

#### **Proudly Representing Michigan Corrections and Forensic Officers for over 40 Years**

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# DO YOU SEE YOUR NAME?

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#### Field Organizer Surveys

#### 6000 AND COUNTING HAVE COMPLETED THE SURVEY ADD YOUR NAME TO THE LIST TODAY...

## What is the average return / completion rate of any survey program? Answer 30% What is the MCO completion rate for the Field survey? Answer 70%

Michigan is no longer the driving force behind our country's economy. As state employees we need to work with the governor, the legislature, and the surrounding communities to inform and educate them about the people who work behind our state prison walls.

As stated in the "Government" MCO Report, every major elected position in our state government rests in the hands of the Republican Party. What does this mean for MCO? This means member involvement and action is needed more than ever. How can you get started? The Field survey is a mighty tool that allows MCO to quickly inform and mobilize members. You can participate as much, or as little, as you want to, but you will not have an event in your area that you have not been informed about.

Each question marked gives an indication into what "you" the member would be interested in learning, participating in, or hearing about. When an event takes place in your area you will be contacted during a convenient hour based on your survey responses. There are still 1,800+ members that need to complete the survey. If you're one of them you can go to our web site www.mco-seiu.org and complete the online survey. It's only four simple questions, and is e-mailed directly to the central office. I look forward to working with everyone!

If there are any questions about the surveys please contact Dustin Drabek, MCO Field Organizer (contact info on reverse)

421 W. Kalamazoo St. Lansing, MI 48933 (517) 485.3310 fax (517) 485.3319 www.mco-seiu.org

#### MCO Beyond the Walls : Shop with a Cop

# The new uniform ordering system is here..!

by Brent Kowitz

Uniform ordering has been troublesome to say the least for several years. With the introduction of this new ordering program, jointly developed between the MDOC and MCO, we believe that those days are behind us.

Facilities are working with chapter leadership to set-up and install the new ordering programs which will allow officers to order on their hire date anniversary.

This new system has many functions build it that will allow the member to track his/her order from beginning to end. Some key features to remember:

> • <u>Member order history</u> - members will be able to see all approved or denied orders

• <u>Special requests/NOT in your</u> <u>anniversary month</u> - Warden e-mails are programmed into the system in order to handle special requests from MCO Members.

• <u>Sizing kit locations</u> - Each facility has assigned a person responsible for the kit. Under "size kit location" you will find contact information and times the kits are available.

Please remember that this is a learning process for everyone and nothing is perfect. We have already been fielding calls about some problems a few facilities are having and have been able to resolve them in a timely manner. Please report any issue you are facing to:

> Uniform Committee Chair Brent Kowitz acfpres@sbcglobal.net

> > or

Committee Staff Member Dustin Drabek dustin@mco-seiu.org 517.485.3310

#### Mark your Calendars!

#### February

4 - Ionia Town Hall 11 - MCOY Interviews/Selection

December, to Officer Matt McShane and his band of volunteers, means the culmination of year long work to bring holiday cheer to local kids in need. Officer McShane, a Corrections Officer for the MDOC, spearheaded the introduction of the "Shop with a Cop" program to the Mansitee community four years ago. In that time, the group has worked hard to expand (because there is always another kid to help) by reaching out to partner with the local Sheriffs, police, and fire departments. They pour their hearts into preparing for this one special day and gladly give much of

their spare time to do so.

Planning starts in early January when the fund-raising events are determined. This year teams stepped onto the basketball court in the "Shop with a Cop" 5 on 5 basketball tournament to fight it out for the top team in the state. New this year was a Battle of the Bands competition which played to a sold out crowd cheering everyone on.

Shop with a Cop is not only about helping kids in need celebrate the holiday (when they might otherwise not be able to) but also spending some positive time with law enforcement and community role models. As the tough economy lingers, more and more of our community members struggle. We are fortunate to have a job, warm home

and food on the table and this is our chance to give back. Few things are better than facilitating the pure joy of a child at Christmas.

This year the kids gathered for a meal and met with Santa before heading out with their partner to shop for their families. Each child was provided with \$50 to spend on presents for their family members. They return for cookies and hot chocolate and volunteers work hard to wrap the presents.

A special thanks to all those who participated in this year's "Shop with a Cop" event. It was a great success, and we helped 35 families have a brighter holiday.

If you would like to volunteer or need help starting a program in your local area contact Matt McShane at 231-510-1710. Have a great new year and stay safe.



hoto courtesy of the Ludington Daily New.

As MCO members we work behind the walls, unseen. With the recent state budget crisis, now more than ever, the public struggles to understand what it is that we do, let alone the dangerous and critical role we play in keeping our communities safe. But we are more than just corrections officers. We are coaches, church group leaders, Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Because of where we work we see where the wrong circumstances or the wrong decisions can lead. Many of us as a result are driven to volunteer in our communities and with the youth to make a difference. These acts, therefore, are how we can shape the public opinion about the character and quality of our state COs. If you know a group of volunteers or individuals who are involved in their communities and would like to nominate them for a "Beyond the Walls" article, contact Dustin Drabek at MCO.

#### MCO teams up with MSU to support former foster kids

Most college students go home for Christmas, but what if you were raised in foster care? This year MCO teamed up with the Michigan State University College of Social Sciences to provide former foster kids with a Christmas full of cheer, donating 20 plus gift bags packaged in a laundry basket with items that would help them get through their winter semester of school while they stay in alternative housing during the Christmas holidays.

While many of our state foster care children go on to college, many people don't know that after the age of 18 these kids age out of the foster care system and no longer receive help from the state. Starting college careers without family or state support, they find themselves without the basic necessities that many of us take for granted such as toothpaste, towels, and school supplies.

18 - Kinross Legislative Meeting March

> Watch for Crisis Fund Events -motorcycle run -raffle tickets MCO Scholarship Applications

We would like to thank MSU for letting us help out with such a wonderful cause and we look forward to partnering with them again in the future to help out our local community.

Would you like to help out? Or put together a fundraiser for foster kids in your area? Contact Dustin (info below) and we'll help get you going!

#### MCO STATE EXECUTIVE BOARD Tom Tylutki, President

Andy Potter, Vice President Bill Henderson, Financial Secretary Brent Kowitz, Recording Secretary Adam Douglas, Trustee John Ost, Trustee Cary Johnson, Trustee Ed Clements, Trustee Bruce Waldron, Trustee

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#### Dustin Drabek, Field Organizer Questions about something you've read in this issue? Need more information? Contact me! 517.485.3310 or dustin@ mco-seiu.org

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If you have changed your address, phone number, or e-mail, please inform MCO immediately at 1-800-451-4878 (phone), 1-800-327-5266 (fax), or complete the online form on our web site.

Editor - Sacha Crowley



#### Winter 2011

Michigan Corrections Organization, SEIU Local 526M

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#### **Retirement Bills Would Fundamentally Change State Employee Retirement**

In early June MCO reported on two bills (HB 4701 and HB 4702) introduced on behalf of the Snyder administration that call for a complete overhaul to the State Employee Retirement System. The specifics of this legislation are still being debated but the overwhelming consensus shows individual employees stand to lose tens of thousands of dollars in future benefits as the state scrambles to shed \$14.9B in unfunded liabilities.

The legislation states that any State Employee currently in the Defined Benefit (DB) system would keep their future health insurance (as promised) but would have to make a decision to begin "voluntarily" paying 4 percent of their salary into a Retiree pension fund starting October 1st, 2011. If an employee chooses *not* to pay the 4 percent, they would have their years of service and pension frozen and be immediately transferred to the Defined Contribution (DC) plan. To make matters worse, the bill mandates that after October 1<sup>st</sup>, overtime will no longer be counted for the purposes of calculating one's pension.

For those currently in the DC plan the effects of this bill are devastating as it would remove any health care coverage upon retirement. Instead, those employees with less than 4 yrs. of service will receive a one- time payment of \$2,000 into a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) which they can access upon retirement to purchase their own health care and/or cover health care costs. Those with 4-10 yrs. would receive one-time payments into an HRA based on an actuarial calculation of today's value of their earned retirement health care benefits and those with 10 or more years would get a slightly higher amount based on the same formula.

It should be noted that the bill provides access to these HRA's only if the individual has attained 55yrs. of age with 30 yrs. of service or reaches 60 yrs. of age with 10 yrs. of service. If for any reason an employee separates from state employment without reaching this attainment date and fails to re-enter state employment within 5 years, the employee gets nothing in the form of retirement health care.

#### House and Senate Wrap up Budget

Governor Rick Snyder and Republican leaders of the House and Senate spent the last week of May wrapping up a final budget agreement that outlined specific targets for each State Department. As reported in the KYI, the DOC budget was lowered to \$1.875B - \$55M less than Snyder's original budget recommendation - and includes dangerous proposals for staff and services.

The leadership also announced that higher than expected revenues would mean a \$35M reduction in the total amount of concessions being sought from all state employees ( \$180M reduced to \$145M). Under the original plan MCO was tagged with just over half of all concessions (\$95M). MCO has now been informed the new concession target is \$72M. Stay tuned to the website and weekly updates for more information.

#### Major boilerplate changes to Corrections Budget

Use of Closed Facilities – New language encourages the Department to sell, rent, or otherwise repurpose closed correctional facilities to create public/private partnerships. (Senate Sec. 237, House Sec. 238).

Privatization of Special Alternative Incarceration Facility – requires Department to seek bids for privatization of SAI by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

#### Mound Saved from Budget Scare

Privatization of Food Services and Prison Stores.

Over the past few months MCO and members of the Mound Correctional Facility did everything they could to take the facility off the budget chopping block. During the final Conference Committee those efforts did not go unnoticed as the House and Senate agreed to fully fund Mound and remove its name from the closure savings list for 2012.

For those following this story, this all began on April 15th, 2011, with a surprise move by House Corrections Chair, Joseph Haveman, to usurp the Department of Corrections administrative powers and unilaterally choose Mound as a target for over \$5.5 million in savings. The selection came so sudden that it caught fellow committee members, MCO and even the Department of Corrections off guard with Chair Haveman offering little to no explanation or data on why Mound was chosen.

Knowing the closure only existed in the House budget, MCO instantly began an aggressive campaign to educate legislative leaders, raise awareness and get information to the public in hopes that Mound could be saved during the reconciliation process where the House and Senate budget differences are worked out. Due in part to intensive lobbying, radio interviews, a personal meeting with MCO and Senate Corrections Chair John Proos, continuous member action via phone and email, an MCO Town Hall with key legislative allies and countless hours of dedication and perseverance by the men and women of the Mound Correctional Facility the campaign was a success!

Special Thanks to Mound President and MCO Board Member - Adam Douglas for all his hard work and effort fighting for NRF.

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#### Arbitration Decision FMLA REGULATIONS TRUMP CONTRACT LANGUAGE, AND UNION'S SECONDARY ARGUMENT IS BEYOND HIS PURVIEW By: J. Martin Foldie, Esq. & Michael Dillion, Extern,

Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Article 37 within the Collective Bargaining Agreement

contains an Attendance Incentive Payment Program. This program allows for various payments to members based on their attendance throughout the year. Prior to August 26, 2009, members utilizing sick leave for a

Full Arbitration decision language can be found through searching "Grieshaber, Physical Fitness Bonus" in the Arbitration Database found on the MCO website at www. mco-seiu.org.

qualifying FMLA leave were not disqualified from receiving the incentive payment.

On January 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Labor changed the FMLA regulations. The change allowed an employer to disqualify members that utilized a qualifying FMLA leave from receiving attendance bonuses. However, there was an "exception". Under the exception, an employer could not deny the bonus for qualifying FMLA leave if members on an "equivalent leave status" were awarded the attendance bonus.

On August 26, 2009, the Department notified MCO that it would follow the U.S. Department of Labor's changes to the regulations. On September 11, 2009, MCO filed an et al grievance contending the Employer was in breach of the contract. The grievance worked its way through the grievance procedure to arbitration.

It was MCO's position that the negotiated language trumped the amended Regulations of 2009. Moreover, because of the "exception", MCO believed that it was disparate treatment to pay awards to persons using bereavement leave and not a FMLA qualifying condition. MCO regards bereavement leave as an "equivalent leave status" as FMLA leave.

On December 6, 2010, Arbitrator Gravelle ruled against MCO when he found that there was not a contractual violation.

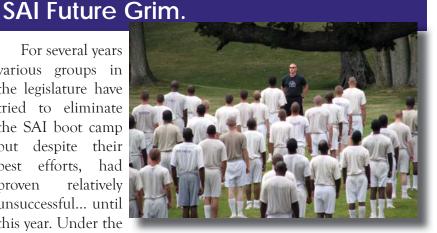
As it relates to MCO's argument concerning the "exception clause" within the Regulation itself, the Arbitrator refused to rule on the argument. Arbitrator Gravelle opined that he was barred from rendering a decision on the Regulation argument because of contractual language.

After Arbitrator Gravelle ruled, MCO took the time to research the issue regarding the amended regulation. It is MCO's position that some members may have individual rights to pursue potential disputes with the U.S. Department of Labor under the amended FMLA regulations. If you believe you may have been adversely affected, you should consult an attorney for protection of your individual rights.

### Fight for a Fair Economy

various groups in the legislature have

tried to eliminate the SAI boot camp but despite their best efforts, had relatively proven unsuccessful... until this year. Under the



Conference Report released, Tuesday May 23rd, the MDOC will be required to release an RFP (request for proposal) seeking bids for privatization of SAI by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

Extensive lobbying by MCO that the boot camp was a model of efficiency, had always been cost effective, reduced recidivism and diverted felons from prison fell on deaf ears as the overreaching Republican agenda set its sights on \$1,000,000 in savings and a way to privatize the first of Michigan's Prison facilities.

MCO and SAI staff sent emails, letters, made phone calls, held one- on- one lobby visits and raised general awareness with the media and public on the value SAI provides to the State of Michigan. Nonetheless, the ruling party has chosen to ignore the facts, ignore our warning about private prisons and ignore the community that depends on the prison labor and services.

A long time friend and advocate of MCO, Senator Glenn Anderson (D- Westland) was one of the few Corrections Committee Members to stand up in defense of the program during Senate session, saying

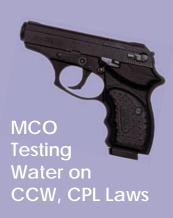
"I rise today to speak against the Michigan Department of Corrections budget. I will be voting against it because it is a perfect example of the shortsighted mindset that privatization is the cure for all the state's financial woes. I fail to see how laying off workers and privatizing prison services are sound decisions, especially when privatization as a whole rarely proves as economically viable as my colleagues across the aisle like to believe. These proposals are very unwise for: food service, the prison store, and most concerning of all, for the operation of what we call the boot camp, or the Special Alternative Incarceration program near Chelsea."

MCO will continue to track the privatization RFP but Republicans seem poised to make good on their promise and stick by their plan to find a private vendor by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

> STATE OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SPECIAL ALTERNATIVE INCARCERATION CASSIDY LAKE FACILITY

Six months ago MCO embarked on a ground-breaking campaign to raise awareness about the fundamental imbalance of power in Michigan and the devastating impact it is having on working families.

Joined with coalition partners throughout the state, our campaign focuses on policies that lead to more and better jobs, on building support for the vital services delivered by State workers, on defending our pensions, and demanding that corporations pay their fair share of taxes and invest in good jobs in our communi-



MCO is currently working to introduce bills that would extend a series of exemptions and privileges related to CCW's and CPL's to Corrections Officers.

We expect that the bill will be drafted in the coming months and introduced when the legislature returns from summer recess. Stay tuned...

To date, MCO's membership has responded by getting involved at every level of state government and declaring in a unified voice that the anti-worker, antimiddle class agenda of Gov. Snyder will not be tolerated.

From facebook and letters to phone calls, town halls, rallies and protests, MCO has had over 500 members turn out and make a difference for the future of Michigan.

As the fight continues we need your help more than ever so expect a ramped up effort to get people involved and please contact Jeremy Tripp at jeremy@mcoseiu.org if you wish to get more information or knowledge on how you can help.

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Editor - Sacha Crowley



Summer 2011

Michigan Corrections Organization, SEIU Local 526M



Michigan Corrections Organization 421 W. Kalamazoo Street Lansing, MI 48933

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80 degree weather, breakfast, motorcycles, and the POLICE? What do they all have in common?



The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Grey Dragons "Run for the Fund" motorcycle

event brought together new and old riders for another great run. Once again, the Jackson Chapter Grey Dragons got together

to host this charity motorcycle run benefitting the MCO Crisis fund. With a long ride ahead we were happy to be joined this year by the Lansing PD motorcycle division to escort riders throughout the trip. The 130 mile run took members through the hearts of Jackson, Hillsdale, and Lenawee Counties with four stops along the way. Once again we saw some familiar faces at our stops including J&J Western Store, Dairy Delight Ice Cream Shop, and Green Leaf BP who were happy to host when we traveled through their areas. Rounding out our list of stops was Randy's Road House who were new comers to the ride, but proved to be the best; severing up authentic BBQ that would make a Texan stand up and cheer.

We would like to thank all the riders that came out to support this year's MCO Crisis Fund event and to the businesses who rounded out the day!

See ya next year!

MC a

#### Spotlight: Former CO Carla White - LETR Team Captain

#### EXPLAIN YOUR CAREER AND WHY YOU CHOOSE CORRECTIONS?

I started as a corrections officer at Florence Crane in February 2000 with female prisoners but by November of 2000 ACF switched to male prisoners. In May 2005 I transferred to Egeler to be closer to home to help out my family when my stepfather had a massive heart attack and could not work. I have been interested in criminal justice for as long as I can remember. I knew I wanted to work in corrections but I can honestly say I never thought I would end up inside the walls. I originally went to college to be a Police Officer but after unsuccessful searches to find a job as a cop an acquaintance of mine suggested that I apply with the MDOC. He worked at one of the facilities in Jackson and told me the State was hiring. I went the next day and applied to take the civil service exam and within months I had an interview and a job offer. I was happy to finally get a job in corrections and hoped it would lead me to bigger and better things in my career. Little did I know at the time that it would lead me to be a highly active volunteer with the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics.

#### WHAT GOT YOU STARTED IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO REPRESENT CORRECTIONS AT THE GAMES?

I started volunteering with Special Olympics and the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) during my first year with the MDOC and running in LETR's Local Community Run in Coldwater. Then a very good friend and coworker from ACF convinced me to volunteer as a chaperone for the Special Olympics State Winter Games. That was my life changing experience with Special Olympics and completely hooked me to become a more active volunteer.

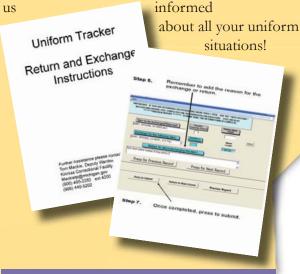
I helped out ACF's LETR Team Captain to organize events and sell LETR merchandise to raise money. I later took over as Co-Captain with Captain Carl White (before he became my husband!). When I transferred to Egeler I continued to volunteer and eventually took over as (Con't on back)

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#### MCO Beyond the Walls : Children's Picnic (Metro area Facilities)

#### Uniform Committee (Return and Exchange Manual)

The uniform ordering system has issued a new return and exchange Manual that will assist officers with returning uniforms in the future. If you would like a copy of this manual please email Dustin Drabek at the email address below. Thank you for your time, and remember to keep



#### Spotlight (con't from cover)

the Team Captain there, which I still do today. The first time I attended the Special Olympics Summer Games - and awarded medals to the athletes - was a life changing experience. The joy and happiness the athletes have and share with you is like no other. Representing Corrections in uniform has been a great honor for me over the years and I can honestly say it's one of the few times I was proud to wear the CO uniform. We in corrections, especially officers, seem to get such negative publicity all the time. It was great to finally let the

public see us doing something positive for those in need. The feedback we get while at the Games from the parents of athletes and the celebrities who attend is amazing. I've been fortunate to attend the Winter Games for the past six years, five of them in uniform. I have to admit,



Winter Games are my favorite!! WHY ARE YOU NO LONGER AN OFFICER?

Summer Games 2010 was my first not in uniform. I got hurt at work in 2008, tearing a ligament and cartilage in my wrist. After three surgeries I did not regain full use of my hand/wrist and I was not allowed to return as a CO. I now work in the mailroom.

My injury and the subsequent move to the mail room hasn't slowed down my volunteering with LETR and Special Olympics though! I truly miss being able to wear my uniform at the Summer and Winter Games. Even though most people remember who I am, there's definitely a different feeling you get standing up there in uniform representing the Department! I encourage all of you to find your place to stand proud as a CO and show the public who we really are.

With wonderful weather and endless amounts of food, Stennis George and his band of volunteers kept belly's full and children smiling at this year's Metro Area Children's Picnic. Once again, members from Forensic Center, Ryan, Mound, Maxey, and WHV came out to laugh, play, and support one another while sharing time with their friends and family. This year was no different from years past. The deep fryers were bubbling, the grills were smoking, and the sounds of children having fun filled the air. Some 600 people made their way out despite a looming storm. We would like to congratulate everyone for a job well done and a great time for all!





Ryan Chapter President Al West kickin' it with family





#### Families get "Locked Up" for a Day

Woodland Correctional Facility officers and staff brought their families to work for Family Day in June. This fun filled and enlightening day included a tour of a vacant inmate wing, a question and answer session with Warden Joan Roggenbuck, a simulated inmate cell extraction, they got their mug shots taken, and concluded with watermelon and bounce houses in a vacant inmate yard. MCO was on hand to provide gift bags to officer's families and children.

This was a rare opportunity for officers to bring their families and friends into a working facility and give them a firsthand look behind the walls. The highlight of the day came when our very own





MDOC ERT team executed a mock inmate cell rush. The professionally trained team really gave it their all to show the crowd just what dangers lie on the other side of the door when their loved ones go to work. We would like to thank MCO Chapter President Dave Siler and all the Woodland Correctional Staff for taking the time out of their day to show civilians a day in the life of a MDOC Corrections Officer and the dangers that they face while just doing their job.

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#### Dustin Drabek, Field Organizer Questions about something you've read in this issue? Need more information? Contact me! 517.485.3310 or dustin@ mco-seiu.org

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