

CORRECTIONAL OASIS

A PUBLICATION OF DESERT WATERS CORRECTIONAL OUTREACH
A NON-PROFIT FOR THE WELL-BEING OF CORRECTIONAL STAFF & THEIR FAMILIES

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

Recipients of Pikes Peak CFC funds—Agency #6022

MAY 2006

From The Old Screw

Temptations

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| TEMPTATIONS | 2 |
| CHANGES | 3 |
| CHAPLAINS' TRAINING | 3 |
| BANK ON US | 3 |
| GARAGE SALE | 4 |
| MANY THANKS | 4 |

I've been asked about the temptations staff face while working in a prison. There are so many, it is scary.

Boredom can become the entry point, just talking to someone to pass the time on a long night at work, night after night. You soon find out that you and the co-worker you're talking to may be having the same problems at home. Husbands or wives just don't understand what you are going through. As time goes on, talking on the job turns into coffee after work or before work. You start looking forward to getting to work and on and on, until something really bad happens. No, I didn't go there, but I have had offers and have seen so many others get involved.

Here are some of the crazy things I've seen happen to staff. While at work, a staff member was called one night on the phone by a lady Officer he hardly knew who told him some things she liked to do that only her husband should have known about.

Another Officer was called around three in the morning by a female Officer at another Prison and asked if he would father her child.

An Officer saw another Officer off duty at a gas station and said, "Want to go grab a beer?" When told no, that he was on his way to see his wife, the other Officer became very upset.

Officers have left their families, giving up everything for a co-worker. The worst thing is that most of the time the new relationship does not work out. Everyone comes out the loser.

Attachments between both male and female Staff with inmates of both sexes are another source of temptation. The Staff member is the only one to get hurt 99% of the time. What can the inmate lose? Some of them even brag about the number of staff they have taken down (got fired) while doing time. There have been inmates that have taken down more than one staff member. The civilian staff can get into just as much trouble. Inmates are very, very good at finding weaknesses in a person. They can tell if someone is lonely or sad and can be very comforting, very understanding. Always remember that some of the inmates are so slick, they should have run for office instead of a life of crime.

Even after being warned in training and by co-workers, some staff still get caught up in this

Still Time To Enter!

You can win one of **more than 40 valuable prizes** donated by businesses in Fremont County, including a rafting trip for two from Raft Masters, \$100 gift certificate from Sonny's Ace Hardware or one-night lodging including two meals and drinks at the Quality Inns & Suites, Cañon City. Entries must be received by 5:00pm, May 15, 2006, with the drawing to be held May 18, 2006. Mail your minimum donation of \$10 today to DWCO, P.O. Box 355, Florence CO 81226.

(Continued on page 2)

From The Old Screw**Temptations***(Continued from page 1)*

mess. I remember a new staff member who was having problems at home. An inmate picked up on it, and went to work on her. The result? In spite of warnings from her peers, she lost her job and almost did time for bringing in contraband for this inmate. The inmate had called her at home (yes, she gave him her home phone number), and asked her to bring in specific items. What she didn't know was that, at the time of the call, the inmate was sitting in the Investigator's office. This incident gave the inmate bragging rights. It was a feather in his cap and status in the joint.

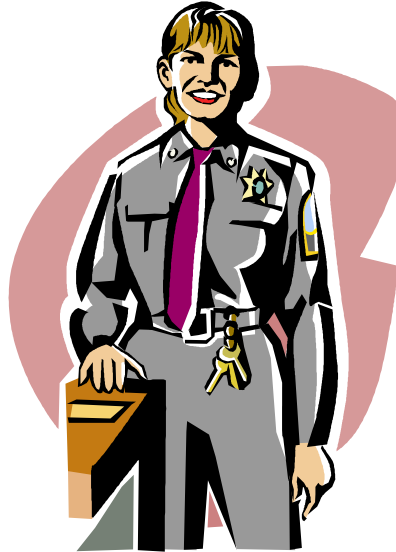
If Staff never remembers anything else, they need to remember this: **NO INMATE IS EVER SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR FRIEND.** An inmate told his housing Sergeant one time that he needed to talk with the Warden about something serious. The inmate told the Warden that Officer so-and-so was carrying out contraband when he got off shift that day. (It turned out that the Officer was taking out a letter for an inmate.) When the Warden asked the inmate how he knew, the inmate replied, "I gave it to him!" The Officer was a very kind person. He lost his job. The inmate got bragging rights.

Inmates will sometimes take years to try to set a staff member up. They have time. If you leave, they will start on someone else. For three years I had an inmate try to be very friendly with me and always want to help. I had been in corrections for ten years by then. The only thing he accomplished was to get my curiosity going, as by then I didn't trust any inmates who tried to befriend me. Finally one day, while talking to me in my office, he brought up the subject that he sure missed having some good iced tea and how nice it would be if

someone would bring him in some. I had thought it was going to be something good, and had already told my friends in IIS (Internal Investigation Section) about the inmate trying some kind of game. I looked at him and told him, "It'll taste even better if you stop playing games and get out of here." The inmate never talked to me again except when it was required. Staff have been offered all kinds of things to bring something in to the inmates. Guns, cars, boats, money and even girlfriends. The list is endless.

Bottom line: Watch out for boredom. And remember: As long as there are prisons, there will always be inmates trying to take advantage of the staff's basic instinct to be nice to their fellow man.

Take CARE, stay AWARE!
The Old Screw

**EPYCS Awards**

The El Pomar Youth in Community Service (EPYCS) committees of both Cañon City High School and Florence High School chose to honor Desert Waters with grant awards in support of the Corrections Ventline program. Desert Waters received two checks totaling \$1,250 at the EPYCS Grant Presentation held at Cañon City High School on April 19th. A total of 11 awards were presented to non-profits in the Fremont County Region. We are honored and grateful for the gracious recognition and support from these caring high school students.

From Caterina's Desk

Changes

© Caterina Spinaris Tudor, Ph.D., 2006

The following is a typical query we get from spouses of COs, and my response to it. (This is NOT an email we received on the Ventline.)

Dear Caterina:

I wonder what happened to my husband since he became a corrections officer. He used to be so easy going. He'd laugh and joke, and didn't complain much about things. Now, after five years in the system, he's all somber. It's like he can't find joy in anything. He's also become paranoid. We don't go out together much, but when we do, he

CHAPLAINS' TRAINING

On April 19 Caterina offered a 4-hour "renewal" training in Colorado Springs for the chaplains of the Colorado Dept. of Corrections. 48 people attended.

Thank you, Katherine Sanguinetti, for inviting Caterina to offer this training!

Chaplain's comment:
Thought challenging—very positive. Informative. Opportunity to draw from experience and expertise of fellow chaplains and trainers.

insists on sitting with his back against the wall. He never used to be so uptight before. And he's so negative! He finds fault with everything and everyone, and tears me down all the time. Now I avoid him. I'm tired of walking on eggshells around him, yet I can tell that he's miserable and I feel for him. Please help me understand! Concerned in Cañon City

Thank you for your question. We often hear comments similar to yours by spouses of corrections staff.

When one works in an environment saturated with ever-present danger, mind games, anger and hate, it is hard to not get "contaminated" by these

influences. It's like a virus exists in the ventilation system. Staff ends up "catching" it or at least battling it for a while until they develop sufficient resistance to it. Infection by this "virus" results in people becoming cynical, pessimistic, mistrusting, anxious, irritable, and even aggressive (due to adrenaline overload) or destructive towards themselves. Others withdraw and shut down, becoming numb and seemingly indifferent. Likening it to metal fatigue, I coined the term *Corrections Fatigue* to describe the gradual "personality changes" in corrections staff over time. Even the strongest piece of metal gets weakened and even snaps when bent over and over again.

Express your caring and concern to your husband. Let him know that you want to understand more about what he's dealing with so you can support him better. Get on our website and read on the subject. At the same time, point out to him when his behavior becomes hurtful. Ask him to make different choices, so he doesn't take his frustrations out on you (or on himself, for that matter). Compassion and gentle limit-setting are crucial in your situation. Compassion, because indeed he is battling serious darkness and gets virtually no credit or support for it. Limit-setting, because he needs to know that his negativity is destructive, such as when he verbally tears you down. (Many wives have told me that when their husbands come home they half-jokingly tell them, "Remember: I'm your wife, not an inmate. This is home, not the prison.")

If this does not prove to be enough, it would be wise to seek counseling either for yourself alone or, preferably, as a couple. This can equip you with tools for dealing with your circumstances more effectively, instead of reacting to one another out of hurt.

Caterina

Desert Waters

Correctional Outreach



*a non-profit organization
for the well-being of correctional
staff and their families*

Caterina Spinaris Tudor, Ph.D.
Executive Director

P.O. Box 355
Florence, CO 81226
(719) 784-4727

DESERTWATERS@DESERTWATERS.COM

WWW.DESERTWATERS.COM

To **donate online** through PayPal,
please go to:

<http://www.desertwaters.com/a-donations.htm>

MANY THANKS!

Individual donors: Lynn Adamic, Gerald Albrecht, Jim & Linda Beauchamp, Todd & Joellen Brown, Wes & Jean Connett, Cory & Veronica Hodge, Henriette Hutter, John & Susan Johnson, Dan & Donna Layne, Wally & Than Lundquist, Revs. Clint & Dr. Margie Pollard, Kevin & Robin Rivard, Cindy Robinson, Russell & Cheryl Scharf, Earlene Wolfers, and Kirk & Jane Yamaguchi.

Business donors: Janice Barnett, C.P.A.

Special thanks also go to: Charlotte Burrous, Cañon City Daily Record; The Florence Citizen; Gary Kurtz; Kathy Rodriguez; David Russell, Executive Director, Pueblo Government Agencies Federal Credit Union; Larry Tucker; The Old Screw; and the Ventline Responders.

Ventline Sponsors: Aquila, Inc., Cañon City High School EPYCS Committee, and Florence High School EPYCS Club.

This newsletter was made possible in part by a contribution from **OmniView** (<http://www.radialomniview.com/>), which provides 100% total inmate surveillance with archive in **OmniView** corrections and detention facility designs.

BLOGS

<http://desertwaters.blogspot.com>
<http://womenincorrections.blogspot.com>

**Your support makes
our services possible!**

The Corrections Ventline™
1-866-YOU-VENT
(866.968.8368)
youvent@desertwaters.com

You Can Bank On Us

Pueblo Government Agencies Federal Credit Union is partnering with DWCO by matching 10% of donations made on behalf of Desert Waters at their branches in Pueblo or Florence, CO. Tax-deductible contributions may be deposited to a special account set up in Desert Waters' name. Our sincere appreciation goes to PGAFCU Executive Director, David Russell, and its board of directors for their support of correctional staff and families.



Giant Garage Sale!

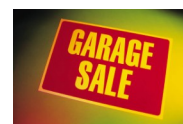
Friday-Saturday

May 12-13

8am-4pm

**Desert Waters Correctional Outreach
431 E. Main Street, Florence, CO**

Corner of Robinson and Main



All Proceeds Benefit DWCO