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Agenda

- Introduction
- History and Background
- Scales of Justice Tournament
- Tournament Day
- Discussion/Questions

Introduction

- The Scales of Justice Fishing Tournament has been held annually (usually in mid-September) since 2004
- The tournament is designed to help Ada County juveniles satisfactorily progressing through their probation to go fishing at C. J. Strike Reservoir with a volunteer boater
- We want to share how it came about – and how YOU can help

Sponsoring Organizations

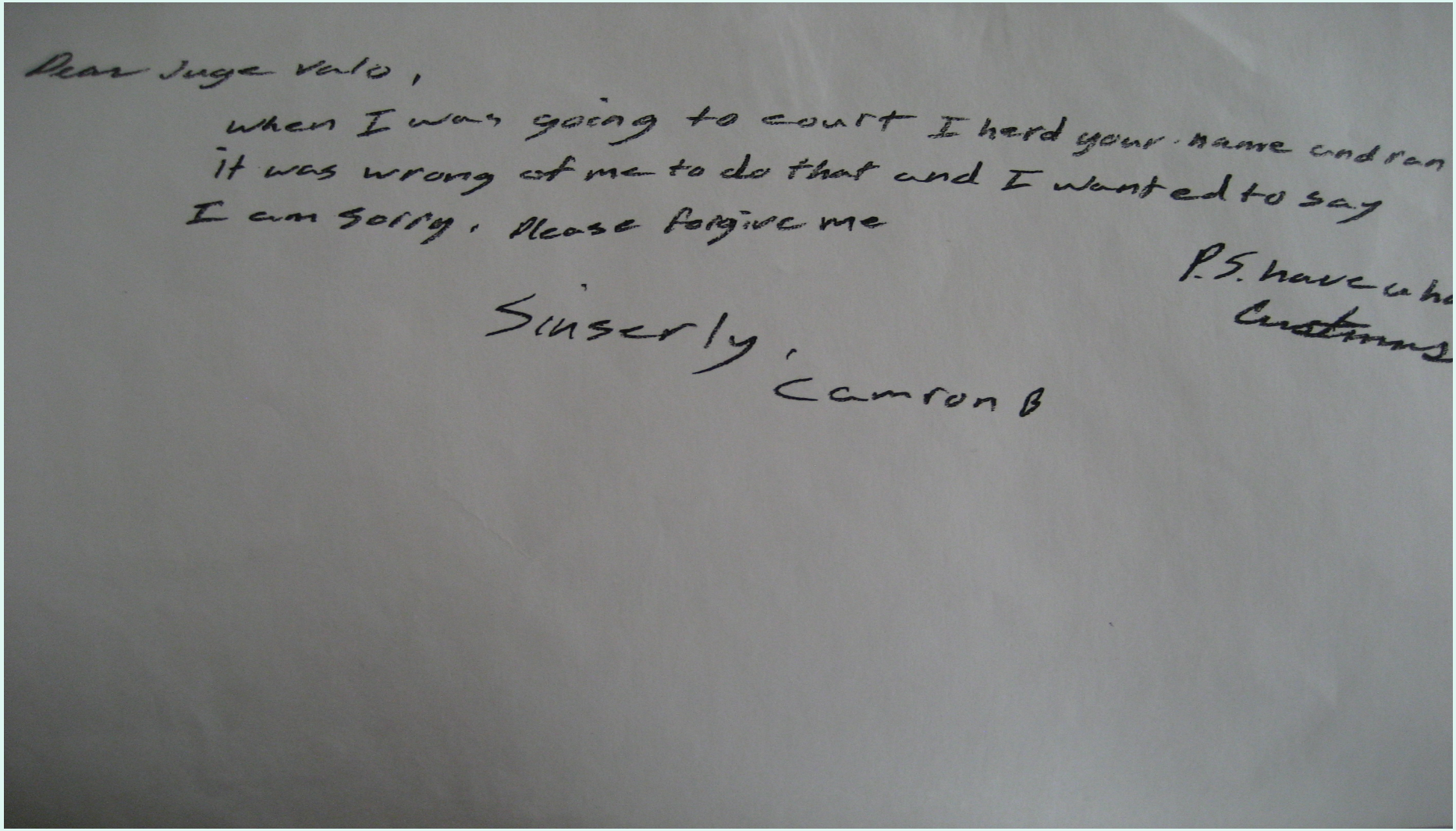
- Ada County Juvenile Court Services
- Idaho Bass Federation
- Idaho B.A.S.S. Federation Nation
- Other supporters include:
  - Neighboring counties in Idaho and Oregon
  - Local businesses and non-profits

ACJCS Scales of Justice Bass Tournament

- The inspiration behind the Scales of Justice: the Honorable Judge John “Bubba” Vehlow
  - Personal Background
    - Grew up in Texas and loved fishing since childhood
    - Juris Doctorate from St. Mary’s University, San Antonio
  - Professional Background
    - Served as Deputy Attorney General with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and a Magistrate Judge
    - Served as a Juvenile Court Judge 1990-2005; now on Senior Judge status
  - Scales of Justice Background
    - It started in a conversation he had with a juvenile in 1999

Scales of Justice

Scales of Justice



Dear Juge valo,

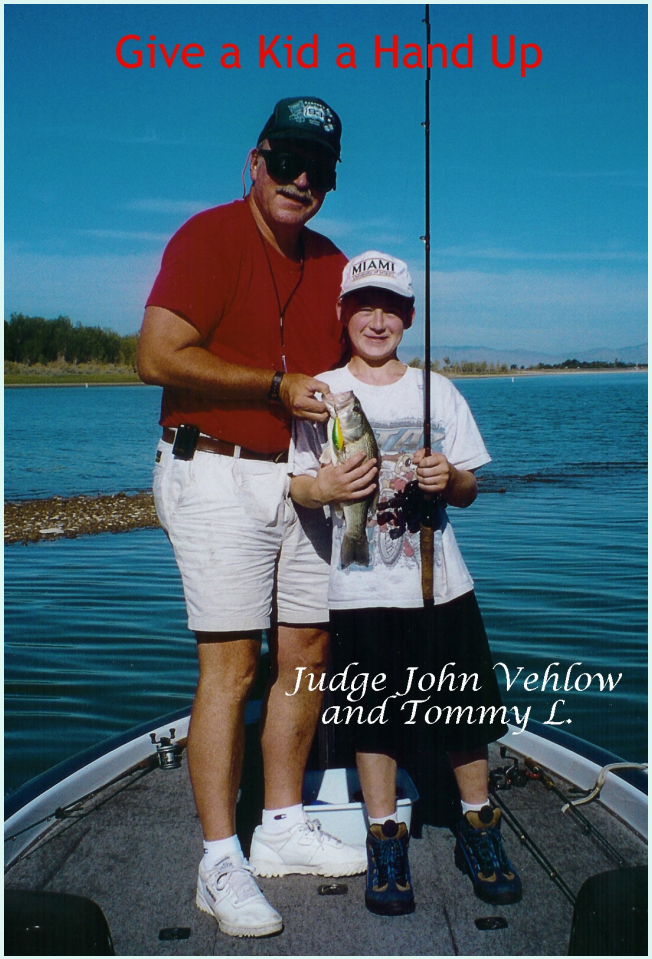
when I was going to court I herd your name and ran
it was wrong of me to do that and I wanted to say
I am sorry. Please forgive me

P.S. have a ha
Christmas

Sinserly,
Camron B

Scales of Justice

- The “Tommy L.” Story
  - 1999-It all started with a promise to one juvenile in an Ada County courtroom
  - “If you successfully finish probation, I’ll take you fishing”
  - Judge Vehlow kept his promise, and the SOJ tournament has since extended it to dozens of “Tommys,” male and female



Scales of Justice Planning

- 2000 – 2003: the idea of a fishing event for other kids on probation became REAL
- Judge Vehlow met with:
  - local Bass Federation and fishing clubs
  - the ACJCS Director
  - the Ada County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
  - the Idaho Supreme Court
  - the IDFG Director
- Approval was obtained from all participants

Scales of Justice Planning (cont'd)

- A contest was held to name tournament: "ACJCS Scales of Justice Bass Tournament" was the winner
- Tournament committee was established with ACJCS, local fishing groups, and other partners providing committee members
- First Scales of Justice Tournament was held in 2004
- Our next Scales of Justice Tournament (the 10th) is set for Sunday, September 22, 2013

Scales of Justice

- What work goes into building SOJ?
  - Scheduling event and support for juveniles
  - Forms/letters (counties, State of Idaho)
  - Permits (Owyhee County, ID Fish & Game)
  - Marketing: News releases, mailings, hats, and displaying Styrofoam-backed posters of SOJ's from years past

SOJ Planning Committee

- Meets monthly year round (October meeting starts the planning process for the next September's tournament)
- Members include Judge Vehlow, local fishing group representatives, the ACJCS Director, and employees from all parts of ACJCS
- Volunteers and donors make this day a reality, so the committee focuses on both areas
- ACJCS Probation Division coordinates the nomination of attendees (a juvenile in Detention is not eligible to attend the tournament)

Scales of Justice

- Alliance with the community
  - Public sector
    - Counties (BOCC, county sheriff, juvenile court staffs)
    - State (Judiciary, Fish & game)
  - Private sector
    - Fishing organizations (Idaho Bass Federation, Idaho B.A.S.S. Federation Nation, others)
    - Fishing businesses
    - Individuals and general businesses (in-kind and cash donations)

Scales of Justice

- How are youth nominated?
  - Probation Officers can nominate youth on their caseload IF:
    - Youth on probation the day of tournament
    - Youth doing well on probation
  - In 2005, Twin Falls County first attended SOJ
  - In 2007, the Scales of Justice Bass Tournament was expanded to invite eighteen surrounding counties to participate in this event
  - In 2009, Malheur County, Oregon began participating
  - 2012: multiple counties are again expected to participate

Scales of Justice Tournament Day

- What does Tournament Day look like?
  - Ada County juveniles arrive at Juvenile Court Building EARLY for transportation to the reservoir by ACJCS staff; other counties arrange for their own juveniles
  - Boaters' meeting at reservoir at 9:00 am
  - Boaters are paired with a juvenile and witness and receive a boater number
    - Hats for boaters/rods and reels and tackle for youth are handed out before the launch
    - Photos are taken of each team
  - Launch time – usually 11:00 am

SKEETER
PERFORMANCE FISHING BOATS
YAMAHA
TEAM

Tournament Day (cont'd)

- What does the day look like?
  - Four hours allowed for fishing (11:00 – 3:00)
  - Weigh-in consists of a three-fish limit with no fish less than twelve inches in length
  - Measuring is done by Idaho Fish and Game with youth participation
  - Fish are then released back into the reservoir
  - Plaques for largest fish and most overall weight are given to the youth
  - All youth receive a plaque with a photo of their team, including themselves

Tournament Day (cont'd)

- What does the day look like?
  - Barbeque/picnic for youths, boaters, volunteers
  - Group photos of all boaters and juveniles are taken (used in future years for posters and advertising – no names or identification)
  - ACJCS staff provide transportation back to the Juvenile Court Building for Ada County juveniles
  - Other counties transport their juveniles home
  - Volunteers clean up picnic site and cooking area (juveniles assist before leaving)

NITRO
FOOTBALL
MERCURY

Scales of Justice

- What is the benefit?
  - A connection between the boater/mentor and each youth is developed
  - A connection between court staff (especially Probation Officers) and each youth is strengthened
  - Kids are able to see first hand that there are other (healthier) activities to do in their community during their spare time
  - Thank you letters are written by each youth to each boater (modeling empathy and proper behavior)
  - Fun day for ALL and a reward to the youth for positive behavior

How YOU Can Help!

- The SOJ team is always seeking assistance and support from the community
  - Volunteer to be a boater/mentor
  - Donate to Scales of Justice (a 501(C)3 group)
  - Help get the word out in your community, especially to
    - Juvenile court staff or judges
    - Fishing organizations
    - Local businesses, like those that serve fishing groups

Scales of Justice Info

- Questions?
- To volunteer or for more information, please contact
  - Judge John C. Vehlow
    - jbubba@overarch.com

Donations

- To donate to the Scales of Justice (in-kind or monetary are both very welcome), just contact:
  - Ken Jenkins, ACJCS Training Manager
    - kjenkins@adaweb.net
    - 208-577-4854

Thank You

- Thank you for taking the time to learn about the Scales of Justice Bass Tournament!