



IN MEMORIAM: REMEMBERING JOSEPHINE McCALLUM AND GEORGE HAIGHT

Late March marks the anniversaries of the murders of two corrections professionals, one in recent memory, and one more than 100 years ago.

Josephine McCallum, 28, was murdered at the former State Prison of Southern Michigan in Jackson on March 24, 1987.

McCallum was the only officer in the activities building when she was brutally attacked, raped, and left to die.

Inmate Edward Hill was convicted in her murder and sentenced to life in prison.

McCallum's death led to sweeping changes within the MDOC. Advanced training, increased staffing, revised inmate discipline

and the breakup of the Jackson Central Complex into several smaller prisons were among the changes. Some of those reforms have been scaled back in recent years due to budget cuts.

McCallum, a wife and mother, is still missed. Rest in peace, Officer McCallum.

George Haight, a gatekeeper, was poisoned by an inmate March 27, 1893 at the Michigan State Penitentiary in Jackson.

Haight ate tainted food prepared by inmate Robert Irving Latimer. Latimer served Haight, the captain, and other workers food poisoned with prussic acid. Latimer had special permission to both cook meals and purchase hazardous chemicals.

When Haight passed out, Latimer swiped his key ring and made his break. He was apprehended days later.

Haight was survived by a wife and five children.

Latimer wasn't charged with Haight's murder, possibly because he was already serving a life sentence for his mother's murder. Decades later, he received a pardon from the governor and was released.

The story of Haight's murder was mostly unknown until Officer Jeff Reasoner uncovered it a few years ago. Haight was added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. in 2014.

Rest in peace, Gatekeeper Haight.

CLOSURE ON HORIZON? LEGISLATURE AGAIN LOOKS FOR MAJOR CORRECTIONS SAVINGS

Corrections savings was the highlight of a Senate Corrections Appropriations Subcommittee meeting Wednesday. Subcommittee Chair John Proos brought up the idea of a closure, as he has done in past hearings.

"As I've been told, the best option for us to save money is the closure of a facility," Proos said.

At the hearing, MDOC representative Kyle Kaminski said the department would not be comfortable with closing a prison at this time. MDOC projections show the

inmate population staying flat for the near future, he said. MDOC's current approach is to close individual housing units.

Obviously, this information is very preliminary at this point. MCO leaders are cautious about reporting news until there's something set in stone, and this is still very much up the air.

That being said, members have a right to know about what conversations are being held in our statehouse and could possibly be coming down the pike. Officers should also know, when MCO officials say

corrections has a target on its back when it comes to budget cuts, we aren't exaggerating.

It's also worth noting that these conversations are taking place among lawmakers around the country. Corrections reform has bipartisan support around the nation, and state corrections departments are being slashed, even if they were already operating on a shoestring budget.

MCO will continue to share developments on this story.

AROUND THE STATE: FOOD SPURS MASSIVE PROTEST AT KCF; RGC INMATE RUNS TO FENCE

About 1,000 inmates took part in a silent protest Sunday at Kinross.

They stood in formation outside of the units starting at about 2:30 p.m. When yard was closed and officers ordered them back to their cells after 3 p.m., they complied.

Their chief complaint is the quality of the food. Trinity has had a lot of employee turnover, so the food quality has been inconsistent, officers tell MCO.

Most inmates boycotted chow the following day. About 100 meals were served

that day. There are about 1,300 prisoners at the main prison.

MCO still cares about what goes on in the prison kitchens. If you have information, you can email us at mail@mco-seiu.org or call (517)485-3310.

An RGC inmate slipped out a fire door and ran into a restricted zone in an apparent escape attempt Tuesday.

Officer McVean was at the officers' desk when he heard the fire door alarm. He walked to the fire door, opened it, and

saw an inmate outside. The prisoner ran, and CO McVean pursued. During the foot chase, he made a radio call for back up and officers quickly responded. The inmate stopped at the fence but didn't touch it.

To CO McVean and other officers, great job. Thanks for your rapid response.

Three cell phones were found in 10 days at MCF.

Dozens of cell phones have been found at the facility in the last several months.