gathered at Thunder Mountain High School to celebrate DOC heroes, families, and the Spirit of Christmas. Not just another holiday party, this gala was our opportunity to showcase the accomplishments of our colleagues, to embrace those who served before us, and to recognize that our families are not an adjunct to our profession, but an essential part of who we are at Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

Take a few moments to meet Sergeant Mitch Cook, recipient of the 2023 Fred Dugdale Employee of the Year Award and share some reflections on the significance of Christmas to those who serve in the field of Public Safety. The staff of the Lemon Creek Journal hope that your Christmas was as merry as merry can be and we wish you a Happy New Year.



Welcome 2024!

By

Superintendent Bob Cordle

Teamwork can be defined as, “the collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in an effective and efficient way.” Henry Ford said, “*Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, working together is success.*” Teamwork is who we are! It is the driving force behind the reasons for our daily successes.

As we step into another year, I am confident that our well-established culture of taking care of one another in every way, will thrive and continue to define us. I am so honored to labor alongside each of you and am grateful for the individual contributions that make this team so awesome!

I have so much respect for each of you. Thank you for giving your very best to the department, the public, and to each other. For this issue of the Lemon Creek Journal, I have taken excerpts from past articles,

authored by me, to express my appreciation for you. I hope you enjoy and will reflect on the many publications since 2016.

“As correctional employees, we are held to a higher standard both on and off the job. We are a group of dedicated professionals who pride ourselves on being dependable, self-disciplined, consistent, and fair, while providing public safety. We are committed to the Department and to our team members in fulfilling our responsibilities and we remain flexible even when it is not always convenient for our schedules. We are a strong team, and I firmly believe that there are plenty of people living right here in Juneau who would love to work alongside us if they knew what it was really like to work here.” **July 2023 Issue**

“There are many factors that contribute to the cohesive unity that exists at Lemon Creek and teamwork is the main contributing factor that makes us so

unified. We hear it on the radio, see it in the hallways, and witness it daily within our offices. It is an absolute pleasure to labor alongside all of you.” **July 2018 Issue**

“Integrity must be at the heart of our profession if we are to succeed as one united front. Honesty, accompanied with integrity provides the core strength for the very underpinnings of our careers. Integrity provides the strength and safety needed to shield us from the threatening storms seen off in the horizon and is a vital tool if we are to accomplish every endeavor we pursue within these walls.” **October 2017 Issue**

“As correctional staff it is not enough to do the bare minimum in our occupations, in fact there is no bare minimum in a correctional setting, there is always something that needs to be done. We are in a people business that demands our full, unwavering attention to every detail. We are required to labor tirelessly as we ensure that public safety is our top priority, and this can only be accomplished as a unified team. Assisting others with their duties builds unity, our collective pride in each other, and reinforces our personal dignity and care for one another.” **July 2018 Issue**

“We work in an environment where we depend heavily upon the solid decision making of the man or woman standing next to us. We are brothers and sisters standing together to continuously hold that thin blue line. We are the force that stands united between the citizens of our community and those incarcerated, literally!” **July 2019 Issue**

“I had a conversation with a new hire who told me that one of the things that attracted him to work here was the solid

relationships and comradery he witnessed while hanging out with a group of LCCC staff who care for each other enough to spend their off time together. It doesn’t get any better than that!” **January 2023 Issue**

“Our watch, the mantle of security, comes with a specific set of responsibilities that is passed down from one person to another, so that there is never a break in the circle of our continuous unwavering dedication to protecting the public. This facility has been staffed by courageous men and women around the clock continuously for nearly 60 years, and we keep on!” **April 2019 Issue**

“We are not just about confinement! We are about setting an example, caring, coaching, and mentoring. I have witnessed many of you standing outside of a cell or walking down the halls of this prison giving words of encouragement to someone who is struggling, and every time it makes me smile inside.” **July 2017 Issue**

“At the conclusion of presenting the awards at the banquet, I looked around the room and saw sitting before me the faces of public safety. I thought about those who were on duty, who couldn’t join us. An overwhelming sense of gratitude for all of you overcame me and I began to single out individuals, recognizing them for the small, but significant contributions they offer to our team. If time would have permitted, I could have carried on all night about all of you.” **January 2018 Issue**

“My career has spanned over two decades and in that time, I have had numerous conversations with formerly incarcerated people who have credited part of their

success to probation officers, nurses, maintenance workers, correctional officers, and kitchen stewards.” **October 2018 Issue**

“So many of you inspire me to try harder, do better, and have gratitude for the good things in life. I appreciate the unity that has been created here by staff and for the teamwork that is shared by all.” **January 2019 Issue**

“I am challenging each of you to help build the team we need. Talk with family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances about what it is like to work here and encourage them to apply. There are plenty of individuals in our community who would love to be a part of this team!” **January 2023 Issue**

“Though, it may seem COVID is the theme of my message, it is not. You are. Shortly after April 15th, my view of the pandemic and the outbreak here within our small facility changed. I no longer looked at our circumstance in a negative way, in fact I realized that it was not COVID that was setting the pace, it was you. If I were

asked to provide a single word to describe the employees at Lemon Creek, it would be resilience. Resilience, of course, is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Resilience is also possessing the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity. Words with similar meaning are strength, toughness, and durability, and those are all fitting, but you are resilient.” **April 2021 Issue**

“It is true, the small things in life that are often the most important can continuously be overlooked. It is easy to get caught up in a world that demands our time to the point that we don’t seem to have time for the small things. If this happens, or when, it is more likely than not because we either have allowed the world to set our priorities for us or we have become unknowingly careless with our time. A great man once said, “Life is to be enjoyed, not just endured.” **October 2019 Issue**

May 2024 be a wonderful and memorable year for each of you!

Remembering Christmas

By

Daryl Webster

I can't recall exactly when I abandoned my faith in Santa. As with most kids, it was an evolutionary process, absolute belief giving way to nagging suspicion, and finally joining the grownup world in nodding and winking at a harmless cherished myth. I suppose we reach a landmark on the path to adulthood when it dawns on us that nothing wonderful is truly free, and that the best things in life come to us, not magically, but courtesy of ordinary adults, determined to do extraordinary things for those they love. Like any other junior member of consumer society, it ultimately didn't matter to me who put gifts under the tree, so long as a goodly number of them had my name attached. But Christmas remained magical because the adults in my life made it their business to feed the enchantment.

Oddly enough, my most enduring memories of childhood Christmases, revolve around my father working as a patrol sergeant on the evening shift, so there were seasons when he had to work the holidays. Our family traditionally opened gifts on Christmas Eve and as darkness fell, I stood at the window, nose pressed to the glass, not waiting for Saint Nick, but for the arrival of a patrol car that would pull into the driveway, red and blue flashers spinning, signaling that Dad's dinner break had come, bringing Christmas with it. I spent the next 30 minutes or so madly tearing the wrapping from boxes I'd been squeezing and shaking for days, trying to guess their contents. My parents cheered me on from the couch, Dad

in his crisp blue uniform, Mom snuggled under his arm, his gun belt draped over a chair and the police radio spewing dispatched calls. By the time he checked back into service and left to complete his shift, I lay exhausted in pile of torn gift wrapping, face smeared with cherry chocolates, and half-eaten candy canes glued to the carpet.

About the same time each year, our police department sponsored its annual employee Christmas Dinner. Youngsters ran wild, getting reacquainted with fellow cop kids we might only see once or twice a year, while adults spent time with fellow officers from different shifts and their spouses, who worked the same city streets but seldom saw one another. Santa handed out candy boxes and fresh oranges, harvested from local groves. I'm certain that all the other kids who attended recall those times with the same warm nostalgia as I, because those gatherings reinforced the conviction that it was *our* police department, and we were part of a larger family, chockfull of heroes.

Christmas isn't about Santa, of course, but commemorates the birth of Christ, and you all reserve the celebrations that matter most for your homes and extended families. But the Lemon Creek Holiday & Awards Banquet draws us together, away from the obligations of work, and builds enduring memories for ourselves and our children, which is why we sponsor it as a family celebration. Recollections of banquets past and people long gone will linger in our sons' and daughters' hearts because we made it

our mission to bring our families and friends together, to laugh and share fellowship in a bright and sparkling setting, while evening settled over the world outside.

Thank you all so much for attending and making lasting impressions for our families, mine

included. Thanks to all of you who worked so selflessly, during months of planning and preparation. The 2023 Banquet was a success because you made it so, and everyone who attended had a hand in weaving a small scene into the tapestry of our holiday memories.

LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER

2023 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

SSgt. Mitch Cook



The nominating committee takes great pleasure in naming SSgt. Mitch Cook as the 2023 LCCC Employee of the Year. Sergeant Cook is the perfect example of selflessness. Regardless of what his workday brings, LCCC staff are the blessed recipients of his positive attitude and friendly demeanor. He, like many of our staff, often makes adjustments to his schedule to help work overtime, even when it is not convenient for him. He somehow manages to find out what projects his supervisors are engaged in and provides assistance, often without them knowing about it. And this year he volunteered his time for every Wednesday luncheon, by grilling, cooking, cleaning, and ensuring everyone was fed, often at his own expense. Sergeant Cook is a “Go-to guy,” prepared to tackle any problem with enthusiasm, skill, and finesse. DOC and Lemon Creek Correctional Center are fortunate to have him in our ranks.

IN MEMORY OF OFFICER FRED DUGDALE

BY

SERGEANT MITCH COOK

2023 LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



In Memory of Fred Dugdale

By

**Ssgt. Mitch Cook,
2023 Dugdale Award Winner**

This year the management team at LCCC decided to honor the late Officer Fred Dugdale by renaming the Employee of the Year Award after him. Officer Dugdale's family was both surprised and honored by this kind and meaningful gesture. I would like to take some time to talk about Officer Dugdale, "Duggy," and share the impact he had on Lemon Creek Correctional Center and the impact LCCC had on him.

Some things about Duggy that only a few knew. When he was a younger man, Duggy was an outgoing fun-loving guy, who loved to watch and play baseball. He competed for many years in the annual Mudball Classic in Sitka. Every weekend would find him in downtown Sitka, playing in the dart league or bowling for a team at Lane 7. At the age of 19, Duggy took in his 8 year old sister, who needed a home. Duggy had someone who depended on him, so he went to work, taking on one of the hardest jobs around as a Log Rat at the local sawmill. Long cold nights working the log rafts, coming home cold, wet, and beat up, he never complained or regretted his decision to do what was right. His work ethic and attitude toward his job was also apparent in the way he worked at LCCC. He always strove to *do what was right*, right for the shift, right for the facility, and right for the Department of Corrections.

Duggy was my last FTO, and I was his last recruit, which was kind of funny because I was the one who talked him into joining DOC years earlier. I believe I was his eleventh trainee. We often talked about being FTO's and what it meant to teach new officers the right way to do this job. One of his favorite stories involved his assignment as Officer Bernaldo's FTO. Duggy told me that when Officer Bernaldo started working at LCCC he seemed unsure of himself, quiet but very observant. Duggy explained how much he enjoyed seeing this young officer emerge from his shell and find his confidence and his "voice" as Duggy put it, to watch him become one of the best officers he had ever trained. Duggy loved to share his knowledge of the job.

When Duggy first started work at LCCC, we were on shift together and we enjoyed the people we worked with. We loved our shift. If you were sick or hurt, you knew that you could come to work, save your leave and you would be taken care of. We as a shift would trade posts, give up sit down posts, and walk all night for those who were not feeling well or who were injured. Duggy felt that when you call-out, you're only letting your shift down. This was even more apparent toward the end of Duggy's life. Duggy was unaware that he had Stage 4 cancer that had moved into his bones. The doctors said he must have been in extreme pain for a quite awhile, but you wouldn't have known it. Duggy never complained and he never asked for more time off, he didn't want to let his shift down. So Duggy showed up to work.

Duggy was known to be fair, kind, and approachable with everyone he interacted with, staff and inmates alike. Since his passing I have been approached by many, speaking of how he was fair and kind to them and how approachable he was. Duggy took time to listen to their concerns and would do what he could to address their issues. Even when he was acting old and grumpy, if you had a question or needed help with something, you could turn to Duggy. He was always there to help anyone who needed it. He was always fair, kind, and approachable.

One of the first things someone in our profession should learn is how to laugh at work. This skill is essential to not only survive but to thrive in this profession. Granted there is a time and place, but this skill should be practiced often. When you laugh with your brothers and sisters, you reinforce the bond that keeps us together during hard times. Duggy understood this concept well. He loved telling funny stories about things he and his shift had seen and done over the years. He also loved to “stir the pot” playing innocent or uninvolved, and then sit back and giggle at his work. He loved to laugh at work.

Corrections was not Duggy’s first choice of professions or his second or third choice for that matter. However, it was the profession that meant the world to him. As years passed, Duggy became less outgoing, less active in the world, less the young man he was in Sitka. Like the rest of us, Duggy had his ups and downs in life, some harder than others. His little sister, whom he took to raise, moved out of state with his nieces, his engagement ended, and then he lost his mother 3 years ago. The only family he had to pull him through those dark times was the family he had here at LCCC. It was the love of the people at this institution that helped him get through. You may not have ever heard him say it out loud, because he was a proud man, but I promise you he loved every one of you. We often talked about how if it wasn’t for the family he had at LCCC, he would have left years ago but he could never leave family.

Duggy
Officer Fred P Dugdale
10/12/1964 to 03/26/2023
Do what’s right.
Share Knowledge of the job.
Show up to work.
Be Fair, Kind, and Approachable.
Laugh at Work
Take Care of each other. We are Family.

I was chosen to be the first Fred Dugdale Employee of the Year Award winner. I do not feel worthy of this title, but I am very proud and grateful that others have seen qualities in me that they wanted to recognize. I have tried to be the type of Officer, Sergeant, and brother that I think would make Duggy proud of me. I will do what’s right. I will share my knowledge. I will show up to work. I will be fair, kind and approachable. I will laugh at work. I will do my best to take care of you because We Are Family.



Lt. Irizarry, Officers Fisi, Parker, Dugdale, Schramm



Dugdale honored at 2018 Awards Banquet



The Lemon Creek Correctional Center Holiday & Awards Banquet



Recognizing
Excellence...



Together With Friends & Colleagues...



And Those Who Matter Most...



Lemon Creek Correctional Center Wants YOU!



Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau, Alaska is currently recruiting Correctional Officers. To apply, go to [Governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/) and look for the Juneau Correctional Officer I position.



Correctional Officers at LCCC Enjoy:



- Great Pay/Benefits
- \$10,000 signing bonus for first time applicants
- Financial Relocation Assistance
- Career advancement opportunities
- Premium schedule (7 days on/ 7 days off)
- Generous vacation leave
- Excellent training
- Great community to raise a family

For information, contact Lt. Irizarry at (907)465-6288. We look forward to working with you.