

D.O.C. RETIREE NEWS

PEOPLE WHO BUILT THE D.O.C. TO THE LOFTY STATURE IT ENJOYED THROUGHOUT THE NATION
FOR CERTAIN RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF THE #1 DEPT.

SINCE 1996
#98 MARCH 2012

SOUNDS LIKE 'LET'S MAKE A DEAL' OR 'THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE' JUNE 1985



WRITTEN BY TOM MCSHEA

Tom McShea started his career in Corrections at the Stillwater Prison in 1978 as a Corrections Officer. Tom served in the U.S. Army Reserve as a Military Policeman. His studies at Century College and Metropolitan State University included subjects of Law Enforcement and Corrections. Both his experience in the military and the officers he met while taking Criminal Justice classes interested him in employment with the MN D.O.C. Sheila (Pratt) McShea started her career in Corrections at the Reformatory in 1980 as a Corrections Officer. Sheila graduated from St. Cloud State with an Education Degree. At that point in time, teaching positions were difficult to come by, so with an interest about the Reformatory, she applied for and was employed with the MN D.O.C.

Sheila and Tom met for the first time when they both transferred to the OPH facility to help open it up on January 13th 1982. Tom likes to say that he "met his wife in prison", as they were married in 1985.

Sheila, who studied in Denmark while in college and forever a travel bug told Tom about an event letter she had noticed about the Australian Prison Officials who were coming to tour the OPH Facility. It was her idea to propose the idea of a work exchange between the West Australian Prisons Department and the MN DOC. Tom and Sheila proposed the idea through their chain of command and the Warden, Frank Wood supported this



with blessings from the DOC Personnel Manager, Ted Spencer and the Commissioner, Orv Pung, the rest is history. They exchanged jobs, a home and a car for approximately 7 months with 2 West Australian prison officers, Jim Schilo and Ken Roberts.

The McShea's both state that the exchange was the highlight of their career. They traveled much of Western Australia and spent time in numerous cities and correctional facilities "down under". The warm friendly culture and life style they experienced made it difficult to return to the states. They thought long and hard about staying and hope to return one day.

In 1989 they both transferred to the Faribault Facility, again to help open another new prison. This is where they have raised their family. Both served in a variety of classifications during their careers while working at three different facilities.

On March 3, 2009 they both retired from the DOC as Corrections Lieutenants with nearly 60 years combined service. They have been quoted saying "It was a good career, the department was good to us and we have many great friends because of our experiences."

NOTE: POSSIBLE DEMISE OF THE "DOC RETIREE NEWS"?

MAYBE YOU NOTICED HOW LATE THE MARCH ISSUE WAS. WELL, THE EDITOR CAME DOWN WITH A LOT OF MEDICAL PROBLEMS - WAS HOSPITALIZED AND GOT TO KNOW THE ER AT PARK RAPIDS WELL!

NOW, AFTER 4 HOURS PLUS OF SURGERY, I'M HOME OPERATING AT ½ POWER OR SO AND GOING TO TAKE A FEW WEEKS TO RECOVER. IN THE MEANTIME I'M GOING TO STRIVE TO GET OUT #100 AS A GOAL. I INVITE RETIREES TO COME UP WITH IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS.

IF YOU'D LIKE YOUR DONATION BACK, JUST LET ME KNOW. SOUNDS LIKE THE END OF AN ERA.

SOME GOOD NEWS

COLONEL NEMEC, RETIRED PERSONNEL MANAGER OF THE ST. CLOUD REFORMATORY, HAS BEEN ILL WITH SOME FORM OF CANCER. HE WON'T ACCEDE TO HIS DOCTOR'S DIAGNOSIS AND GIVE IN! THE WORD IS HE SEEMS TO BE DOING WELL AND THE DR. IS AMAZED. GOOD FOR YOU COLONEL!

BERT MOHS, RETIRED LINO LAKES AND RUSH CITY WARDEN LIVING IN WINONA, HAS HAD A BRUSH WITH SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUES WHEN HE WAS FOUND TO HAVE A CASE OF BREAST CANCER! HE SAYS HE HAD SUCCESSFUL SURGERY WHICH HAS LEFT HIM BACK TO FULL ACTIVITY BUT HE HAS TO BE WATCHFUL. BERT WAS A STUDENT INTERN OF MINE AT MANKATO STATE MANY YEARS AGO (AND A SUCCESSFUL ONE!).

NOW, HE IS INVOLVED IN THE 'HABITAT FOR HUMANITY' 500 MILE BIKE RIDE THIS SUMMER. ANYONE WILLING TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION CAN REACH BERT AT 84 COLLEGE RD, WINONA, MN 55987.

WELL KNOWN RETIRED FIELD AGENT, BOB BIRCHER, PASSES AWAY.



PART OF HIS OBITUARY:

"Bob was born Aug. 26, 1932, in Mitchell, S.D. He was the first of five children born to Velda Bircher and Carlos Bircher. The Bircher family lived on a farm in a farming community. Much of Bob's work ethic started as a young boy on the family farm. The Bircher family moved to Alexandria, Minn. where Bob attended Alexandria High School and graduated in 1950. An influential shop teacher suggested to Bob that he had significant talents and that he would make many accomplishments in life. Bob joined the United States Navy and served as a mechanic. He was stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii and was given the duty of working on aircraft. This was where much of his love for airplanes began."

Bob also attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus and earned a bachelor's degree along with colleagues, Ted Spencer and Dick Fritzke in 1959. Bob's goal was to be a State Parole/probation Officer - but, although he was on the civil service list, no jobs were available when he graduated late in '59.

But, one day the infamous Ted Telander asked Spencer if he knew of anyone on the list as he had an opening. Ted told him of Bircher in California to which Telander commented that he'd give him an interview but no promises. Spencer traced Bircher through his Mother in Mpls and Bircher came to the interview and was hired!

Bob was a Corrections Field Agent, climbed the ranks and became a Corrections Supervisor, then was appointed as the Assistant to the Commissioner of Corrections for a two year term. Bob would joke that then he slid down the ladder of success, by choice, and became a Superintendent of the St. Croix Boy's Camp. He then returned to being a Corrections Parole/Probation officer for Pine, Washington, Chisago, Isanti, and Kanabec Counties. He enjoyed the work in that role best, and worked diligently to support and work with the people that were assigned to his caseload.

Bob retired in 1993, and had a long fruitful retirement.

MYRON JOHNSON SAYS ABOUT BOB BIRCHER:
 "SO SORRY TO HEAR OF HIS PASSING. I REMEMBER BOB WHEN HE AND SALLY NEUMAN WERE "RUNNING" THE MPLS OFFICE AT 25 UNIVERSITY AV S.E. BACK IN 1964"



(EDITOR'S NOTE) BACK IN 1964 THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE D.O.C. WAS IN 310 STATE OFFICE BUILDING BY THE CAPITOL. IT ALSO HOUSED A LOT OF AGENTS WHOSE CASELOADS WERE IN HENNEPIN & RAMSEY COUNTY. BOB AND SALLY OPENED UP THE OFFICE AT 25 U. SE WITH A LOT OF AGENTS FROM THE C.O.

DENNIS BENSON, FORMER DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR INSTITUTIONS, HAS ANNOUNCED HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE STATE SERVICE ON JUNE 5, 2012. (38 YEARS IN)

YOU KNOW, OVER THE YEARS IN CORRECTIONS YOU OCCASIONALLY MEET SOME VERY SUPER PEOPLE. ONE OF THESE FOR ME WAS 'CHESTER NELSON' THE COURT REPORTER AT NEW ULM. MY FIRST VISIT THERE AS THE NEW PAROLE AGENT WAS 1959. THE JUDGE WAS GONE SO CHET IMMEDIATELY CALLED HIS WIFE AND INVITED ME TO THEIR HOME FOR LUNCH! WE WERE LONG DISTANCE FRIENDS EVER SINCE-STAYING IN TOUCH. CHET RECENTLY DIED AT 95. HIS WIFE, OF MANY YEARS, MILDRED, WROTE OF HIS PASSING. NICE PEOPLE.

SOUTHERN MN D.O.C. RETIREES TO MEET

MIKE SMITH OF MANKATO ANNOUNCES THE GROUP IS MEETING AT THE 'MYSTIC LAKE CASINO' ON APRIL 19TH AT NOON . MIKE WOULD LIKE A HEAD COUNT SO CONTACT HIM AT msmith7100@hotmail.com. MEET AT THE BUFFET. SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF FUN! MANY OF THE NAMES ON THE LIST I RECALL FROM MY DAYS AS AN AGENT AND FIELD SUPERVISOR IN THE MANKATO AREA

ONE OF THE NOTES I'VE KEPT FROM A CORRECTIONS FRIEND SAYS, "TED, YEAH, IM STILL ALIVE. DON'T KNOW WHY!"

DOC MONTHLY LUNCHESES

HELD THE LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT PERKINS, LEXINGTON AV AND 694.

JANUARY 25TH WAS A 'SNOW DAY' AND TOO DANGEROUS TO GET OUT FOR LUNCH! FEBRUARY 29- BOB NELSON OF LINO, TOM FOSTER OF ANOKA CO. & WIFE PAULA & 5 INCHES OF SLUSH!

LOOKS LIKE THESE LUNCHEONS ARE GIVING IT UP, TOO!

REMEMBER AGENT EMIL HANSON?

EMIL PASSED AWAY SOME YEARS BACK BUT HE WAS A STATE AGENT IN THE BAGLEY AREA- HAD A CABIN ON A LAKE. SOMEHOW, SEVERAL YEARS AGO, HE AND HIS COHORTS INCLUDING WILL NAJJAR AND DENNY HANSON PLOTTED AN 'EDUCATIONAL/SOC' OVERNIGHT AFFAIR AT EMIL'S CABIN. IT WAS SENSATIONAL!

I RECALL TED TELANDER WAS THERE (PROBABLY AS A PAROLE BD CHAIR) AND ORV PUNG GAVE A TALK ABOUT LEGISLATIVE UPDATES. OUTSIDE, ROASTING ON A SPIT WAS SOMETHING WILD AND GAMEY. EMIL HAD A BUNK HOUSE WHICH HELPED WITH THE SLEEPING. (I RECALL I HAD A BOTTOM BUNK AND AGENT JERRY HELLEND'S BUNK ABOVE, CAVED IN ON ME.) GREAT POKER GAMES. MY POINT IS THAT THIS WAS PUT ON BY THE 'TROOPS' AND WAS EXCELLENT!

I THINK I SEE JON POEHLER, ANDY DOOM, TOM LEHMAN, BOB BIRCHER



DARREL PANGBORN, TELANDER, DON KOST???? (FED. P.O.)



EMIL HANSON

THE D.O.C. RETIREE NEWS-

WITH MY RECENT SURGERY THAT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR RECOVERY - AND REACHING MY 80TH BIRTHDAY! (EGADS), I'VE DECIDED I HAVE TO LOOK TO YOU FOR HELP. ANYONE OUT THERE WHO THINKS THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO CARRY ON SOME SEMBLANCE OF THE RETIREE NEWS? I WILL HELP WITH SOME ARTICLES.

I'M HOPING AND PLANNING ON GETTING OUT TWO MORE ISSUES - MAY & JULY.

I'M AT doretiree@hughes.net BY E-MAIL OR
TED SPENCER,
17969 DEEP WOODS DR,
NEVIS MN 56467
& 218-732-7083

DONATORS SINCE LAST 'RETIREE NEWS'

KURT HOEHNE
AL ARNOLD
LEROY SIEGAL
BOB ERICKSON

BRUCEMC MANUS
PAUL LARSON
SAM KNUTSON
LOIS GELBMANN

JIM BRUTON

(IF IT IS STILL AVAILABLE AFTER THE ISSUE
#100 IS OUT - IT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU). AND MY
THANKS.

**I APPRECIATE YOU, YOUR VIEWS,
SUGGESTIONS, NEWS. KEEP THEM COMING.**