MAINE SELECTED AS ONE OF TWO STATES TO RECEIVE 3 YEARS OF INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE PROBATION SERVICES

Maine has been chosen by the National Institute of Corrections to be a participant in a technical assistance project titled Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community. The purpose of the three year project is to develop and implement evidenced-based practices in adult community corrections – better known as probation – in order to reduce future criminal behavior. The Maine Department of Corrections is one of two states to be selected for this highly competitive award.

In announcing Maine’s selection, Governor Baldacci said, “The evaluation team from the National Institute of Corrections was impressed with the high level of collaboration that already exists in Maine and with the enthusiasm for this project. We have a strong record of working with our criminal justice and community partners.”

According to Commissioner of Corrections Marty Magnusson, “The project offers Maine and the department an opportunity to improve our practices in adult community corrections. And, importantly, this project can assist us in implementing the Corrections Commission’s recommendations.” The Commission to Improve the Sentencing, Supervision, Management and Incarceration of Prisoners is also recommending strategies to reduce probation caseloads and focus probation resources on high-risk offenders.

The three year NIC technical assistance project will be guided by an External Policy Group, including representatives from the executive, legislative and judicial branches, local law enforcement, the victim and advocacy communities. A kick-off meeting is scheduled for February 5th and 6th.

Since the 1990’s, the National Institute of Corrections has promoted an awareness of what has become known internationally as “what works” in correctional practice. This three year project is intended to immerse an entire statewide system in a comprehensive process to bring about effective change. The project will use research supported principles in the fields of community corrections, organizational development and collaboration.
**COMMISSIONER’S CORNER**

As I reflect on the events and our accomplishments that have taken place in the year 2003, I realize what great people make up the department that I have been given the privilege to lead.

The development and implementation of CORIS ( Corrections Information System) the web-based offender management system for the Maine Department of Corrections gives our Department an informational data base that sets a new national standard for “Best Practices” in the field of correctional information services.

We have experienced both a difficult financial environment and an increasing offender population over the last year. Through the outstanding efforts of our employees the Department continues to make amazing progress in many areas ranging from progress on the ACA accreditation for our juvenile and adult correctional facilities to National recognition of the Women’s Unit at the Maine Correctional Center.

I would like to personally thank each and every person that works for the Maine Department of Corrections for his/her hard work and dedication that made these monumental accomplishments possible. I am proud of the hard work and dedication that each of you contribute that helps to give the Department of Corrections the reputation as being the most progressive Department in the Maine State Government.

I wish a safe, happy and blessed holiday season to each of you and your families.

*Marty*

**Food for Thought**

Make yourself a better person and know who you are before you try and know someone else and expect them to know you.

*Unknown*

**Facility & Region Newsletter Contributors & Staff**

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Priscilla McLellan, Charleston Correctional Facility  
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Ralph Colfer, Central Maine Pre-Release Center  
Anthony Winslow, Long Creek Youth Development Center  
Priscilla McLellan, Mountain View Youth Development Center  
Carol Carlow, Region 1 - Adult Community Corrections  
Nancy Downs, Region 2 - Adult Community Corrections  
Bud Hall, Region 3 - Adult Community Corrections  
Sue Carey, Region 4 - Adult Community Corrections  
Kathleen Pressley, Region 1 - Juvenile Community Corrections  
Pauline Ayers, Region 2 - Juvenile Community Corrections  
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Hi All,

My name is Bea and I work at the Helpdesk in Central Office. Many of you have spoken with me for various reasons.

I recently turned 42 and discovered something that tickled my funny bone for 5 months. It was the ideas that Martin Murphy and I would come up with if we were to own a Volkswagen Beetle. We thought of the red one being painted with black spots so it would be a Lady Bug. We thought about the classic white one that was painted in the mid 70’s as Herby the love bug. Then we thought if we had a yellow beetle we could paint it to look like a Killer Bee, but I decided it would have to be a girl because it would be my car. So we came up with the idea of putting eyelashes and lips on the front of the car, black strips on most of the back and using the current antenna as the stinger.

We went to the Windsor fair and there was a booth there displaying motorcycle tanks with flames so we stopped and asked if they did any detailing on cars. Robin the owner stated that they did do cars. We spoke with her about our ideas and she stated she could do that and to make an appointment and we could do it. Well, what do you know, my truck was paid off and I could hardly wait to buy the beetle. Then we made the appointment and I was so excited when I saw the car. I get a kick out of it every time I look at it. And thanks to Ellis King you too can now get to see this marvelous creation. The kids look at the car and smile and chuckle or even give me the thumbs up.

Hope you get as much of a kick out of this picture as I do out of the car.

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Maine Adult Correctional Education Association

A meeting of the Maine Adult Correctional Education Association (MACEA) was recently held at the Maine State Prison in Warren. Twenty-four people representing State and County correctional education programs and community agencies attended the meeting that included lunch and a tour of the MDOC’s largest and most secure adult correctional facility.

One of the areas covered, at the meeting, was a lively discussion concerning mandatory education in adult correctional facilities. Denise Lord, Associate Commissioner of Corrections was the guest speaker at the meeting and discussed mandatory education as well as other academic and vocational educational program issues within the MDOC adult correctional facilities. Denise was very interested to hear from the meeting participants concerning their thoughts and opinions of correctional education issues.

The next meeting of the Maine Adult Correctional Education Association is set for Friday, March 12th, 2004, 2:00 p.m. Time and location to be announced.

Continued next page
Maine Adult Correctional Education Association cont’d

The 16th Maine Adult Correctional Education Association Conference is to be held Thursday, May 13th, 2004, at John Martin’s Manor in Waterville. This conference offers many worthwhile workshops that deal with vocational and academic educational programs in adult correctional facilities and the “best practices” within correctional education programs.

The MACEA meetings are open to anyone interested in correctional education programs. If anyone is interested in attending either the MACEA bi-monthly meetings or the annual conference and needs further information, contact Bob Aubrey at 474-6086 or esi@somtel.com

Did you Know?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, the nation’s prisons held more than 1,264,000 state inmates and 161,000 federal inmates as of June 30, 2002. Prisons typically confine persons convicted of felony offenses who are serving sentences ranging from 1 or 2 years to life.

What the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Provides for Prisons Professionals

The NIC Prisons Division provides assistance that supports the effective management and operation of the nation's prisons.

NIC assists prison administrators, staff, and policy-makers by conducting management and specialty staff training; developing new resources; helping prison professionals share their expertise through networking; and providing direct, on-site assistance addressing the full range of prison facility, operational, and policy issues.

NIC brings together resources and expertise on issues of concern to Prisons correctional staff and policy-makers. Current topics include:

- Staff Sexual Misconduct
- Youthful Offenders in Adult Correctional Systems
- Thinking for a Change: NIC Cognitive Behavioral Program for Offenders
- Offender Classification
- Restorative Justice
- Mentally Ill Persons in Corrections Settings

National Institute of Justice Journal 250 November 2003

Intimate partner homicide—the killing of a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend—has declined significantly in the past 25 years. The findings presented in the feature articles examine which women are most at risk for being a murder victim and consider policies that may explain the declines or result in further declines. The "At-A-Glance" section contains snapshots of research on domestic violence, child abuse, and other interesting subjects.


This NIJ Standard establishes performance requirements and testing methods for active hand-held metal detectors used to find metal weapons and/or metal contraband carried on a person and/or concealed by a nonmetal object. This Standard supersedes NIJ Standard–0602.01 published in 2000.
A special congratulation goes out to Sally Kinney and Tom Shorey for their volunteerism to the MSECCA campaign. Under their leadership, the Bolduc Correctional Facility experienced an unprecedented 575% growth in participation! Way to go Sally and Tom. You did an outstanding job. For their reward, on December 9, 2003, Sally and Tom were presented a plaque at the Statewide MSECCA luncheon in Augusta. Governor Baldacci was the keynote speaker, Secretary of State Dan Gwadosky was the entertainment and Commissioner Dawn Gallagher was the Master of Ceremonies.

Thank you Sally and Tom for your hard work and dedication.

On December 16, 2003, Rosalie Morin was presented with the Department of Corrections Leadership Award for outstanding dollar growth in the 2003 MSECCA campaign. Under Rosalie’s leadership, MVYDC more than doubled its contributions to the campaign, going from $5,616 in 2002 to $13,473 in 2003! Seen in the picture congratulating her are (back row) Larry Austin, Christine Conlogue, Eric Hansen and Barry Stoodley, (front row) Jody Breton and Rosalie Morin.

The archive photograph pictured in this article first appeared in the Portland Press Herald on January 20, 1967 and was entitled “The Windham Cow Palace”- Holstein cows at the Reformatory for Men get the best of care in their spotless barn. As a result, their production of milk and ice cream has been climbing on an annual basis”

The article described “Inmates of the State Reformatory for Men take satisfaction in translating 400 green acres into 50,000 quarts of ice cream and 1,000,000 pounds of milk each year for 10 Maine Institutions.

This photograph and information was supplied by Nancy Marcoux the current Community Programs Director at the Maine Correctional Center in South Windham.

Nancy, Thank you for this contribution!

PHOTO OF COWS IN BARN

If anyone has any old MDOC photographs that they would like to submit to the DOC TALK to use for this section, please contact Ellis King at 287-4342. The photographs may be published but will certainly be returned to the sender.
WALDO COUNTY - Cathy Gilmr Reported – They’ve had good contact with the Waldo County Criminal Justice Committee. The team has been stalled for a bit. Two trainings were cancelled because the main speaker was unable to attend. This set them back a little, but everyone is ready to go. They had a “fishbowl” with role-play and the public participated. This was very educational and all observers got to ask questions and learn about CRT’s and the roles. Overall the energy of the members is low. They have people at the Belfast High School that would like to be involved. They are working on networking with others to have everyone back and focused. They hope to meet with some officers to gain their interest and involvement. They are looking to hire a program administrator at the local jail and would look at alternatives to incarceration and they hope to work with whoever fills that position.

MT. BLUE - Tessa Mosher Reported- There hasn’t been any cases referred to the team.

PARKSIDE - Karen Tucker Reported- They have had a few referrals, but had to refer some juveniles back to the JCCO because the team decided they were not appropriate cases. They are working out the criteria for JCCO’s to filter out the cases before they are referred. They had two conferences, the second conference was sent back to the JCCO because the juvenile revictimized the victim by writing a nasty letter to the victim. The juvenile was not following the requirements. They have been meeting on average twice a month. There seems to be a lack of Police and JCCO involvement in their meetings. They agreed to take cases from the entire Portland area. They have had issues with juveniles being summonsed, but the offender is never notified to not show up to Court. They are working on better communication to ensure this doesn’t continue to happen.

OLD ORCHARD BEACH - Sue Rudalevige Reported - There hasn’t been any referrals and or conferences.

There was a small group at this meeting but we had a lot of interesting conversations relating to the importance of having an organized team, a team contact and cooperation with the Police Department and Juvenile Community Corrections Officer.
VICTIM—OFFENDER DIALOGUE

On December 4, the Region 1 probation office was the site of the second Victim Offender Dialogue between a victim and an incarcerated offender. The victim made the request for a dialogue when contacted by Victim Services for an impact statement as part of a Supervised Community confinement investigation. The offender agreed to participate, and the process began while the offender was in the institution. The process requires a great deal of preparation of both the victim and the offender by the facilitator prior to the dialogue, this resulted in the offender already being placed in the community on supervised community confinement prior to the meeting taking place. The Regional Correctional Administrator, acting as Chief Administrative Officer agreed to allow the meeting to take place, as did the supervised community confinement officer. The meeting was considered a success by all parties.

MAINE STATE PRISON

INMATES DONATE THOUSANDS IN CHRISTMAS TOYS, CASH TO SALVATION ARMY

By Daniel O’Connell
"Reprinted by permission from Village Soup"

WARREN (Dec 24, 2003): Santa Claus got some extra help this year to make his way through the Midcoast, but his helpers aren't who you might expect.

Inmates at the Maine State Prison in Warren went cell to cell to raise money for the Salvation Army's Rockland and Lewiston branches.

They had originally planned to make a donation to just the Rockland Salvation Army, but a television news story about the need in the Lewiston area sent them back for more.

LONG-Timers Chairman William Flynn, right, speaks during the group's presentation to the Salvation Army.

Several weeks before Christmas the volunteers office purchased wooden trucks, bulldozers and cars which the Spruce Unit (Boys Detention) residents painted. The vehicles were donated to the Prebble Street Day Care near by. It was very rewarding to do something for others, especially when they are small children.

In a presentation to Salvation Army officials on Wednesday, members of the prison's Long-Timers group and the prison Jaycees handed over $1,600 worth of toys to the Rockland branch and a check for $700 to help with the Christmas effort in Lewiston.

Long-Timers Chairman William Flynn thanked the Salvation Army and prison officials for the opportunity to participate in the community service project.
Capt. Steve Pearl speaks with Long-Timers Chairman William Flynn, middle, and Jaycees Vice President Kevin Knight after Wednesday's ceremony.

If it wasn't for the benevolence of the Salvation Army, we wouldn't have the opportunity today to give something tangible back to the society from which we've taken," said Flynn.

"It makes our holidays brighter and hopefully it will make some children's holidays in our communities brighter as well."

"Thank you for reminding me what Christmas is all about," said Bennett. "We are indeed all in this together, from the greatest to the least, and often the least are the greatest."

MAINE STATE PRISON
2003 CO-ED SOFTBALL SEASON
By Paryse Thibodeau

The Maine State Prison Softball team had a successful year with a 10 & 2 overall record and finishing 2nd Place in the Maine State Employee’s Softball Tournament held in Augusta, September 4th–7th, 2003.

The 2nd place finish was no small feat considering the team played 5 consecutive games on championship day, without any breaks.

Players, right to left:
Rusty Worcester, David Allen, “Bear” Brownell, Gary LaPlante, Elwin Weeks; Coach Doug Starbird; Kathy Fleury; Russ Manduca; Eddie Mayer; Paryse Thibodeau, Assistant Coach Charlene Gamage, Stefan Plessner; Jason Stewart, Ricky Worster; Lisa Richards; and Mick Collins.

Absent from photo: Mae Worcester, Danielle Mayer, Dale Lindsey, Richard Brooks, Ryan Fries, Larry Worster and Paul Devers who seriously injured his knee during a regular season game which kept him out of the play offs. We missed you Paul!
ADMINISTRATION:

We are in the process of implementing the “Seeds of Change” Program for our prisoner population and their families.

This program connects fathers with their children for a common family literacy activity. The fathers involved in the program will utilize Alphabet Gardens designed and developed by Maine State Prison to create learning activities with their children up to age eight. We hope to have one garden inside the walls for prisoners to plant and cultivate, with a “mirror garden” outside the main entrance so the child can see it when visiting the incarcerated parent.

This all possible due to a grant Polly Black has been working on, the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Planning Grant. We will spend approximately $5,000 to build community partnerships with Head Start, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Literacy Volunteers, Senior Spectrum, and Child Development Services in the hope of receiving a grant of $25,000 through the Barbara Bush Foundation. Monthly meetings have been held with the above-mentioned agency representatives and prison educators and administrators.

We believe this will be a very successful program. Over 100 varieties of perennial seedlings (A through Z) are growing in the MSPW greenhouse to be transferred to the Bolduc greenhouse mid-January. The first parenting classes, Long Distance Dads, will start at MSPW and Bolduc in January. We are looking forward to the implementation and anything we can do to ensure the fruition.

FARM:

Our farm crews made all of our Christmas Wreaths that have been hung around MSP and BCF.

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PROMOTIONS:

John Roberts – Correctional Officer to Correctional Sergeant.

Congratulations to many of our staff that have increased their families

CCF STAFF HAPPENINGS:

By Steve Berry

On December 19th Charleston Correctional Facility hosted our annual 6:00 AM Christmas breakfast for all Staff. The breakfast is 100% staff sponsored and funded. The event made the record book this year due to the large percentage of staff participating in everything from funding to laboring and consuming.

A GREAT response from a GREAT Staff!
DCF’S LEAP INTO
THE COMPUTER AGE

The CORIS system has become a big part of our daily routines, and a lot of people who up until this point have been computer illiterate are now becoming very familiar with the use of computers as the Department of Corrections and Downeast Correctional Facility leap into the computer age. What we all have to always remember is that you can only retrieve information that has been entered. All of the smaller institutions are trying to come up to speed; we don’t have the staff to jump right on some things as fast as the larger institutions. But as always, we seem to make due with what we have, multitasking is the rule not the exception. Once the bugs are worked out, the new system will greatly improve the ease for fast recovery of information, everything from which bed a prisoner is assigned to to what property is being shipped. A great deal of information is needed by our various classification boards to properly place a prisoner in a security level and to better fill our work crews with the proper workers. It will now be at the fingertips of the people making the decisions and will keep the public and our staff as safe as possible.

RETIREMENT

Sgt Gary Godish who has worked for the state at Downeast Correctional Facility since May 13th of 1985 is retiring. We all wish him well. We will be hiring a new sergeant in the near future.

DOWNEAST WINTER WONDERLAND

The only problem with living in an area that has such changeable weather patterns is that you may not like the change.

A gentleman once moved into this area from a southern climate and couldn’t wait for winter. All summer long that’s what you heard about, “when is winter coming?”

When the first flakes started to fall he was elated,” Isn’t snow wonderful, it’s so beautiful drifting down out of the sky.” Everyone he spoke to he told how wonderful it was to have four seasons and how much he loved Maine, this was early December.

About January he still thought it was great, but it may be a little colder than it needed to be. He’d spend some of his weekends’ free time building snow forts in the back yard with the kids, Maine is so wonderful.

Then came February, the snow was getting so high you could almost walk onto the roof of the house. Yesterday the water from the stream the beavers had dammed up started across the road and the car hit the ice and slid across the road and landed on its side. Our southern gentleman took it in stride rolled the car upright and continued on down the road with the fenders flapping.

March came in like a lion and went out the same way. The biggest snow storm of the year struck on the 31st, the last day of the month. You know that cold wet heavy snow that sticks to everything followed by a 10 degree night. There were no snow forts in the back yard, only an appointment with the local chiropractor to straighten out the back that two hours of shoveling put out.

Second week of April and it’s still snowing in between winter freezing rain. It looked like a crystal palace with mud. The only comment you could hear from the man with the cane was, “If this is Maine the way life should be… you could have it!”

The first week of May found the new Real estate for sale sign out front of the old homestead.

Welcome to life in Downeast Maine home of the Downeast Correctional Facility.
VOLUNTEER NEWS:
By Sheena Lundin and Kathy Kemp

Over 2,000 books were recently collected during a two-week book drive sponsored by the students of SeDoMoCha Middle School’s Civil Rights Team and Peer Mediators team. These students took on this community service project to help more fully stock the Mountain View’s library. They collected books which were donated by M.S.A.D. #68 students, their families and staff members from all three schools in M.S.A.D. #68 (Dover-Foxcroft, Monson, Sebec, Charleston). Books were also donated by Foxcroft Academy students and staff, and the Thompson Free Library and its’ patrons. The homeroom in each school that collected the most books won a pizza party provided by the sponsoring groups. The books were delivered to Mountain View on November 17, 2003, and accepted by Superintendent Eric Hansen.

The Volunteer Department with assistance from Kathy Kemp, Kelly Asbury and member of the mission committee of Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church traveled to The Maine Seacoast Mission in Bar Harbor to assist Terry Hanson, Christmas Coordinator in making up ditty bags for each of the young people at Mountain View Youth Development Center.

Congratulations to many of our staff that have increased their families

PERSONNEL

ANNIVERSARIES

NOVEMBER YEARS
Wayne Page, JPW 24
Paul Preble, JPW 15
Margaret Williams, Food Service 14
Scott Chandler, Storekeeper 6
Pam Irish, JPW 6
Sandy Rollins, JPW 6
Katie Gagnon, JPW 6
Karen Olmsted, Food Service 6
Spencer Salley, JPW 5
Mike Niles, JPW 5

DECEMBER YEARS
Priscilla McLellan, Admin. Secretary 18
Dwayne Chase, JPS 17
Lewis Beal, JPS 9
Donald (Bud) Dillon, JPW 6
Linda Gardner, Payroll Technician 6
Peter Spaziano, JPS 6
Jamie Emerson, JPS 6

WELCOME TO OUR NEW HIRES

Jeffrey Schaller, Woodworking Teacher
Reverend Paul Dunfee as our new Chaplain

PROMOTIONS:

John Simmons – JPW to Vocational Trades Instructor
On Saturday, December 6, Sheena Lundin and Kathy Kemp traveled to Orrington and gave Volunteer Training to 25 attendees of the Calvary Chapel in Orrington. The Church members have been very involved in our facility providing programs for our youth. They were instrumental in planning a family day for the parents of our young people.

Choices, a foster child placement agency was given some wooden cradles, trucks, and doll blankets for their children’s Christmas. These articles were made by the youth at MVYDC.

**EDUCATION NEWS:**

Residents at MVYDC improved on average 105 points from their pre-GED to their actual GED test. Target areas for school improvement were identified as math and writing.

**Goals of GED Testing Program:**

- Use pre-GED test results to help evaluate Resident needs in subject areas; in particular using item analysis for diagnostic purposes.
- Interest Residents in skills improvement through their strong motivation to take the GED test.
- Compare pre-GED to GED results to obtain an objective assessment of students’ skills growth during their enrollment in the school program.
- Develop a databased decision making process for school improvement.
- Develop data DOE local assessment purposes.

Each student improved in the following areas: Science/Language Arts/Reading/Social Studies. Congratulations to students and teacher alike.

**FOOD DRIVE**

By Lori Call, JPW & Edwina Strout, JPW

We would like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks to all the CCF & MVYDC Staff who helped with our Thanksgiving food drive. The combination of monetary and food donations made this a very successful endeavor. With your assistance we were able to supply Charleston families with five turkey baskets with all of the items for a dinner. We gave four to Womancare of Dover-Foxcroft. We were also able to give canned goods and food items to the Dover-Foxcroft Food Cupboard and four turkeys and items to a Milo Church.

We have set up an Angel Tree this year in the MVYDC Lobby. Everyone has been very bighearted donating toys, clothing and food. Thank you for helping to show our generosity in helping others!

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**TALENT SHOW**

By Mike Cushman

Wednesday, November 19, MVYDC showed off their talent in our First Annual Talent Show. Acts included a singing duo by Laura England, Librarian and a Female Resident. A very talented dance routine performed by a male Resident complete with flips and spins. A hilarious comedy act presented by Larry Austin, Deputy Superintendent and Perry Jordan, Education Consultant. Staff and Resident’s alike showed their karaoke talent to an array of music. We were put in the Christmas spirit by a solo performance by Mike Cushman, Teacher.

To all of our delight SpongeBob Square Pants and Patrick showed up with their sidekick The Captain, David Brugger, JPW. The Resident’s in the act made the costumes. Dr. David Coddington and his band played some good old rock n roll, great job!

Thank you to Chef Spahr who hosted the talent show. Great job Mark and Congratulations to everyone who participated it. All enjoyed it.

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Special Thanks:

A special thank you to Lori Call, JPW and Edwina Strout, JPW who both worked very hard on making the Thanksgiving Food Drive and Christmas Donations successful.

CHRISTMAS NEWS:
By Rosalie Morin

We had a visit from Mr. & Mrs. Claus for Christmas. They handed out goody bags, everyone was happy that they took some time to visit during their busy schedules.

A special thank you to all CCF and MVYDC Staff who participated in the Angel Tree this year. There were gifts galore from toys, books, clothing, shoes, and games. The families who received the donations were overwhelmed with emotion. Thank you again for your kindness and generosity.

THANK YOU for donating to help out other families at Christmas. The picture below is just some of what was donated.

ADULT COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS
Region 1

MOVES SOUTH

We welcomed Jim Cole to our staff this November. Jim made a lateral transfer from Region 4 in Bangor and is now based in our Springvale office, supervising the Waterboros and the first half of the Sanford/Springvale caseload. Jim’s corrections experience spans 22 years, beginning with 6½ years at the Maine Youth Center and continuing with his move to the Bangor Pre-Release where he served as Director of that facility for 13 years. When the Bangor Pre-Release was phased out, Jim took on the challenge of a Probation officer position in the Bangor Office and worked there until moving south to join our Staff. Welcome aboard Jim.

OFF THE INURED LIST

A couple of familiar faces returned to work after being on the injured list for a few weeks.

Assistant RCA Lisa Nash finally is now out and about after spending some time at home on the mend following corrective foot surgery and PPO Dave Edwards is back on the job after recuperating from surgery to his small intestine. Both of our patients seem to be doing fine and we’re all mighty glad to have them back with us again.

HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTEST

Our annual Christmas party was held December 20th at Assistant RCA Lisa Nash’s home in Falmouth. The gang gathered around six with everyone bringing a dish to share for our festive meal together. After everyone was amply stuffed, we gathered in the living room for the laugh filled Yankee gift swap. Let’s see was it the spice rack or the picture of Portland Headlight that went around the room and changed hands several times. Doesn’t really matter. What is important is that we all had a great time and were most appreciative that Lisa opened her home to all of us.
With the holiday season upon us, we again plan our annual Christmas party/staff meeting at Brian MacDougall’s house. His wife spends many hours preparing a feast for our Region One staff. We always have a Yankee swap after our staff meeting and enjoy a wonderful meal together. Josh Ash has left us and transferred to Region IV. We all miss his wonderful personality and his sense of humor. He was a great addition to our team. Dan Harfoush just returned from a golf trip in the Carolina’s; this is his annual trip with his father. He surely chose a great week to escape the Maine weather. We are already off to a wild start for a winter wonderland. We look forward to hiring new people soon to fill the vacant slots and I am sure the officers that are now doing double case loads will be very grateful for that. I wish everyone a great holiday season and a very pleasant winter. Since we live in Maine, we may as well enjoy the weather while we continue to look forward to spring.

By Alison B. Smith

It is Dec. 22 as I write this article. Instead of being in the Malls getting those last minute presents, or baking cookies, I find myself in bed. The flu has hit me full force. And I had a flu shot! I would not wish this experience on Saddam Hussein; well maybe. My eyes and sinuses feel like they are on fire; my head pulsates, and my skin aches so bad I can barely comb my hair. This is starting to sound like a D-rated movie! After three sleepless nights, I rolled out of bed and visited with my local pharmacist. I cannot take medications. She kindly suggested a very old fashioned remedy; Vicks vapor rub, along with a vaporizer and the works. After collecting all the necessary gear, I went to the check out counter, sneezing and coughing, non-stop. I noticed two people move to different lines. This really happened! I don’t blame them. I returned home to set up my new equipment. My husband, Dick, follows me around, disinfecting the telephones, door knobs and basically anything I may have touched. Oh well, this too shall pass.

A lot of our friends and colleagues are preparing for their traditional holiday celebrations. Donna Miles and her husband Ron, are preparing a feast for over 20 people, and they all sit down together, at the same table! A real Norman Rockwell experience.

Dave Barrett and his wife Nancy are heading to the Maine coast to share in a Christmas Eve family reunion. Galen Williamson and his wife Jen will be traveling to their childhood neighborhoods. Renna Hegg is flying out to Michigan to be with her family. Tom and Mary Pailes have flown to Florida, to spend Christmas in their home that is still up for sale. Dick and I are heading to Massachusetts to spend a few days with our families. My father turned 83 years old this year, and is still as sharp as a tack. I hope I inherited his genes !!! Lots of nice family traditions continue……

As most of you know, Sue Carey and Barbara Mascetta retired and moved to their new home in Lehigh Acres, Fla. I keep in touch with them via e-mail. One day, while I was raking a foot of snow off of my roof, Sue e-mailed to say she was floating in their backyard pool. What’s wrong with “my picture” here?!

Chris Ross, our bionic woman, had yet another hip replacement. She has to bring a Dr.’s card with her when she flies. All the metal she has in her system sets of the security alarms! She is doing fine, but will be out for 3 months or so. Thank heavens for Sue Colson and her proficient skills. Hopefully, we’ll be getting a “temp” soon to lighten up a little of Sue’s load.
We had our annual Christmas party on Dec. 19th. We had enough food for all four Regions! As always, the “Yankee swap” was great fun. Somehow, all the crazy/fun gifts ended up with Shawn Nelson and Tom Pailes. Shawn is still trying to figure out his gift: A clock on a rope that you take into the shower. Shawn asks: “Why”????? If any of you are ever in the Bangor office, check out Tom’s singing/dancing chipmunk. So cute! Mary Jones played Mrs. Santa, giving out her most generous gifts. Bill Francis called us from Kuwait. It was 11:30 am, our time, and approx. 7:30 pm, his time. He sounded as though he were right next-door. Technology is amazing to me. We miss him, but know he will be home in April.

As in past articles I’ve written for DOC TALK, I know what I am writing now, will be old news by the time this is published and in your hands. The good news is, I will be basking in warm sunshine, in Naples, Florida, just about the time you are reading this article. My flu will be history. But for now, I’m going to crawl back under my electric blanket, visualizing sugar plums dancing in my head, or maybe diamonds! ☺

May you all stay safe, warm and healthy this New Year.