

# Larch inmates earn high school certificates

Graduation ceremonies were held June 19 for 53 inmates at Larch Corrections Center who have earned General Education Degrees (GED), a high school-equivalency certificate. Another 41 offenders received vocational certificates in computer applications or automotive repair.

In addition, two Larch inmates--Randall Henderson and Gary Warden--received scholarships to Clark College, presented by Clark College president Bob Knight.

Larch Corrections Center, with an offender population of about 400, is located at 15314 NE Dole Valley Road in Yacolt. Sherri Foley, public information officer at Larch, said the minimum-security facility houses all kinds of offenders who are within four years of being released.

Shirley Moore, who heads the Education Program at Larch, said less than 20 percent of offenders arriving at Larch have high school diplomas, but most have some high school experience. Earning a GED can take from six months to two years,

said Moore, noting that turnover at the institution can interrupt the educational process.

Moore said as many as half of the offenders housed at Larch have learning disabilities. The facility does not have a psychologist to deal with such limitations, said Moore.

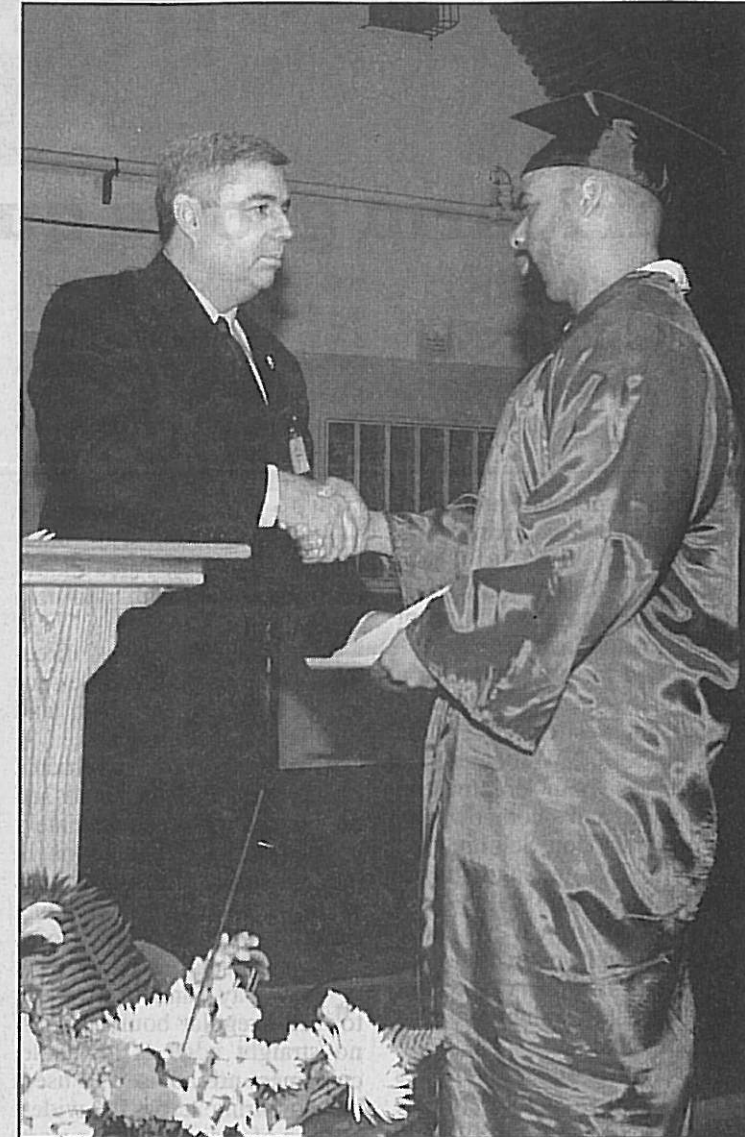
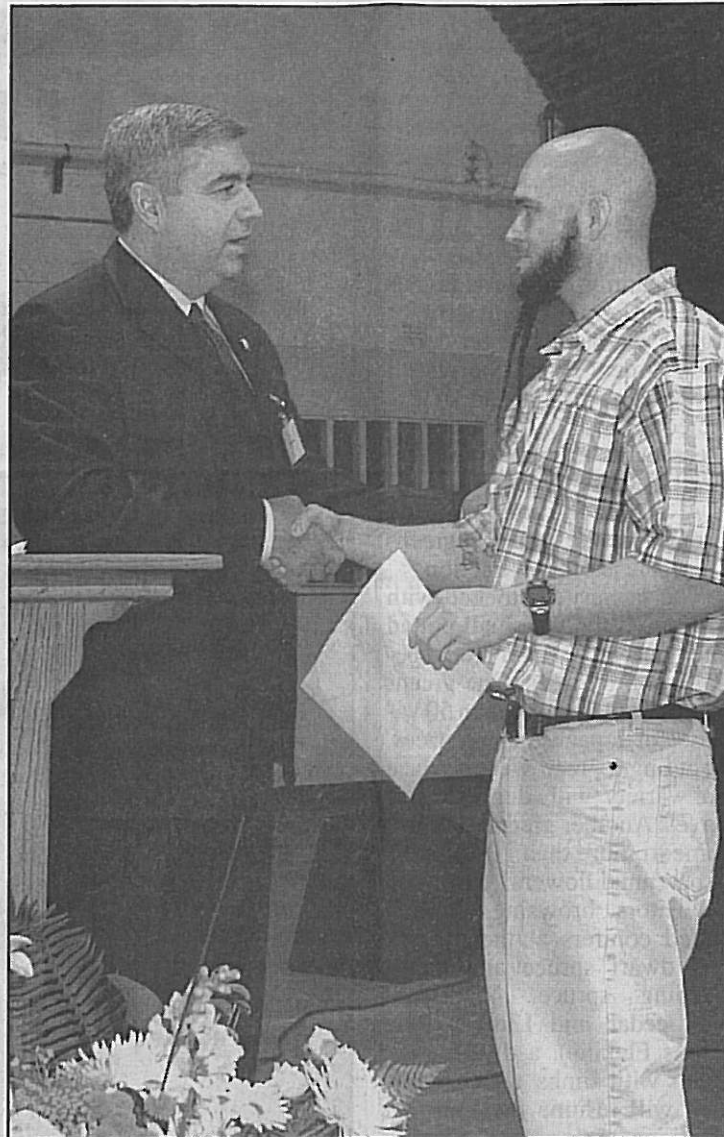
To achieve a GED, offenders attend classes about 12 hours a week, earning credits each quarter.

Moore said a GED indicates a person has achieved equivalency with a sample of average high school graduates in math, social studies, science, reading and language arts.

Classes at Larch are taught in part by instructors from Clark College.

Moore said two vocational fields are also taught at Larch. They are computer applications, allowing offenders with no computer experience to get up to speed, and automotive service/brakes. Those studying automotive/brakes spend 24 hours a week in class.

Larch has no way to track the success of its education program, said Moore.



**CLARK COLLEGE PRESIDENT Bob Knight presented scholarships June 19 to offenders incarcerated at Larch Corrections Center in Yacolt. In left photo, inmate Gary Warden receives a scholarship to study computer applications at Clark College, and in right photo, Randall Henderson accepts a scholarship to study auto mechanics. Both Warden and Henderson are due for release soon.**

Moore described scholarship recipients Randall Henderson and Gary Warden as motivated.

She said Henderson got "turned on by the automotive class," and is "excited about it." He

plans to enter the Toyota Automotive Program at Clark College.

Warden, said Moore, worked for some time on a plan for success. Both Henderson and Moore hold GEDs, she said.

The Clark College scholarships were presented by Knight, along with Clark vice president

Rassoul Dastmozd, and Clark County Foundation president Lisa Gibert.

Keynote speaker for the cap and gown graduation ceremony was Kathy Goebel of the state Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Family members and guests of offenders attend the event.