Record Winter Weather and its’ effects on the DOC

By Darren Duarte

As record snowfall forced schools, businesses, and some government agencies to close the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) remained open and willing to help.

The DOC’s Gina Perez has been busy scheduling nearly one hundred inmates a day to assist the MBTA with snow removal. Perez worked with the T to ensure inmates had the proper gear to shovel snow on the red line from Boston to Braintree and anywhere T officials requested assistance.

Since the 2015 winter storm created havoc for the transit authority, commuters have suffered. Public transportation riders have waited for hours to catch a ride to work and home. The MBTA even suspended service on some days as it tried to dig out. All of this created headaches for commuters and a media blizzard about the problem.

As a result, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and hundreds of publications between the east and west coast reported on the fact that inmates from the DOC community work crews’ were called in to clear snow from the train tracks.

New York Times: “Union workers and even prison inmates from the state’s Department of Correction have been pressed into service to shovel the tracks by hand.”

Los Angeles Times: ”The MBTA has brought in inmates and the National Guard to help dig tracks after melting machines like the “Snowzilla” have failed to keep pace.”

Not to be outdone, the national broadcast media wanted in on the story too. Check out this headline from CBS News: Boston’s new norm: Inmates shoveling snow

Desperate to clear the tracks, the Boston Transit Authority is using prison inmates and paying union workers to join the shovel brigade. It could be a month before the entire transit system is back on a full schedule.

The DOC received the following message from a commuter who wished to remain anonymous: “I don’t know how to thank the inmates for working to clear the red line. Please tell them of my heartfelt thanks. I have terminal cancer and work at MGH, after having a tough chemo round, I was pushed and shoved for 3 weeks now on a bus, then a shuttle then a train. It has been taking me 4 hours to get to MGH everyday from Braintree. It is one thing to stand in line to get on a shuttle when you are healthy, but quite another when you are 67 years old and weak from chemotherapy. Please relate to these men how grateful I am for their hard work and help. May God Bless You All!!! All of us from Braintree are so grateful.”

While DOC inmates received a lot of media attention for their storm efforts, a number of other inmates joined staff and other agencies to help here at home. Several DOC buildings, including headquarters, were in danger of having too much snow on roofs. Facility superintendents worked with Division Resource Management (DRM) Director Jeff Quick to make sure plans were in place to remove the snow before the next snowfall arrives.

Deputy Commissioner Paul Dipaolo oversees DRM. “Jeff Quick and his people are licensed engineers. They are familiar with all the facilities and know where we may find ourselves at risk. They look at facility and roof conditions to see if there’s a lot more than the normal weight on those beams. And we’re not in the position where we can take chances because we’re responsible for life and safety.”

There have been four storms in a short period, with a fifth expected a few days from now (February 20, 2015). That doesn’t leave much time for Team DOC to keep pace. At the same time perimeter doors, grills and locking devices were not working in some places.

“We have frozen pipes; we lost two heating boilers in two out buildings. One was on the Bridgewater complex and the other in Shirley. Both have been replaced,” said DiPaolo. Four enormous storms in four weeks are enough for any person or state agency to handle. Nevertheless, the work always goes on. That means transporting people and medical supplies among other things never stops. With subzero temperatures this winter black ice is in many spots, which means the roads have been treacherous.

“…many people don’t realize we have transportation vehicles on the road, six days a week 24 hours a day. We have to send out medical trips, emergency trips. We’ve had many motor vehicle accidents, not always caused by our staff, but other people on the road. Between the four storms, we may have had as many as 10 to 15 fender benders involving state vehicles. No one was significantly hurt. That’s the good news,” said DiPaolo.
**Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Recipe**

**Original recipe makes 5 servings:**
- 3 pounds corned beef brisket with spice packet
- 10 small red potatoes
- 5 carrots, peeled and cut into 3-inch pieces
- 1 large head cabbage, cut into small wedges

**Directions:**
- Place corned beef in large pot or Dutch oven and cover with water.
- Add the spice packet that came with the corned beef.
- Cover pot and bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
- Simmer approximately 50 minutes per pound or until tender.
- Add whole potatoes and carrots, and cook until the vegetables are almost tender.
- Add cabbage and cook for 15 more minutes.
- Remove meat and let rest 15 minutes.
- Place vegetables in a bowl and cover.
- Add as much broth (cooking liquid reserved in the Dutch oven or large pot) as you want. Slice meat across the grain.

**PREP** 10 mins  
**COOK** 2 hrs 25 mins  
**READY IN** 2 hrs 35 mins

---

**Spring Cleaning Tips**

Set aside enough time to accomplish all you have planned. Don’t create a three page detailed list for the kitchen and plan to spend 2 hours doing it. You will only get frustrated because you will pull everything out just when you need to move on, and everything will be in a worse state than before.

Clear your calendar for the proper amount of time you need, and treat that time as sacred as any other appointment.

**Make appointments and reservations ahead of time.**

If you need to rent a carpet cleaner, or are going to call professionals to clean your upholstery, for example, then go ahead and call them and set this up ahead of time to make sure your plan fits other people’s schedules.

Do the same with family members who you will need to help you with various tasks, such as moving furniture and appliances.

**Gather all your supplies and equipment before you begin.**

Check your cleaning supplies and purchase any additional items during your normal shopping trip instead of having to make a special trip.

Also, check all equipment for wear and tear and have items repaired or serviced ahead of time, if necessary.

**Gather boxes and bags for de-cluttering.**

Spring cleaning is a great time to get rid of a lot of extra stuff that has accumulated in your home over the past year. Make sure you can easily get rid of it all by getting lots of containers to put it in.

You may even need to rent a dumpster to take large items, such as furniture, to a donation site or the dump.

**Set up an upbeat music play list for while you clean.**

Spring cleaning can get pretty tiring so set yourself up for success by getting music that makes you happy and energetic to listen to while you work.

*Excerpts from Household Management 101*
If you are a grandparent, parent and have children you probably have more stuffed animals than you know what to do with. I myself, a collector, can identify with that feeling; they can take over your house. I started to think of a way to find homes for some of my polyes- ter roommates until one night I saw a commentary on television which sparked my inter- est.

A group of people in the Midwest donated bears to their local police and fire department. The intention of their project was for fire/police officers to give a child something of comfort to hold onto during an emer- gency and/or stressful situation.

I suggested this initiative to Lisa Mitchell, Superintendent of Old Colony Correctional Center, of donating bears to the Bridgewater Police and Fire Departments. She loved the idea and said “Let’s do it!” Then we decided to kick it up a notch and include the entire Bridgewater Complex.

Immediately I began to organize the drive getting the word out to Old Colony, the Mass Treatment Center, MASAC and the Bridgewater State Hospital that Old Colony was “Bear Central”.

“Lions and tigers and bears….Oh my” The outpouring of stuffed animals from the officers and staff was overwhelming. Hundreds, yes, hundreds of animals were collected. The Drive was a huge success!

After the donations were collected, I went through each and every animal to ensure they were safe for children and appropriate for donating. Some animals were taken to the local laundry mat to fluff up their fur, certainly a hair raising event. Then, all of the donations were carefully placed into plastic bags, ready for Superintendent Mitchell’s approval for transport.

Reinforcement of officers and staff were needed to carry all the donations, and a convoy of vehicles set off to deliver the bears to the Bridgewater Police and Fire Departments. Superintendent Mitchell thanked all for their continued participation in support of staff and community service which helps and heals all.

Sergeant Rivera Saves the Day
By Mary Lynch

After a week of in-service training, Sergeant Darrell Rivera decided to take his three year old son Max for an afternoon of fun and food at the nearby McDonalds restau- rant. Darrell also brought his dad Gilbert along.

After sitting down to enjoy their meal, they heard a woman scream “Help me. Help me she’s choking.” Darrell immediately got up and asked his dad to watch Max and ran over to an elderly woman who appeared to be choking. Darrell said, “It was just like what Lee Clement was talking about in training earlier in the week. I just automatically ran over to the choking woman who was making the universal choking sign and informed her that I was trained in CPR and asked her if she needed help. I then yelled over to one of the customers to call 911 and began the Heimlich maneu- ver. After the third thrust, the food dislodged from her throat and she began to cry. Darrell recalled, “She and her daughter were both crying and thanking me at the same time. I didn’t know it then, but everyone in the restaurant was clapping. The best part was turning around and seeing my little boy’s beaming face. Max held his two thumbs up and said ‘Good job Dad!’ That was the greatest feeling in the world to have my dad and son be proud of me. It just feels good that I was able to use the skills that I learned in class and have it turn out all right for everyone. Lee did a great job, because everything he said to do stuck with me.”

Correction Officer Lee Clement is a long-time instructor at the Training Academy. When he was told about what happened with Sergeant Rivera, Officer Clement said, “I always tell the people in my class that there’s no telling when you’ll need to use these skills. Chances are that you may never need to use them at work, but you never know if you’ll need them for your family or friends. Many times, people know what you do for a living and expect that you’re a first responder, so naturally they’ll look to you. I’m so glad everything worked out well.”

Correctional Recovery Academy
By Jamie Goodgion

The Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) at MCI Concord is a 78 bed, intensive treatment program for 70 active participants and 8 Graduate Support Program (GSP) participants. The program runs as a Therapeutic Community (TC) and incorporates strong components of group learning, individual and group accountability, structure, responsibility and work. Though the program is considered a substance use disorder treatment program, curriculum and treatment plan topics address a myriad of is- sues related to substance use, criminal thinking patterns, anger manage- ment, communication skills, job readiness and continuing care planning. MCI Concord hosts 1 of 4 CRA Programs in the Massachusetts DOC, with other programs residing at MCI Shirley Medium, MCI Shirley Minimum and MCI Norfolk. Spectrum utilizes best practices and evidenced based treatment methods within all of its programs, which run in multiple states across the country.

My name is Jamie Goodgion. I am the Program Director of the CRA at MCI Concord. I work with a dedicated, hard working, intelligent team, including Clinical Supervisor Ann Lashua and Counselors Florence Blis- sell, Sandra Van Den Heuvel and Lauren Abou-Halaka. I have spent almost 14 years working within various CRA Programs across the MA DOC and have seen the program model grow and develop both in intensity and overall design.

In early July, 2014, I started as the Program Director at MCI Concord. The CRA had recently undergone a move to a dorm style housing unit and several staffing changes. The program was looking for new ways to help others, therefore in an effort to find new ways to leverage our existing resources, we had a brainstorming session for ideas that could help our members follow rules and avoid destructive, unhealthy behav- ior. Our team has worked collaboratively with DOC staff to rejuvenate the CRA and TC model, resulting in a decrease in both disciplinary discharges and positive toxicology screens in recent months.

One of the most substantial changes was around the use of community based interventions and incentives. The model of a TC focuses primarily on the use of Community as Method. What this means is that the experi- ence of living and interacting with other members of the program is a primary vehicle for helping individuals change. Our program philosophy states “When one falls low, we all fall low and when one rises high, we all rise together.” When members of the program are showing positive, pro- social behavior they may be given incentives such as extended television viewing for special events or increased access to recreation time. Con- versely, when program members show an increase in antisocial or pro- criminal behaviors, they may be held accountable individually, as a group or both. It is in the considerable best interest of each program member to help other members follow rules and avoid destructive, unhealthy behav- ior.

Our program schedule has become significantly more intense over recent months. The program is designed to keep members busy, including structured time in groups, meetings, individual counseling, seminars, ac- tivities and work duties. Members have limited access to television dur- ing programming hours and are not allowed to sleep in their bunks dur- ing the day. Every member should be spending time working on some- thing productive and constructive. Each member has a job assignment within the community and is held accountable for completing it. Partici- pants learn work responsibility by starting on the Environmental Crew (responsible for overall cleaning of the unit) and applying and interview- ing for positions with more responsibility.

CRA staff have worked to consistently increase the collaboration with unit Corrections Officers (COs). Every day unit COs are present for all unit programming. They help make decisions regarding inmate phase up, individual and group interventions, incentives and general program changes or interventions. Working collectively with COs helps provide more effective and consistent treatment for members. It gives members less opportunity for potential staff manipulation and holds them to a con- sistent standard of behavior. The CRA is performance-based program- ming, thus program members do not advance to the next phase or ulti- mately graduation until they have met clearly defined behavior standards for their current phase of treatment.

The program continues to strive towards increasing overall fidelity to the TC model and providing the highest quality of treatment. Currently, we are focusing efforts on increasing the expectations around bunk and unit decorum. Members are creating new signs and posters to decorate the unit with program slogans and phrases. Some members are working on the design of a program t-shirt. A new members newsletter, while others help develop recre- ational activities and educational seminars. The CRA truly provides an opportunity for individuals to acquire skills and begin to make healthy changes in their lifestyle.
SMCC Program Entertains and Changes Lives
By Stacey Butkowski and Darren Duarte

A dozen or so women from the South Middlesex Correctional Center (SMCC) are serving time for their crimes, but have also found a way to invest in their future.

These inmates have joined a dance troupe called the Dance Leela project. According to the project’s volunteer creator and director, “the spirit of collaboration cooperation and creativity is alive and well and active with all the participants…regardless of prison experience,” said Adrianne Tabet.

That wasn’t always the case when the women first joined the project. Tabet says over time the women realize they are part of a group and learn to work and rely and collaborate with each other.

For these inmates, participation in Dance Leela has become a creative means for re-entry and social integration.

Since 2010, community volunteers have offered the Dance Leela program to female offenders at SMCC. Some have gone on to work in the dance field as instructors. Others have left prison and credit the experience gained through the project as having a significant impact on their lives. Two former project members posted the following on the MovingSteps Website. Moving Steps is a non-profit organization that establishes and conducts dance programs for incarcerated women and former offenders in Massachusetts.

“Three years ago, if someone would have told me I would be part of a prison dance class, learning and helping to teach choreography, I never would have believed it. The hour-long dance sessions do more for my self-esteem and recovery than any other activity.”

- Carla

“The honesty, praise, constructive criticism and most of all, respect I have experienced in this dance program have been so important to my life here in prison. Coming full circle, I want this to continue to always be a part of my life.”

- Lesley

The SMCC women choreograph their own moves with the aid of outside guest professional choreographers and teachers. Every three months they perform for fellow inmates, their families and invited guests from the community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

A few members are already working outside prison walls in the pre-release program. One of them is a dance leader in the group and says she will take a supervisory role at the company full time once she completes her sentence.

SMCC Superintendent Lisa Jackson continues to support the project as a means to facilitate successful reentry into the community and effect positive behavioral change. Jackson agrees with the project’s goals. Those goals include fostering self-esteem, promoting independence, encouraging communication, and generating a sense of community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

Promotions:

Edward Alinkowitz
Howard Asnes
Todd Babak
Keith Barboza
James Bednarcyk
Robert Burgess
Laura Clarke
Ryan Connor
Meghan Crowley
Franco Delmonaco
John Dorethy
Steven Dias
Jeffrey Dicenzo
Sue Dionne
Ryan Donlon
Stephen Flynn
Michael Gailliard
Paul Guimond
Mary Hyde
Brian Kennedy
Gail Kilpeck
Stephenson King
Kevin Laterza

Retirements:

Kenneth Arensault—Mar 1981
Tina Asi—Sep 1998
Paul Arocyn—Nov 1982
Normand Benguy—Sep 1984
James Borden Jr—Nov 1994
James Brannan—May 1982
Charles Correia—Nov 1986
Leroy Demoranne II—Aug 1989

Dance Leela program is to not only to sustain and expand programming at SMCC, but also to establish a bridge where female offenders can be helped to succeed socially, emotionally, and vocationally. A central goal of the project as having a significant impact on their lives. Two former project members posted the following on the MovingSteps Website. Moving Steps is a non-profit organization that establishes and conducts dance programs for incarcerated women and former offenders in Massachusetts.

“Three years ago, if someone would have told me I would be part of a prison dance class, learning and helping to teach choreography, I never would have believed it. The hour-long dance sessions do more for my self-esteem and recovery than any other activity.”

- Carla

“The honesty, praise, constructive criticism and most of all, respect I have experienced in this dance program have been so important to my life here in prison. Coming full circle, I want this to continue to always be a part of my life.”

- Lesley

The SMCC women choreograph their own moves with the aid of outside guest professional choreographers and teachers. Every three months they perform for fellow inmates, their families and invited guests from the community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

A few members are already working outside prison walls in the pre-release program. One of them is a dance leader in the group and says she will take a supervisory role at the company full time once she completes her sentence.

SMCC Superintendent Lisa Jackson continues to support the project as a means to facilitate successful reentry into the community and effect positive behavioral change. Jackson agrees with the project’s goals. Those goals include fostering self-esteem, promoting independence, encouraging communication, and generating a sense of community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

A few members are already working outside prison walls in the pre-release program. One of them is a dance leader in the group and says she will take a supervisory role at the company full time once she completes her sentence.

SMCC Superintendent Lisa Jackson continues to support the project as a means to facilitate successful reentry into the community and effect positive behavioral change. Jackson agrees with the project’s goals. Those goals include fostering self-esteem, promoting independence, encouraging communication, and generating a sense of community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

A few members are already working outside prison walls in the pre-release program. One of them is a dance leader in the group and says she will take a supervisory role at the company full time once she completes her sentence.

SMCC Superintendent Lisa Jackson continues to support the project as a means to facilitate successful reentry into the community and effect positive behavioral change. Jackson agrees with the project’s goals. Those goals include fostering self-esteem, promoting independence, encouraging communication, and generating a sense of community. Tabet says the fact that the women are responsible for a new goal every 12 weeks “…gives the group members a sense of accomplishment and a vehicle to pursue future interests whether it’s dance or working in the business world.”

A few members are already working outside prison walls in the pre-release program. One of them is a dance leader in the group and says she will take a supervisory role at the company full time once she completes her sentence.