

Artist takes time to teach inmates

NORTHWEST
PORT HADLOCK, Wash. (AP) — Chimacum artist Sherri Scalf molds humans — like art pieces — one at a time.

She works on the educational and emotional rough sides until they become smooth and soft. And for some of them, the edges are more than just a little rough.

They are men and women who have misstepped somewhere and ended up in the Jefferson County Jail.

But whether they raped someone or robbed a convenience store, Scalf is committed to helping those who want to learn or to attain an educational goal or dabble in art studies. That is why twice a week for the past five years, Scalf has come to a small conference room in the Port Hadlock jail to work with inmates toward GED achievement, to study other subjects or sometimes just to be their friend. And she isn't paid a dime for it.

Scalf, who is fluent in Greek, Hebrew and Portuguese, has dedicated her life to learning. She has a doctorate in neural biology and a master's degree in education and communications. So, if there is a subject one of the inmates or deputies

wants to study, she will research it to help him. Surprisingly, Scalf came to the volunteer jail position with lots of experience. Her doctoral thesis was setting up a program similar to this at the Oregon State Hospital. She also volunteered at the Oregon State Penitentiary, where she taught murderers, rapists and other violent crime offenders.

"It didn't matter what their crime was; to me they were a student," said Scalf. But she admitted there were times she had to be very careful.

"They were scared that I might be taken and used as a hostage," she said. "But I was never afraid."

Some of the inmates ask to take her classes just to get out of their regular routine.

"There is always someone who is difficult to work with — think they are too good for it," said Scalf. "That has to be taken with the job."

Many of those have a real attitude problem, she said, adding that she has found that art is a real ice breaker in those cases. "Most of them that do time are artistic in some form," she said.

Right now Scalf has two students, a 19-year-old inmate who is studying for the GED

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— Sherri Scalf,
 Jefferson County Jail
 volunteer

exam and a deputy who is learning Spanish so he may communicate with Spanish-speaking inmates.

The inmate, who was convicted of rape of a child and sentenced to eight months at the facility, wants to change his life, he said. His father didn't finish high school right away and couldn't help him with his studies.

"I don't want to be like that with my kids," he said.

After achieving the GED, which Scalf is helping him do, he hopes to go on to college in architecture, math or computer areas, he said.

Not all her pupils go on to something great, she said. One of them did pass the GED with one with the highest score ever seen — 98 percent. But others end up back in jail.

Groups appeal plan for salmon recovery

PORTLAND (AP) — Five environmental groups and an Indian tribe asked a federal appeals court Friday to review the multimillion-dollar salmon recovery plan adopted by the Northwest Power Planning Council.

The two actions were filed in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco on the last day that appeals to the plan could be submitted.

The environmental groups say the plan does not do enough to preserve and restore the depleted salmon runs, especially those in the upper Snake River.

"We want the court to order the council to go back and provide for adequate flows for fish and really give the fish equitable treatment with the hydropower system and other river users," said Adam Berger, attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

The document filed by the Yakima Indian Nation says the recovery plan would harm its "treaty reserved rights to the natural and cultural resources of the Columbia Basin."

Tim Weaver, attorney for the Yakima tribe, was not available Friday to elaborate on the Indians' claims.

Council chairman Ted Hallock said he was disappointed but not surprised by the filings.

"These are difficult and contentious issues and we recognize that there are bound to be disagreements," Hallock said.

Berger said he did not intend to delay putting the plan into action while the court decides on the issue.

Both Hallock and Berger said they hoped to avoid any further court action and would continue to try to resolve the dispute.

"We want to help create a regional consensus. We don't want to destroy a regional consensus," Berger said. "But the fact the fishing interests, the conservation interests and the tribes all feel that these amendments are inadequate demonstrates that no regional consensus exists at present and that the present plan isn't sufficient to save the fish."

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