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STATEVILLE

SPEAKS

VOICES FROM INSIDE...

FEBRUARY 2010

Going Straight to the Top

Statesville Speaks is very proud to conduct the first public in-depth interview with Michael Randle, recently appointed Director of the I.D.O.C. Northeastern Illinois University students spent weeks preparing, reading letters and brainstorming questions.

In opening comments, Randle indicated he was interested in Statesville Speaks being one of the methods he will use to provide information to inmates and their families. Randle added that this interview and future issues will be utilized to announce new initiatives.

Randle then spoke about three major announcements: Specifics regarding Tamms 10 Point Plan, telephone costs and replacing cassettes with CDs.

Randle said time spent in Tamms would be determined by a person’s behavior. The range of time could be from less than one year to 5 years or more. Positive behavior was defined as utilizing opportunities like GED classes; appropriate handling of certain privileges like

phone calls and access to publications; a low number of, or no, conduct reports; appropriate interactions with staff counselors, medical, and mental health staff. There will be a review every 90 days and time in Tamms can be lessened or increased based on the behavior of the prisoner. The Director also stated he will be exploring how long-term segregation time is administered. (For the entire Tamms 10 Point Plan, see “Director Randle Unveils...”)

The second announcement involved the cost of phone calls. Randle explained that part of the reason that phone calls are so expensive is that a portion of the expense is to offset the hardware and infrastructure costs associated with the recording and monitoring of phone calls. Randle indicated he was planning to offer at least two additional methods to pay for phone calls that will reduce costs. The first would be a prepaid debit system to be offered to families where they can contact the phone vendor directly and prepay for a specific amount of minutes. The second would be to authorize inmates to purchase minutes from the commissary.

These options will allow the family to budget the phone expense and prevent the need to refuse collect calls. Randle indicated his goal is to have an agreement in place with the vendor by late 2010 as changes can’t be made until current contract ends.

The third announcement Randle made was to phase out cassette tapes to compact discs. Current cassette tapes will be “grandfathered in” but in the future, only CDs will be available for purchase.

Following preliminary comments, Randle responded to questions prepared by students. The following represents the questions and Randle’s response:

Q: We have received numerous prisoners’ letters about the lack of hygienic and sanitary items, adequate clothing, and shoes for winter; and the shift of

Continued on Page 6...

hope / change / redemption

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Coverage

WHEN YOU NEED IT

INMATES IN EACH DOC PRISON CAN SUBMIT ARTICLES TO
STATEVILLE SPEAKS

Bring Back Parole

By Janet Jackson



There are many aged, ill and worthy people rotting in prison due to the laws passed after 1977. Prior to 1977 the convicted felon had to prove themselves in order to be released. Sentences were indeterminate. An offender had a minimum and a maximum release date. If they were rehabilitated they might be released upon their minimum release date. If not then their sentence could be many years.

Determinate sentencing was enacted in 1978. Offenders were now released after serving 50% of their sentences regardless of their behavior. Sentences grew and shrunk. Nonviolent crimes were given earned "good days" based on passing programs. Soon

nonviolent crimes were doing a quarter of their time and in some cases less than 62 days.

Violent offender's time and sentences increased. Murder was a mandatory 20 years with no good time earned. Many programs designed to rehabilitate were closed to them. Other violent offenders served 85% of their sentence with no good time or rehabilitative programs. Those who needed the programs most were unable to participate.

Yet the violent offender found ways to rehabilitate themselves. Many guards swear they would rather deal with "the old timers" than the new young prisoner coming in. Those who have done time have come to realize that prison is no joke. Once you do

10, 15, or 20 years behind prison walls, your health deteriorated, your children grown, you know you will never ever commit another crime.

Yet due to sentencing these offenders, who now are in their 50's, 60's and 70's are unable to obtain release. They are stifled by current determinate sentencing.

Yes, I believe all should and would benefit from a parole board. There are many offenders both short and long terms that are rehabilitated and deserve a chance to seek a parole board and prove themselves worthy of release.

Changing the current law back to the 1977 "See the Parole Board" is a monumental task.

It requires a lot of support, from the prison population and support from the free world. There are representatives to do this, but support is needed.

* * *

Below is a coupon to send to *Stateville Speaks*. Surely your freedom is worth a postage stamp. All we ask is the name, address phone number and if possibly, mail address of the one free world person you can count on for support—the one person who will work for your release. So please fill out the coupon and mail it to *Stateville Speaks*. **

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Northeastern Illinois University's Edition of Stateville Speaks

By Joshua Brutzkus

Welcome to the second edition of Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) *Stateville Speaks*. In our time as Justice Studies students here at Northeastern, we have learned a lot about the injustices within the prison and jail systems in our country. This semester we spent many hours reading through inmate letters, articles, poems and essays. Doing so gave us an in depth, firsthand account of prison life. We were also given different assignments and topics to research. They ranged from postpartum depression, to several other inmate issues, such as soy diets and slow mail delivery. We visited inmates in prisons, met with legislators in Springfield and interviewed Illinois Department of Corrections Director Michael P. Randle for this issue, his first since taking over this position. All of this and more are in this issue of *Stateville Speaks*.

In addition, our Justice Studies class had the privilege to have a panel of ex-inmates speak to our class. Some were wrongfully accused and convicted for crimes they did not commit. Others admitted guilt to crimes, the harshness of their sentences and prison life and once incarcerated, how hard it was to gain release. These men told us their stories of prison life; being on death row and the effects on their mental and physical health. They shared stories that made us laugh and brought many to tears. Truly amazing to all was that

instead of feeling angry towards the correction system for the years they lost, for crimes they didn't commit, these exonerated were enthused just to be free. Instead of looking back they were concentrating on rebuilding their lives and connecting with their families. All expressed a need and desire to work within the system to improve it. We thank them all for their candor.

There are many reasons why each of us chose to work with *Stateville Speaks* for our internship, but after collaborating with the entire group, one reason stands out. For years we have learned about the prison system from textbooks, educational videos, research, professors, etc. Our internship with *Stateville Speaks* allowed us to meet inmates and really ask the questions that we felt were important. Questions that could only be answered from someone who has been on death row, suffered abused by prison guards, denied certain health treatment, or feeling remorse for a crime they committed.

We have learned so much in our field of study while working with *Stateville Speaks* that our team feels that it is an extremely valuable resource to us at NEIU and the education community; beyond the value as a prison newspaper working on issues of prison. We have a much deeper understanding of how the prison system functions and really how much work it

takes to reform even a small portion of it. We have learned about inmates, their families, their stories, feelings, thoughts, and how they are able to cope with being in prison. However we think the most important lesson learned is the fact that the Correction System is broken and in need of repair. There needs to be more people willing to step up and speak for those who have lost their voice; to be a part of a group that does so, even in a small way is an amazing and very humbling experience that we will never forget.

We want to thank Bill Ryan and Cynthia Kobel of *Stateville Speaks* for all their hard work. They both have an undying passion for helping reform the prison system, especially those treated unduly harsh, those that have been wronged by the system. We appreciate all the times they met with us, all of their guidance and support, and most importantly for showing us that there really are people who want to be reformers and not just maintain the status quo.

We would like to thank Gayle Tulipano who was essential in supporting us in all aspects of our internship. Gayle, Justice Studies alumni, answered any questions that we may have had and always guided us in the right direction. Also, thank you Professor Kingsley Clarke for sharing so many of your extremely valuable, real-life experiences with us. You have shown us true justice and that the proper treatment of

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****This issue of Stateville Speaks is generously supported by Cynthia Kobel.****

Director Randle Unveils New Plan for Illinois Prisons

by Agustin Bibian



Northeastern University Students who interviewed Director Randle for cover story.

On September 17, 2009 the John Howard Association (JHA) held its annual meeting at a downtown Chicago restaurant. The room was filled to capacity with many prison reform advocates, including legislators, attorneys, ex-inmates, clergy and those working within programs that assist released inmates re-entering society, just to name a few. Also represented were members of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), including the newly appointed Director of Corrections, Michael P. Randle.

It was here that Randle, previously from the Ohio Department of Corrections, presented an outline of his programs for the Illinois prisons including reducing the flow of people going into prisons, reducing recidivism, and better programs for re-entry into society. He also unveiled his much awaited plan for Tamms Supermax Prison.

In his three-prong approach to reduce recidivism Randle discussed the need for the reduction in the number of offenders that would be coming into the prisons. Statistics show

that 47% of the offenders who are released from the IDOC have been in custody for 6 months or less. According to Randle, it is thought that most of the low-level, non violent offenders can be punished by using less expensive community options. He also stated offenders who come to prison will need the help of successful rehabilitative programs within the prisons and also stressed the need to continue and expand the work of community-based partners that support successful reentry, such as Adult Transitional Centers and Day Reporting Centers.

Randle also discussed SB1289, a senate bill from the Illinois Crime Reduction Act of 2009 that Governor Quinn recently signed into law. According to Randle, the significance of this Act is that it uses an integrated approach to punishment and crime risk based on the various levels of the criminal justice system including pretrial, probation, prison and reform. The purpose of the Act is to make better use of resources devoted to those four functions and to provide better assessment of the risks and needs for their application.

A few examples of the reform would be that judges will have the opportunity to review the risk/need of an individual before committing someone to probation or prison. While in prison, the staff would also complete a risk/need assessment. In it they would assess education levels, skills, need for substance abuse programs and job placement. In addition, the Act will focus on reducing the number of offenders even sent to Illinois prisons. Instead, more funds would be given to community programs to work with the short term, nonviolent offenders. Randle acknowledged much of this plan was set forth by the hard work of Senator Kwame Raoul (D-13th) and Representative William D. Burns (D-26th).

Finally, in addition to naming acting warden Yolande Johnson as the permanent warden of Tamms, Randle also announced his much anticipated Tamms Ten Point Plan as follows:

First point: Allow each inmate placed at Tamms CMAX to have a Transfer review hearing. Specific timelines to conduct Transfer Review Hearings are being designated. Inmates will

also be given an opportunity to refute and offer information that may impact their transfer and placement to the facility. An audio recording of all Tamms' placement hearings will be maintained.

Second point: Inform each inmate of an estimated length of stay and how privileges can be earned to provide for eventual transfer from the facility. Based on the offense the inmate committed, staff will use professional correctional judgment to inform the inmate of a range of time he should expect to serve at Tamms.

Third point: Promote the medical and mental health evaluation process conducted prior to and after placement for each inmate sent to the facility. Each inmate placed at Tamms will receive a full mental health evaluation within 30 days of placement. Mental health staff will make weekly rounds in all housing units to identify any inmate who is decompensating as a result of transfer to the facility.

Forth point: Increase inmate privileges throughout the Behavioral Level System to incentivize positive behavior at Tamms. Dependent on behavioral adjustment, the amount of out-of-cell recreation time and commissary will be increased. Telephone privileges will be added to the Behavioral Level System at the facility.

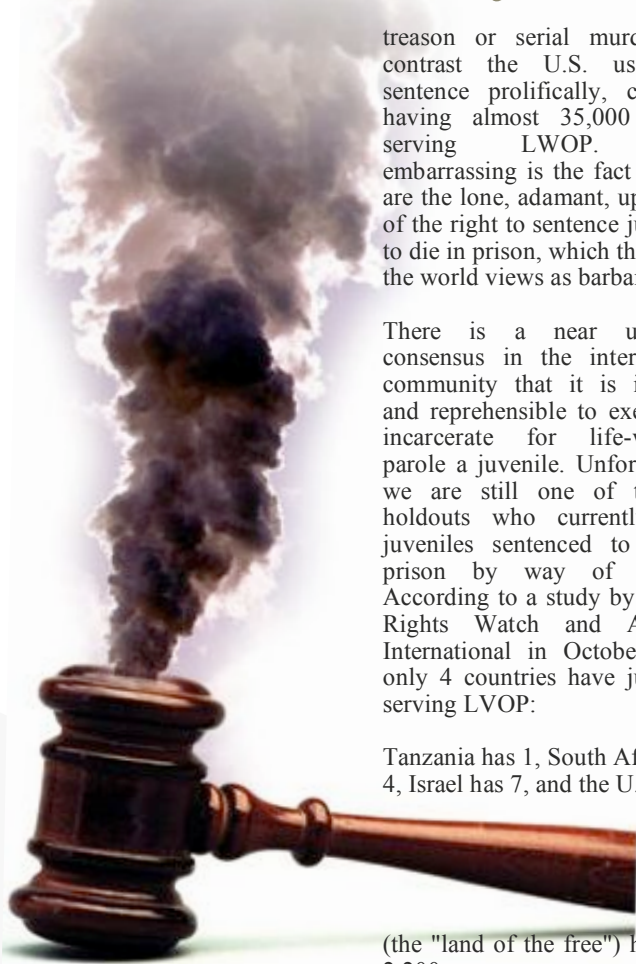
Fifth point: Begin offering General Educational Development (GED) testing at the facility.

Sixth point: Implement congregate religious services for inmates at Tamms.

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Unilaterally Punitive

By Joe Dole



treason or serial murder). In contrast the U.S. uses this sentence prolifically, currently having almost 35,000 people serving LWOP. More embarrassing is the fact that we are the lone, adamant, upholders of the right to sentence juveniles to die in prison, which the rest of the world views as barbaric.

There is a near universal consensus in the international community that it is immoral and reprehensible to execute or incarcerate for life-without-parole a juvenile. Unfortunately we are still one of the last holdouts who currently have juveniles sentenced to die in prison by way of LWOP. According to a study by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in October 2005, only 4 countries have juveniles serving LVOP:

Tanzania has 1, South Africa has 4, Israel has 7, and the U. S.

(the "land of the free") has over 2,200.

The United States is unique in the world for its overzealous love affair with life-without-parole sentences (LWOP). It is one of the few western countries to have LWOP sentences and the only country in North America to have them. Even the other western countries that do have LWOP sentences, reserve them for only the most extreme circumstances (e.g. acts of

There are numerous calls to abolish LWOP sentences for juveniles worldwide. The U. S. stands unabashed against them all. The U.S. and that other stalwart protector of human rights, Somalia, are the only two to refuse to do so.

Part of this love affair with LWOP sentences is due to the short-sightedness of the anti-

death penalty movement. (The death penalty is another issue the U.S. stands steadfast in support of). In their rationalization of the lack of need for a death penalty, they push LWOP as the "perfect alternative". A couple of decades ago only a handful of states had LWOP sentences. Now almost all of them do. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan finally had enough and called a moratorium. People sentenced to LWOP (there are over 1,400 in Illinois alone) went through this same broken system, but without the added safeguards afforded to people sentenced with the death penalty. Thus it is much more difficult for a lifer who was wrongly convicted to get his conviction overturned; ergo many more innocent people are almost definitely serving LWOP sentences than were sentenced to be executed. Considering that there are many more people sentenced to LWOP, than to death each year.

Compared with the rest of the world the United States incarcerates more of its citizens per capita than anyone else and for much longer than any other industrialized country. An entrance requirement to the European Union is that the death penalty be outlawed in the joining country. Concerning life imprisonment, the Council of

Europe in 1995 stated "A crime prevention policy which accepts keeping a prisoner for life even if he is no longer a danger to society would be compatible neither with modern principles on the treatment of prisoners during the execution of their sentence nor with the idea of reintegration of offenders into society". Both the European Court of Human Rights as well as the German Constitutional Court has held that a term of life imprisonment must include the possibility of release. Both Brazil and Portugal have banned LWOP sentences. In Spain the maximum sentence one can serve is 40 years, while in Slovenia it's 20 years.

The United States cannot continue to demand compliance with human rights principals and norms aboard while it refuses to apply them here at home. We have an obligation to implement humane principals embraced by the rest of the world for our own people if we are going to admonish other nations about the inhumane practices of dictators, despots, and others.

In the words of United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, "Our resources are misspent, our punishments too severe, our sentences too long Courts may conclude the legislature is permitted to choose long sentences, but that does not mean long sentences are wise or just. ... [A] people confident in its laws and institutions should not be ashamed of mercy". Well said, too bad few are listening. **(This is an edited version of an award winning article written by Joe Dole) ****

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Straight to the Top, Cont

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responsibility for these items from the state to the inmate and his/her family. How do you plan on addressing this? Can you tell us how many times an inmate can take a shower a week; how many times an inmate can change their clothes as well as their undergarments?

A: Depending on the security level and physical plant of the facility, some inmates can take showers daily. Typically, clothing is exchanged annually unless severely damaged. Winter coats are made in I.D.O.C.'s correctional industries. With winter soon approaching, if it is determined that the provided coats need to be upgraded or changed we would certainly do that.



Mike Randle

Inmates are issued adequate sanitary items. There also is an option of purchasing items from the commissary, as some inmates don't like state-issued soap, undergarments and toilet paper. Some people use toilet paper and soap for things other than their original purpose. As an example, instead of using the soap to wash them, some use soap to wash their clothes. Laundry services are provided to the inmates so our expectation is for the state-issued soap to be used in an appropriate manner.

Q: Stateville, Menard and maybe other prisons are on lockdown much of the time. Not only is one cell house locked down but the entire institution

when the incident only involves something in one cell house. In this regard, if Stateville, Pontiac, and Menard utilize lockdowns so much why is there a need for Tamms when you could just lock them down in maximum prisons?

A: There have been dramatic decreases in the number of lockdown days in our facilities over the last several months. During a lockdown, an investigation is conducted. As a result of the incident and investigation, numerous factors can determine the length of the lockdown and the operational management of the facility. There is and will continue to be a need for Tamms.

The mission of Tamms Closed Maximum (C-Max) Security is to improve the quality of life, safety and day-to-day operations of other IDOC facilities and to enhance the safety of staff, offenders and the public. Tamms C-Max has been designated and designed to house IDOC's most disruptive, violent and problematic offenders. Since the opening of Tamms, staff and inmate assaults as well as gang activity have decreased*.

*For specific numbers of assaults, Randle directed us to the published 10-Point Plan Report. According to that report, there were 52.2% fewer inmate-on-staff assaults reported during FY09 as compared to FY00; there were 36.6% fewer inmate-on-inmate assaults from FY01 through FY07; and Rule 25, "Gang or Unauthorized Organizational Activity" violations declined 89.3% from FY96 to FY09.

Q: Give us an update on releasing nonviolent offenders? What are the future plans?

A: A total of 117 inmates have been released to electronic detention so far. The department continues to screen eligible inmates for the program.

Q: We have received a lot of letters about the slowness of mail delivery. What can be done to remedy this?

A: This is a concern that has been raised to me when I go and walk around prisons. Quite honestly,

that is something that is primarily tied to staffing levels and we have started to bring in staff, so hopefully the situation will improve.

Q: Looking into your crystal ball describe the I.D.O.C. system you head in five years.

A: In five years time, reentry will be a major focus of I.D.O.C. with a much greater emphasis on preparing prisoners to reenter society. Programs that focus on family reunification will also be emphasized. Now, all too often family "moves on" when a person is in prison and effective communication is ended. There will be opportunities for communication to be continuous.

Obviously the inmate will have to be responsible in responding to opportunities, but the programs will be present to prepare a person for becoming a contributing member of society. It is recognized that both of these are major changes from the way IDOC operates today. Also, in five years there will be "theme" prisons, specialized to handle their specific populations, i.e. substance abuse, educational, elderly, etc.

Q: Certain policies end up creating negative consequences for positive behavior, for example, the loss of yard time due to the time conflict with inmate work detail. Since night yard time is only offered one time every other week, this policy essentially punishes the inmates for working. What are you going to do to redress these kinds of situation?

A: How often they are allowed to have yard or indoor recreation depends on the security level, physical plant and number of inmates at a facility. These are ongoing issues that have to be addressed at the facility level. It would be fair to say though, that it would be the plan that nobody would be punished for working.

Q: As you stated in your recent report, when the IL task force on Crime and Corrections agreed on the need for a Supermax, they noted that the facility should not be utilized as a permanent assignment for

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Cruel & Unusual Soy Punishment

In Illinois and across the U.S., cheaper meat substitutions have crept into our diets. Illinois prison inmates have had little, if any choice, in consuming soy products in every one of their meals. Why does this matter? The problem is that inmates have been having health issues, particularly with their thyroid glands and gastrointestinal tracts. Schools have been tinkering with the idea of substituting soy in lunches.

The Weston A. Price Foundation held a press conference luncheon at Uncommon Ground Restaurant in Chicago on November 12. The room held the press, lawyers, former inmates, nutritionists, as well as prison reform advocates; it certainly exceeded the capacity in which it was designed. The Foundation has been receiving letters from inmates and ex-inmates since early in 2008, and they are now in the early stages of courtroom proceedings. The problems arose in 2003 after former Governor Rod Blagojevich allowed substitutions of things like meat, cheese, and even flour with soy additives. On stage was Weston A. Price President Sally Fallon Morell who went as far as to call the force-feeding of soy to inmates, "the Tuskegee of the 21st century."

Gary Cox, attorney for the lead plaintiffs, followed by giving information on the lawsuit. The lawsuit is seeking a permanent injunction against forcing soy in prison meals. The heart of the lawsuit focuses on the 8th Amendment, citing cruel and unusual punishment. He made it clear that the lawsuit is not seeking damages, rather a mere end to soy products. The case is being argued in the Central District of Illinois under Harold Baker.

Jeffrey Smith, a leading spokesman against genetically modified organisms, provided



research from his work in the field. He spoke in depth about rats that were fed genetically modified soy and their subsequent health problems. The problem, which the panel discussed, is that over 90% of soy is genetically modified. Smith went on to say that companies like Monsanto have political backing and often have minimal regulations in producing genetically altered food. The privatization of prisons has created a system in which contracts are negotiated with food companies. This is the reason why Illinois prisons have been so reluctant to get genetically modified soy products out of the diet.

The last member of the panel was an ex-inmate named Thomas Salonis. He spoke, at times painstakingly, about allergic reactions to the soy. Thomas was even locked up in isolation for four days with ants crawling all over his body when he tried to get his doctor's note, regarding his soy allergies, honored. Needless to say, he finished up his stay at Stateville eating prepackaged noodles, which he had to purchase.

The press luncheon was a success for the Weston A. Price Foundation. Not only did they bring food to our tables, they

provided a front of information that will be spread by the attendees. A few laughs were shared, a few tears were shed, and ultimately there was a round of applause for a 54-year-old ex-inmate. The press conference's message was simple, be knowledgeable of the things we eat and be concerned with the lives of inmates as it may soon affect the health of our children, as they consider similar diets within the Illinois school system.**

Director Randle's

Confirmation Hearing on New Strategies for Illinois Prisons

by Magda Helmy

On October 28, newly appointed Director of Illinois Department of Corrections, Michael P. Randle was called upon to address the General Assembly and to seek official confirmation for the position. His opinion regarding the TAMMS Correctional Center was raised. One such senator commented that he remembers when TAMMS was not around and thinks with its presence it has made it safer.

Continued on Page 17...

NO REFUND (On-site)

ACE Coffee: serves **BAD** Business

Ace Coffee Bar; the new staple vending service to many (if not all) of the Illinois Department of Corrections facilities has found a very crafty way to avoid refunding most customers for:

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The result: **No refund**, since most would not incur a cost to obtain a refund greater than the amount of the refund, itself.

Ace beat Canteen in a bidding war for the recent vending contract to IDOC. However, the visitors and even IDOC staff are the ones left paying the price. There is little concern from decision makers for the fairness of these companies to those who have no alternative choices.

THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO.

File your complaint against ACE with the Better Business Bureau to spark an investigation. Companies with such poor practice and morale do not deserve a monopoly-sized contract with IDOC. Go to:

<http://www.bbb.org/>
or call (312) 832-0500

The more complaints filed, the more ACE will have to be held responsible for their poor business practices. **

The Conscious

By Andre Patterson

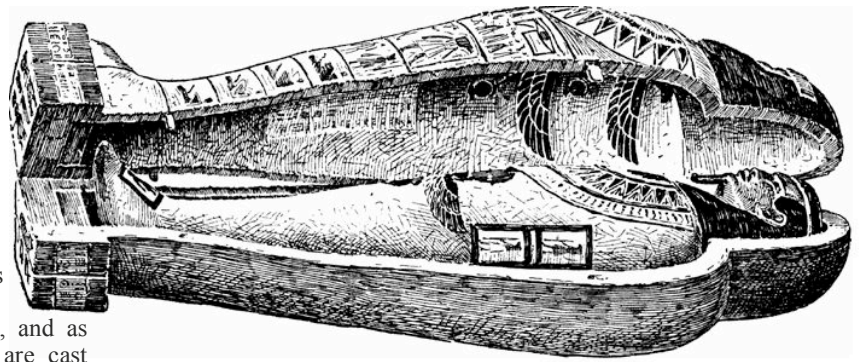
This is for all the Neteru, gods, conscious ones, and sons of light. What goes on inside a conscious mind? I'm not talking about brain activity, which is ultimately just a vehicle for the mind; but I'm speaking on the seat of man's soul. The place where knowledge is born, and we intuit the Divine; where the laws of the universe are innate, and we identify with that Supreme Essence that is the substratum of all creation. Many of us here in prison are intellectually aware of this place and a few may have even elevated to this plane of existence, riding the waves of pure mental energy which is their mental; experiencing what so many myths, religions and ideologies were built upon, and are striving for. What goes on inside a so-called conscious mind?

Do the outward actions truly reflect the inward life? Couldn't anyone condition themselves to robotically perform a ritual, day in and day out? Confined in these small spaces, we're susceptible to become obsessive compulsives anyway; losing ourselves in routine to ease the monotony. So does keeping myself clean shaven, walking with an erect and disciplined posture, praying several times a day, reading (insert "holy" book of choice here) when I awake and before I go to sleep; and greeting brothers with a "Peace god-as-salaam a walaikum-shalom - may the blessings of Christ be upon YOU." Do these things mean: "I'm in tune with the Divine?" Does this give a proper gauge of my mental state, or the depth of my humanity? This is not an indictment on those who haven't yet awakened to the folly,)~ their past and present actions; nor is it a judgment of the conscious dead; conscious because they are aware of their higher self, but dead because they have yet to allow the knowledge of self to actually penetrate that hard outer covering that has

Dead

encased and stifled that self. Why do we profess with our mouths "while restricted and confined in these cells, and as soon as the restraints are cast off, we kill our elders, and rape our women and children, and yes I'm speaking of specific incidents, just watch the news.

Brothers who have dwelt among us for 20 plus years, immersed themselves in the knowledge of our true culture, studied the spirituality of the ancestors; and yet still fell victim to the enemy. I'm not talking about some outside demonic entity, or non-melanated person; I'm talking about the enemy of the inner me and the inner you, that a lot of times we fail to subdue. Brothers, I'm confused. I've seen some of the most devout men, men I've respected and who were integral parts of my spiritual journey; go home and you can imagine the rest. Somehow the ends just don't connect - aren't connecting. Were these men the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing? Or did they just lose the ancient battle that has been waged by man since the dawn of time? Light versus darkness ... Good versus evil ... Higher self versus the lower self. What are the weapons needed to finally gain victory in ones personal battle? This is just a commentary. I do not profess to have any answers, or set myself apart from, or above any ideology that I referred to here. I'm still on that 9,000 mile journey, trying to find my way back "home". I just see brothers like the ones who have been in the news recently, and become vexed, as well as perplexed. This is just a call I'm sending out to those who may possess a piece to this intricate puzzle which is life the life of an imprisoned man - the life of an imprisoned man trying to dispel the darkness of his past, and his present, with the power of a tangible light. Maybe we can help each other piece this thing together, to-gether.



So, this is in memory of the conscious dead; who were sentenced to a life of knowing self, and the knowledge embalmed them, making them a well preserved conscious corpse may you be rest-less in peace.**

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Straight to the Top, Cont...

inmates, yet according to some estimates, up to 1/3 of the population have been there over a decade. You did mention in your report that 48 of the 133 have been deemed eligible. What will be done with the others? When will the 48 be transferred?

A: We are reviewing all of those offenders that have been at Tamms since '98. In review of that entire cohort of 133, there are about 48 who are in the process of stepping out of Tamms. Five of the inmates deemed eligible have been transferred from Tamms and another five will be transferred soon. More inmates will be transferred as bed space becomes available. Of those who remain, we are giving them an idea of how long they can expect they can be at Tamms and making sure they understand that the way they behave will impact the length of time they are at Tamms.

Unfortunately, space does not allow for us to include the full interview in this issue. Watch for

Stateville Speaks Settles Federal Lawsuit

The Federal lawsuit (Kobel, Ryan v. Walker) is in the final stages of a negotiated settlement. The primary focus of the settlement will be for the additional training of mail room personnel. It is the expectation that such training will resolve the problem of *Stateville Speaks* not reaching inmates.**

Randle, 10-Point Plan, Continued...

Seventh point: Rescind some of the printed materials restrictions for inmates at Tamms.

Eighth point: Develop a plan for a Reassignment Unit at Tamms is similar to those operated at other step-down units. The Reassignment Unit will be an intermediate step for inmates who present the most risk if transferred from the facility, but have demonstrated appropriate adjustment behavior.

Ninth point: Plan a media, legislative and public outreach strategy that includes a visit to Tamms Correctional Center.

Tenth point: Reexamine the population of inmates having served extensive time at the facility for transfer eligibility. A review of the inmates held at Tamms from 1998 through 2004 was conducted to determine which inmates were appropriate for eventual transfer out of the facility. Of the cases reviewed, 45 were deemed eligible for transfer. Some of those in attendance seemed confident that this new Director's reform plan would be a great start in regulating treatment for those in Tamms. Many others, however, were not convinced that this would really do much to bring about significant reform, since this was only a guide. Many thought the only way to guarantee true reform would be do so legislatively. **

Stateville Speaks Lessons in Justice

By Gayle D. Tulipano



NEIU Edition Continued...

people- all people is integral for creating a better future. We feel the lessons that you teach have become crucial in helping us become better equipped to do just that. Again, thank you Dr. Cris Toffolo, NEIU Justice Studies Chairperson, for bringing the paper here and for continuing to be so supportive of this project.

The many articles could not have been possible if not for the countless letters, poems and essays that were sent to us from you, the inmates. We also value the artwork and cartoons. Thank you for granting us interviews and for allowing us a personal glimpse in your lives. Our wish is that NEIU students will be able to continue working with *Stateville Speaks* for many years to come. **

“So, just what was the importance of your work in putting together this prison newspaper?” asked an audience member at the 2009 Peace and Justice Studies Association Conference, held this past October at Marquette University in Milwaukee. I was asked because I was part of a panel representing Northeastern IL University (NEIU), specifically the Justice Studies program, from which I am a recent graduate. The answer as to why *Stateville Speaks* is such an important addition to our curriculum was an easy one.

Working on *Stateville Speaks* encompasses much more than the journalism and editing skills that one would expect in producing a paper. It also offers a comprehensive understanding of one the most ponderous yet oftentimes imperceptible social justice dilemmas of our time, America’s prison system. Our endeavor took us beyond the literature review, using more applied methods; allowing us to immerse ourselves in our research.

We worked alongside tireless, selfless advocates who demand civil rights for everyone, regardless of popular opinion. We

were constantly reminded that those incarcerated are also people, often the victim of crimes themselves. We understand that some people do bad things, some make bad choices and some have very few choices at all. We all realized the importance of and the commitment we must make, as Justice Studies students, to insure there is “justice” within a segment of our population that most don’t even consider.

The *Stateville Speaks* project at NEIU is new and while still being perfected, is an excellent model for putting theory into action. But beyond the letters, prison visits, interviewing, protesting, petitioning and lobbying we already do, we have the potential to expand this program. Ideally, our Education Department could set up a program to help teach some of the 45,000 inmates in the Illinois prison system, many that are in need of a basic education. This could make a tremendous difference in the success of those re-entering into society. As efficacious as this program already is, it can expand as far as the Administration will allow.**

Are Prisons for the Homeless?

By La Juana Lampkins

Well, it’s my twenty-seventh year of incarceration and “wow” how times flies. A lot has changed Illinois prisoners’, and I wanted to mull over a few issues “anew”.

In recent years prisoners’ who have no place to go upon their release are further detained and denied “freedom” due to homelessness. Prisoners’ labeled “sex offenders” require a placement with special stipulations, so a placement for them is hard to find, so because of that they are re-violated, so prisoners’ eligible to be free are further punished due to “homelessness”.

Well, let’s do the math. If the money provided by the state to house, feed, provide care for the prisoner is used to transfer to “shelters” and re-entry services for prisoners’ to be released, wouldn’t that support the rehabilitation “theory”? Furthermore, prisoners’



sent to various shelters and “housed” in communities they qualify to go to, could contribute charitable community services and become “useful” versus ‘useless’ abandoned in prisons for “housing”. Back in the day, prisoners’ who were released, “had to leave the prisons” after serving their time.**

Words Can't Describe

By Joseph Dole

In the past two decades we have been opening up Supermax prisons in this country as if they were franchises of a fast food chain. To me this is unconscionable. I fully understand how we arrived here; between the decades of "tough-on-crime" rhetoric and the lobbying of the prison industry, not to mention our collective indifference to the plight of anyone who commits a crime. We've gotten to the point where prisons are akin to "Vegas Baby!" What happens in prisons stays in prisons. There is virtually no oversight in prisons, and prisoners have few resources and fewer supporters.

Supermax prisons go by many names and acronyms to try to conceal their true nature. Whether it's "SHU's" (pronounced "shews", and an acronym for "secure housing unit.") or "SMU's" (pronounced "smews", and an acronym for "special management unit.") or "management control unit" or even "CMax" (which stands for "closed maximum" security prison), they all employ the same strategy of long term isolation which most other industrialized countries view as both barbaric and a form of torture. The name game is nothing more than a PR stunt. The Supermax prison in Tamms, Illinois, for instance was originally named Tamms Supermax Correctional Center. It is, to this day, located on Supermax Road. The town used to have a sign that read "Welcome to Tamms, Home Of The Supermax." Some years back, some savvy bureaucrat renamed it Tamms C-Max to make it sound less harsh, even though the policies didn't change. Now they deny it's a Supermax.

It may be naive of me to believe that most people are actually pretty good, but I do. Thus I would hope that if people knew what life was really like in here, they would rise up and demand change. Maybe if they knew that just 3 months of solitary confinement has been shown to cause serious damage to one's mental health, and that the



majority of us here at Tamms have endured more than 7 years (many well over a decade) of isolation, that they might say, "Hey that's wrong!" After all in 2000, the UN Committee Against Torture said the United States' "excessively harsh regime" of Supermax prisons violates the UN Convention Against Torture.

It's hard to explain the multitude of little factors that induce stress, anxiety, frustration, and depression. How does one adequately convey the physical effects of the mounting anxiety of day today events? Like today, after stalking the mail daily for over 2 months, waiting to receive my graded correspondence course lesson, and worrying it was lost; I learn that the mailroom had returned it to Ohio University for no apparent reason and without notifying me. Or how does one explain the mixed emotions of anger, revulsions, and sympathy, of learning that someone has defecated on the "yard"? (Our "yard" is a small 20' by 10' concrete box with a half chain-link/half corrugated steel roof.) Although you're angry at the staff and over the fact that you now can't go to the yard unless you care to share your yard time with another man's feces, which is disgusting, you also feel sympathy for the elderly inmate who is incontinent and begged for two hours to be let off the yard so that he could use the bathroom only to be ignored by the staff. He had no choice but to embarrass him and then had to endure further

humiliation when he came in because he had the respect and courtesy to inform everyone of the situation. All that and he received a disciplinary infraction to top off his public debasement.

How can I explain the heart-wrenching reality of not being able to speak to my two rapidly-growing daughters on the phone for the past 7 1/2 years? Or not being able to touch them or any other human being in that time? Or the humiliation I feel when they visit me and have to see me through Plexiglas, handcuffed, shackled, and chained to the cement stump that "is my chair? How can one begin to explain that each day gets harder and harder, not knowing if you'll ever get out, and being continuously and arbitrarily denied release?

I can't. Not adequately at least. My best attempt to describe prolonged isolation in a Supermax prison is that it's like Chinese water torture. A single drop may not harm you but the millions of little drops of anxiety, stress, uncertainty, depression, and sorrow build up until you can begin to feel your mind breaking. I wish I could explain it better. Maybe then people could understand and wouldn't allow this hell to continue.**

New Developments for Jon Burge

by David Ross

Former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge, alleged torture professor was set to go on trial January of 2010. However, the trial has been set back a third time for an estimated date of May 10, 2010. Burge received a

diagnosis of high-risk prostate cancer in September which his lawyers used to push back the court date. There is no doubt that there is a lack of sympathy from the plaintiffs, but a five-month delay may prove to be a lack of served justice in court for Burge. Perhaps death from failed health for the 61 year old is a better outlook than a 40-year prison term.

Accusations of torture have long plagued Burge and his "henchmen" throughout the 70s and 80s. Burge himself claims that the news has portrayed him as the "poster boy for police torture." Eventually, four former death row inmates filed suit and settled for approximately \$20 million from the torture accusations.

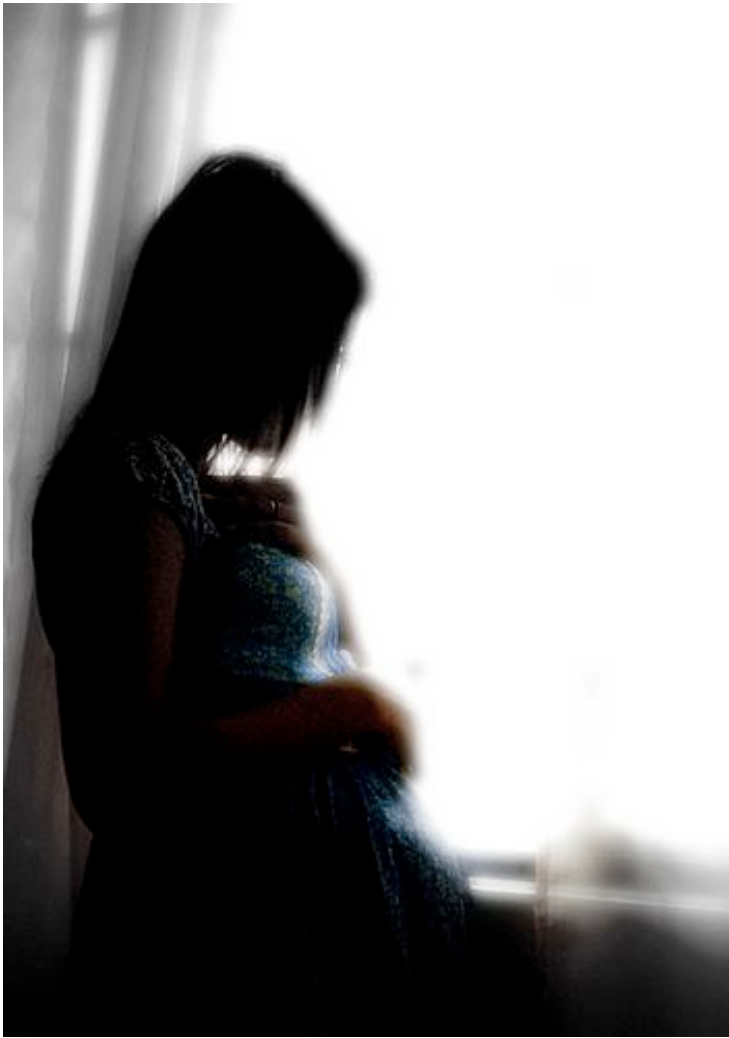
Following his termination, a \$17 million review was called for in about 60 cases in Illinois. Altogether, 148 cases were examined and three could have been proven "beyond a reasonable doubt" that torture had been used. In addition, half the claims in the cases could have been deemed reasonable. The statute of limitations proved to be beneficial for Burge and other law enforcement individuals. Regardless of the limitations, Burge still protected himself by pleading the 5th Amendment to almost every single question asked of him during a testimony before a grand jury.

Burge was charged and arrested in October 2008 based on lying in written testimony in a lawsuit filed by one of the death row inmates, Madison Hobley in 2003. Burge is charged with obstruction of justice and perjury.

Amidst the accusations, starting in 2005, Illinois began requiring confessions to be videotaped. This assures that confessions to crimes are monitored and the threat of torture from police is at least minimized in this aspect.**

Postpartum Compassion

By La keysha Pearson



Post Partum has displaced many women in our society. This illness comes along like a quiet storm. It creeps up on women during pregnancy, or after the birth of a child. The illness makes you unaware of your feelings and actions about your child, yourself and others.

Paula Sims was diagnosed with a form of this life changing illness, called Post Partum Psychosis, after she was convicted of the dreadful crime of killing her two children. She has suffered a great deal of hard ach and pain through the lost of family, friends, and most of all the absence of her son, whom is her only living child. Women of all ages have suffered

from this illness, often intensified by non-loving spouses who have physically, mentally, and emotionally, abused these women. If we constantly let people control our minds, they will eventually control our actions.

When I decided to visit Paula, I was not sure what to expect. I had never visited a prison in my life. I was comfortable but observant. I waited for Paula in the visiting room, anticipating what to say to her. When she entered the room, I gave her a big hug as if we were old friends.

I held the hands and cried with a woman who loved her children. I thought to myself, this loving kind hearted woman could never hurt

her children; something had to have gone wrong, and something did. This woman was unaware and afraid of what was going on in her mind and body. She did not know how, or from whom to seek help from this illness.

Throughout this storm Paula has stayed strong and nothing will hold her back as long as she has her Lord and savior in her corner. This mental illness has taken Paula's dream away of becoming a happy and safe mother.

As a mother, I know how easily it is to become depressed and feel unwanted in a relationship. Some women, like me, are able to seek out support. I was able to receive help from my family who intervened in my depressed situations. In Paula's case, she was unable to receive that support, guidance, and intervention when it was needed.

Paula has recently filed for her first clemency, which she is very hopeful about since Governor Quinn recently granted a clemency to Debra Ginrdorf, who also suffered from Post Partum Psychosis. I hope Ginrdorf's clemency is not a smoke screen for all of those who are really concerned about this illness. Paula's clemency would allow her to fight this illness on the front line with other mothers who are afraid and unable to seek help.

With Paula's help, they will know that they have a voice and can gain some inspiration to fight this quiet storm. The people of Illinois elected government officials to recognize and understand that Post Partum is a severe illness. Women, like Paula, who bear children, need our support, as we were not there as a society, (United we Stand) to help her.

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it must take the humanity in others to cultivate the world. If you know someone with the symptoms of postpartum, please don't be afraid to open up a line of communication and help that special woman in your life. **

New Legislation Breaks Barriers between Prisoners and Family Members

by Magda Helmy

On October 28, State Representative Karen Yarbrough (7th Dist.) explained during an interview the difficulties family members face in order to communicate with their loved one in prison. These difficulties may include financial burdens, strain on the families' schedules, or the distance it takes to see them. Most importantly, taking their children could be an uncomfortable and an unhealthy experience. Therefore, Representative Yarbrough is proposing a pilot program in which families could communicate by video conference. Families will not feel constrained and this will give inmates constant connection with them and the outside world. She stated, "I often visualize a student holding up his/her report card to his/her father through this technology. This will make prisoners think of what they're missing out on. Eventually, this will make them change their situation to be a part of the family again."

Later, a press conference was held in which she further explained the pilot program in detail. She also discussed the costs on this bill. Due to the fact that the video conference equipment is already in prisons and utilized by staff members, it will be set up for prisoners to use as well. Representative Eddie Washington added, "This bill opens up even broader implications such as connecting with lawyers, counselors, etc. The goal is to reduce recidivism." The pilot program will launch soon in about twenty prisons for approximately one year, although, not all inmates will utilize the benefit.**

Embracing Suicide

By Richard Dyches

A friend of mine died recently in the ward of a health care unit in a prison in Illinois. He had been there over 30 years. For many years, he had expressed a rather lackadaisical attitude toward what is still to me, the "never give up" attitude that I possess (so far). He had medical problems which he ignored for months before the problem became unbearable. Could indifference to one's health be classified as suicide? I don't know. I do know that he was ready to die.

For someone in poor health, in their seventies or eighties to welcome death is comprehensible to me. For a man who has yet to reach his sixtieth year and accept death so readily - is cruel from most other perspectives. If his attitude was singular among men of his position and circumstances, then one might attribute it to depression. He never seemed depressed at the prospect of death. Personally, I attribute this to oppression by a system which has been broken for longer than I have been alive. Can oppression lead one to suicidal thoughts or attitudes? Possibly. Probably.

Another lifer who has been here for over 30 years and is in his fifties commented to me that the only thing left to do here is die. This is not the first time he has expressed that sentiment. I have heard the same from both older and younger individuals, and from some who have been here only a mere eternity of 10 years.

Erasmus Darwin, an 18th Century British physician, scientist and poet, once wrote, "He who allows oppression shares the crime." Oppression can be defined as arbitrary and cruel exercise of extreme power.

For thousands of years man has worked and progressed toward a higher ideal of life, which defines his culture and his life. Culture is self-organizing and adapts and conforms to the direction of its constituents, whether anthropic or animal. The American dream has emerged in the latter half of the 20th Century - a house, car, two or



three kids, and all the amenities that go with the lifestyle of the nuclear family. It is programmed into us at an early age to go forward, progress, save for a rainy day, and do whatever is necessary for securing our future. One builds their life and family around these ideals and principles.

Incarceration kicks the wind out of our sails and leaves you without any connection to your lifelong programming. I won't suggest that any of us are innocent. All creatures, great and small, are guilty of something, even if it's just existing. But there are a number that are innocent of the

Supreme Court hears two cases on JLWOP

By Colleen Tracy

On Monday, November 9th, oral arguments began in two Supreme Court cases that focus on the sentence of juvenile life-without-parole. The Court decided to hear the arguments individually, which suggests it may distinguish the two cases based on the ages of the offenders. In *Sullivan v. Florida*, Joe Harris Sullivan was 13-years old at the time of the crime; and in *Graham v. Florida*, Terrance Graham was 17-years old. In both cases the juveniles were convicted of violent, yet non-homicidal offenses and were sentenced to life without parole.

According to a July 2009 study by Florida State University Public Interest Law Center, there are an estimated 111 inmates in 7 states serving life-without-parole sentences for non-homicide crimes committed as juveniles, 77 of those inmates are in Florida. In these two cases, the appellants

argue that the sentence is a violation of the 8th Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The cases gain their footing from a 2005 Supreme Court decision, *Roper v. Simmons*, where the Court ruled the death penalty was inappropriate for juveniles due to their reduced culpability and their capability for reform. In that opinion, the Court was divided 5-4, and this case may be just as close.

Conservative justices are suggesting alternatives to a blanket prohibition against life without parole for juvenile offenders while liberal justices are questioning whether an adolescent is developed enough to receive such a sentence for a crime less than murder. The Court is expected to make their rulings by July, 2010.**

crime for which they were convicted, but are serving some ludicrous sentence that is completely disproportionate to their crime.

The careless words of someone on the witness stand or a lie propagated by the state for no better reason than to have another win on the district attorney's record, can shatter a person's life, and send that person into a vortex of bureaucracy that in the best cases takes 10 years to navigate to repair. For a state witness to intentionally lie at the behest of the district attorney should not only be a punishable offense, it should also be adamantly enforced. Yet, it is not. About 3800 years ago, even the Code of Hammurabi allowed for a false accuser to serve the length of the accused's sentence for such lies.

Under the guise of protecting the public, the bureaucracy has perpetrated a routine of lies and deceit while shielded under color of law. Its persistence with this objective has little to do with the original goal or intentions. But the powers that be have never really been concerned about the fact that what they do doesn't make much sense.

How many thousands are incarcerated for life as a third offender on a multi-bill, when the charge they were convicted of only carried two or five years? The logic to the three-strikes law is two years plus two years plus two years equals life.

I have another perspective on that equation. A life sentence on a two or five year charge takes a taxpayer completely out of circulation for dozens of years. Between sales tax and income tax, that individual might typically pay over \$100,000 back into his government's pockets, and that is if his income is at poverty level. Instead, the government is paying possibly a million dollars (\$20K to \$30K per year times possibly 50 years) to keep society safe from this person who committed an offense carrying two years.

Continued on next page...



By Manuel Perez

Prison programming is imperative to give residents the ability to assimilate productive skills. Despite the diminutive programs offered to prisons, Kairos Prison Ministry International provides a unique and innovative program that integrates spiritual means to assist participants in becoming productive citizens and gaining a sense of family.

The Kairos Prison Ministry International is affiliated with institutions in the United States and seven foreign countries. The organization is involved with 350 institutions in 31 states in the U.S. and 8 additional countries. Stateville and Dwight are the two institutions with Kairos programs in Illinois. Over 20,000 trained volunteers assist Kairos with its extensive involvement with correctional institutions. The Kairos organization provides programs that comfort and enrich the lives of prison inmates. Kairos is presented from a Christian perspective with persons belonging to any faith tradition or not faith invited to attend. Every faith tradition is respected with no attempt for anyone to change their beliefs. The purpose of the program is to inform inmates that they are not alone by providing a connection between them and the community through a series of activities and discussions. The Kairos weekends are a biannual event presented to a new group of 42 prison inmates that come from a wide array of backgrounds and faiths. After the weekend experience, Kairos holds a monthly follow-up for 6 months

with the individuals who participated during that weekend to reinforce the teachings and unity that was established.

The Kairos weekend is a 38 hour process that begins on a Thursday evening in the prison auditorium and ends on Sunday afternoon. Each day different themes are established for the talks and discussion. The first day is meant for introductions and Kairos team members are introduced to the participants in the program which allows participants and volunteers to get acquainted with each other while having refreshments. After the introductions, participants and team members meet in the Chapel area for meditation and conclude with nighttime prayer. In the days that follow, participants are assigned to groups of six with three volunteers to discuss topics and excerpts while enjoying cookies, lemonade, coffee, and other treats. Participants are able to take discussion notes and express themselves through interactive discourse and prayer with other participants and team members. During the conclusion of Saturday and Sunday's programming, participants and volunteers share their experiences and provide feedback.

"...never have I ever been in a room with men from different religious backgrounds and felt so much love. The feeling was intoxicating. I spoke with Christians and Muslims and everyone enjoyed the experience. Men that had never spoken with each other before the Kairos weekend were laughing and embracing each other with the

Embracing Suicide Cont...

Our nation spirals down into a vortex of recession and still the public as a whole turns a blind eye towards this dilemma. Such societal attitudes have been propagated and grown more disproportionate as the years pass. When I hear a politician talk about being tough on crime, I think, now there's another crook about to benefit from lending fear and anxiety to public sentiment, and is willing to help bankrupt his own government just for his own personal advancement.

While I well understand that there are some individuals who will never function well in society, I also know that they are not the majority of those that I have met in my tenure in the DOC. There are some programs and disciplines that are rehabilitative. If rehabilitation is followed by a lifetime of incarceration then somebody has missed the mark. If a dog is rabid, you don't punish him and then kill him. If a child breaks the rules then you punish to correct, but punishment doesn't last forever. If a man has done something so heinous that he doesn't deserve to exist, then you kill him. Otherwise give him a viable release date.

What kind of sick society engineers such a hateful and malicious system and titles it justice? Don't come to me and tell me about the precepts of Christianity, and then expect me to convert and die. I was a Christian before I came to prison. As a Christian I always thought that it was more important to do what was right than what was politic or the trend. Don't tell me you are a Christian or whatever and that you forgive me for my supposed sins and leave me to rot until death in this cesspool of society. Do something, become active and

express your opinions to your local lawmakers. Some of our nation's icons exhibit the words, 'In God We Trust.' Are we a nation of absolute hypocrites? Where is the compassion to my family and friends? Do you wear the banners of Christianity and justice as a shield to relieve yourself of your own guilt? Use your influence to wield a sword of truth that makes a difference in the world. Society has been arbitrary and cruel in the administration of justice to thousands. By definition, this is oppression.

In school I learned of a great nation, a nation whose compass could not go awry because of its many checks and balances. It is a nation with a grand and glorious constitution that was by the people. As I grew older, I realized that even the Easter bunny was a myth. The checks and balances that were intended no longer functioned in their designed manner. America has embraced the suicide of her glorious ideals. "Apathy kills painlessly, but who cares?" (Author unknown) I want my country back, but now I can't even vote.

By these truths let it be known that my friend did not merely die of natural causes. He died at the hands of his oppressors. He was murdered by the oppression inherent in the system.

I agree with Darwin's premise - if you in any way allow this oppression to continue without making efforts to fix or reform this mindset, then you also share culpability in this crime against your fellow man and society. If you are content in your world and you do nothing to change the status quo, then you are a party to the oppression that murders the incarcerated. Be very careful. My friend left an empty bed. Will you, your child, brother or uncle fill it?*

spirit of brotherhood," said one prisoner.

Another said, "There was an openness and respect that allowed me to express myself".

Kairos weekends occur twice a year at Stateville CC and Dwight CC during the spring and the fall. If you are interested in

participating in a Kairos event, contact your Chaplain for more information and to sign up for the weekend event. If you are interested in volunteering and joining this joyful weekend or if you have any questions, log onto www.kairosprisonministry.org.**

Governor Quinn Acknowledges
Postpartum Illness

By Paula Blew-Sims

Illinois Governor Patrick Quinn proclaimed May 2009 Postpartum Mood Disorders Awareness Month in order to raise awareness of the common illnesses experienced by moms and moms-to-be.

Postpartum Depression is a temporary mental illness brought on by the birth of a baby. Approximately 15%-20% of pregnant women and 15% of new mothers experience minor and major depression in the first year after giving birth. The symptoms of Postpartum Mood Disorders are different for everyone but may include:

- Many worries and panic attacks
- Feelings of sadness, fear, anger and guilt



- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Appetite and sleep disturbances
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Auditory and visual hallucinations
- Possible thoughts of harming the baby, oneself, both and others

Symptoms of depression and anxiety occur in up to 20% of expectant and new moms, making these most common complications of pregnancy, affecting nearly 1 million women every year in the United States alone. These emotional disorders cover a wide spectrum including pregnancy

IDOC Director Randle welcomes members of the Adult Advisory Board

Board will assist IDOC in reforming state's criminal justice system

SPRINGFIELD – October 1, 2009 – Illinois Department of Corrections Director (IDOC) Michael P. Randle welcomes the newly appointed members of the Adult Advisory Board. The board advises IDOC concerning policy matters and programs for incarcerated persons and those on parole.

“I look forward to working with the members of the board to help move the department forward and reform the criminal justice system in the state of Illinois,” Director Randle said.

The Adult Advisory Board meets quarterly and consists of 13 members, including Director Randle and IDOC Assistant Director Deanne Benos. Governor Pat Quinn appointed the following members to the Adult Advisory Board on Tuesday:

- **Wilder “Kendric” Berry** (Chicago) – a wrongfully convicted man who spent more than eight years at IDOC; senior paralegal at Winston Strawn LLP; affiliated with the John Howard Association of Illinois and the Positive Anti-Crime Thrust.
- **Shaena Fazal** (Chicago) – director of the Long-Term Prisoner Policy Project for the John Howard Association of Illinois; former chair of the Illinois State Bar Association’s Committee on Corrections and Sentencing.
- **James Gannon** (Homewood) – current chairman of the Adult Advisory Board; deputy chief of police in the village of Homewood.
- **William “Patrick” Hartshorn** (Danville) – member of the Adult Advisory Board since 2002; sheriff of Vermillion County.
- **Keith Lape** (Jacksonville) – retired vice president of MacMurray College.
- **Vernon Mercier** (Decatur) – banking and trust industry professional.
- **David Olson** (Arlington Heights) – professor and chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Loyola University; former senior research scientist for the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority.
- **Jesus Reyes** (Lansing) – acting chief probation officer for the Circuit Court of Cook County.
- **Angela Rudolph** (Chicago) – program education officer for the Joyce Foundation; former special assistant to Mayor Richard M. Daley on Ex-Offender Reentry; former program director for the Juvenile Violence Initiative of Chicago Metropolitan 2020.
- **Donald Young** (Ava) – 25 year veteran of IDOC; retired warden of Shawnee Correctional Center.
- **Malcolm Young** (Free Union, VA) – retired executive director of the John Howard Association of Illinois.

If you wish to contact any of the members you may do so sending the

depression and anxiety, professionals and many go without postpartum depression, treatment. postpartum anxiety, postpartum Over the years a closer look has obsessive-compulsive disorder, been given to these terrible postpartum post traumatic stress illnesses. Here in Illinois, the disorder and postpartum Postpartum Depression Illness psychosis. Yet despite these statistics many women go Alliance (PPDIL) works to promote awareness, prevention undetected by healthcare and treatment of maternal mental

health issues. PDDIL offers a helpline, 847-205-4455 and website, www.PPDil.org, for women and their families so they can learn more.

Also, in all 50 states and 26 countries you may contact Postpartum Support International (PSI) for help by calling 800-944-4773(4PPD) and website www.postpartum.net for information and assistance. Don’t hesitate to contact these organizations.

In furtherance of Postpartum Awareness, Governor Quinn on May 1st granted clemency to postpartum mood disorder sufferer Debra Gindorf. She was serving a natural life sentence for the deaths of her two children. She had served 24 years and was released on May 8th from Dwight Correctional Center. Many of us still continue to rejoice regarding this mighty miracle. We applaud Governor Quinn for his compassion, courage and wisdom in recognizing these mental illnesses. His actions have brought more awareness to an important issue, have placed more hope in the hearts of many and has strengthened our faith. Thank you, Governor Quinn. **

Prison Officials Must Avoid Healthcare Battle

By Rich Dyches

Prisons officials should not wait for the force of law to ensure the delivery of a constitutional and humane level of medical care for inmates.

If inmate care is found to be substandard, then they must fix the system. They should do it because it is part of their job, because, it is the right thing to do and because failure to make reforms will be costly in terms of

Continued on Page 16...

We encourage those who have lost friends and loved ones, to send us their information, so we may acknowledge their passing and share our condolences. Submissions can be sent to: **Stateville Speaks • 2237 Sunnyside • Westchester IL 60154**



Adequate Medical Treatments, Procedures and Oversight Needed

By Colleen Tracy

Stateville Speaks receives many letters about the medical care, or the lack thereof, in the I.D.O.C. Each one of these stories illustrates the serious problems that are present in the current system. One such story is Christine LaRocca's. Christine received a three year sentence that might have turned into a death sentence due to a lack of timely medical care. She had eight months left to serve when she was transferred from county jail to Dwight C.C. It was during her medical intake exam at Dwight that a lump was discovered in her breast. Due to the seriousness of this discovery, you would think that she would have been scheduled to see a doctor right away, but instead, it took over a month. The doctor ordered a mammogram; it took another three months for her to receive the test.

According to the American Medical Association, approximately 40,000 women will

die from breast cancer this year. It is the second highest cause of cancer-related deaths in women, next to lung cancer. Early detection has been a significant factor in the decline of breast cancer deaths and it has been proven that treatment is more successful when cancer is discovered early. So why did it take so long for Christine to see her doctor and get a mammogram?

The LaRoccas believe it is because she was in for a short-term and Wexford, the medical provider, did not want to be responsible for the surgery and follow-up treatment. All the while, Christine was filing emergency grievances inside and her husband, Tony was acting as her advocate on the outside. Christine's grievances were not responded to within the required timeframes. She was told by the medical administrators that the hospital makes the appointments. Requests to see a doctor were approved, appointments were made, and then she would find out the night before that the appointment had been

rescheduled.

She was lucky to have Tony diligently advocating on her behalf on the outside. In March, he was able to get a hold of the medical director of the I.D.O.C. who was completely unaware of the problem and who responded that this was Dwight's decision. Even with such lackluster results, after speaking with the Director, things started moving for Christine. The mammogram was scheduled and took place in March. By the end of April she met with the surgeon who told her that had she been there sooner, she would not have needed the surgery, only chemotherapy. Instead, she would

have to undergo a full radical mastectomy. On May 6th, a full six months after the lump was discovered, she had the surgery.

Christine was released on June 30th. Securing continued medical care upon her release has also been an ordeal; it took months to get approved for health insurance and they had to sign papers taking full responsibility for payment in order for her to continue treatment. When I met with her, she was still undergoing treatment, but she seemed driven to beat the cancer and to advocate on behalf of the women at Dwight.**



Medical Update

By Colleen Tracy

In our last issue we reported on the May 19, 2009 House of Representatives Prison Reform Committee hearing where the Committee heard testimony about the inadequate medical care provided to Illinois' prison inmates. As a result of this hearing, Committee Chairman, Representative Eddie Washington sent a formal letter of request for information to newly appointed Director of the I.D.O.C., Michael Randle. The letter requested such information as the policies and procedures for the provision of medical care and how the level of medical care is monitored; the policies and procedures for providing prisoner's and their families information about the prisoner's health; copies of the current health provider contracts; the numbers of grievances regarding improper medical care and their responses; and the I.D.O.C.'s plans on hiring a new medical director.

The I.D.O.C. answered Representative Washington's and the Prison Reform Committee's request with a three-hundred-plus page response. As of our print date, the Prison Reform Committee is still in the process of reviewing that lengthy document. When contacted for a comment, Representative Washington stressed the need for better oversight in addition to the need for compassion and health care for all of Illinois's inmates.

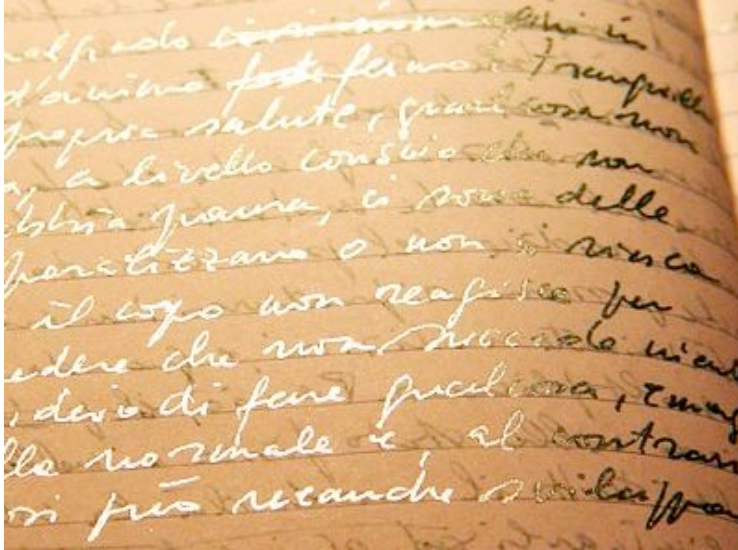
A new Medical Director has been recently chosen. Dr. Louis Shicker, former medical director at Dwight Correctional Facility, will head this department.

Stateville Speaks would like to thank you for your readership and continued support. We encourage you to send us your comments, letters, articles and creative works for possible future publication. Submissions can be sent to:

Stateville Speaks • 2237 Sunnyside • Westchester IL 60154

Essays, Letters and Insight

PROPOSALS AND PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS



To whom it may concern:

I come today as a prisoner at Menard Correctional Center in Menard, Illinois whom is serving a 100% prison term of 32 years. The purpose for my forth-coming today is because I am extremely in need of some support and help to challenge the unconstitutional standards of Illinois Truth-in-Sentence statue. The history behind said statue is one that first took place in 1995, but was later ruled unconstitutional. Nevertheless, in 1998 the same Truth-in-Sentence statue was revised and made law once again.

Though the above mentioned history is only the tip of the iceberg, the most common issue at hand is the mandatory 100% serving of sentences under the Truth-in-Sentence statue for murder offenses rather if you're a first time offender or otherwise, whom will also have to serve a mandatory 3 years of supervised parole. By sentencing individuals to such a guideline does not motivate positive reinforcement nor rehabilitation, and according to the Illinois Unified Code of Corrections under 730ILCS 5/1-1-2 which reads as follows;

The purpose of this Code of Corrections is to:

(A) Prescribe sanctions

proportionate to the seriousness of the offense and permit the recognition of differences in rehabilitation possibilities among individual offenses.

(B) Forbid and prevent the commission of offenses.

(C) Prevent arbitrary or oppression treatment of Persons or delinquents;

(D) Restore offenders to useful citizenship. Eff. Jan. 1, 1973

(Also see Illinois Constitution Article 1 Section 11)

The basic tenant of what the law "suggests" is completely ignored here but it also unconsciously reflects to the recidivism behavior of lower offenses which has caused a flood upon the Illinois prison system. I am only left to question whatever happened 'to the justice system where rehabilitation for all offenses is not implemented? Under no uncertain terms am I implying that the crime itself should be disregarded but to take in account that to sentence anyone to a 100% plus year prison term does not show that Illinois justice system has a wanton desire to restore the individual to useful citizenship. Additionally, in Illinois there are individuals who has to have the same type of crime and punishment as I or more, but who also have an incentive of only

Prison Officials Continued from Page 14

the state budget and in terms of protecting the general public's health.

A report issued by the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, the Uptown People's Law Center and Bill Ryan's Stateville Speaks, to the Prison Reform Committee, based on a review of inmate medical records, casts doubt on claims that inmate illnesses are being treated properly. It would not speak well for the state of justice in the Land of Lincoln if an audit finds what medical reviewers call a "shocking and callous disregard for human life and human suffering". Certainly the public is also likely to be shocked.

Convicted criminals absolutely should experience punishment and not think of prison as a pleasant place. However, as long as inmates keep drawing breath, they must receive appropriate care. People cannot be sent to prison and then be denied adequate health care so states the U.S. Constitution. Their punishment and their suffering must be determined by the Legislature and the courts, not by an abusive prison administrator or policy.

having to serve 50% of their time which motivates them to focus on positive reinforcement and rehabilitation. Thereto, by allowing one group of people to serve 50% and another 100% without any incentive, in its totality violates the United states Constitution under the 14th. Amendment of "EQUAL PROTECTION" as well as Illinois Constitution under Article 1 Section 2. However, though the legislators have refused to view the Truth-in-Sentence as one of a cruel objective and equally

Documented reports imply a culture of clandestine operations that punishes the families as well as the prisoners and increases suspicion that things are not as above board as the state department of corrections and the Attorney General claim.

The American Civil Liberties Union exists to speak for the public and to ensure that at least the minimum level of care is available. But it should not have to do so. State officials should only have to look at several other state departments of corrections where the ACLU has successfully litigated inadequate prison health care and the costs associated with them. In those states the courts have mandated improved medical care, mental health care and dental care at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars to the taxpayers of those states. That is in addition to the costs of lengthy litigation.

The high walls and fences around prisons are designed not only to keep prisoners in but also to hide ugly secrets. Corrections authorities should avoid the costly court battle that they are threatened with conduct internal audits and improve their operations if they are found to be wanting. It is the right and humane thing to do not only for prisoners but also for the general public. **

unconstitutional, I can only plead to you in hopes that you can assist me in showing the unconstitutional and cruel magnitude of the Illinois Truth-in-Sentence statue that will ultimately change Illinois sentencing scheme for convicted first time offenders. In closure, I thank you in advance for your time and attention towards this immense matter, and I look forward to your speedy response. Thank you once again.
Amanuel Wade
Menard Correctional Center **

Dear Stateville Staff,

Hello. I recently read an article in one of your newsletters. I am writing to add to her input: Concerning Our Mailroom in Dwight. They recently put 2 women (staff) up there. You would think that would generate a more efficient mailroom Sadly-it has had the opposite effect. They are busy trying to make sure that we don't receive mail from other inmates-they can't give us our regular mail. And on the matter of Money Orders-it is a nightmare. Our mail is but a tipoff the iceberg -on our problems in Dwight.

They tell us the state is broke-that's why our food has been cut down and given in such unappetizing wrap. Yet, The State put up bars and cameras and received computers that we as inmates cannot use. Everything they are doing is counterproductive to a safe and habitable environment. When I have attempted to speak to counselors (DEAFEARS) I'm being paranoid. And wardens (because I said so) were for the most part were pooh-poohed-swept under the rug. We, as inmates/offenders are being denied our basic connection with our world outside. They want to make sure that we have no free and easy access to the free world.

How are we (those of us going home in a short time) supposed to keep with family, friends and people we need to have access to, if our mail is in a constant state of upheaval? I thank you in advance for printing my letter, as this some of my 'lost mail'. It seems that the powers that be in our mailroom are missing along with this publication.

Many thanks, respectfully yours,
Reema Lee Asking **

Dear Bill,

I finally got Stateville Speaks, both of them. The one you just mailed and the one they have been holding back on. All of the articles are right on

time-the prices (as "Third WORLD Wages" point out) throughout the DOC, is outrageous. In some of these joints, they up the prices in the commissary every month. As pointed out in Late Mail Letters and Insights) we are lucky if we receive our mail in two to three weeks. And if it has a money order in it, it might take a month, or better to get it. Everything (as always) in Stateville Speaks is right on time.

Also, the political 'toon is making a strong statement that I heard out of prisoners mouths before. Honestly, I heard brothers, brothers who are locked up (with a boat load of time) say, "America is the freest country in the world". Malcolm X had a name for that mentality. I am enclosing two more cartoons. They are somewhat old, but they are still good.
Take Care,
Arkee**

To Whom It May Concern:

Please forgive me for writing you from a place that most people demonize fear and pass unfounded judgment on most of us within. In the early part of 1998, the truth in sentencing statute was found unconstitutional because it violated the single subject rule. And then there was a "big rush" to restore the truth in sentencing statute, and no one gave any consideration in repairing the sentencing scheme in its totality when it came to truth in sentencing and mandatory supervised release combined. The state cannot have it both ways. To serve all of your time under the truth in sentencing act, and then to come back and tell them to do additional 3 years mandatory supervised release, an enhancement is clearly unconstitutional. The best fix this extreme error by reducing the 100% to 50% sentence. The truth in sentencing statutes makes it clear, that if an individual is

convicted of first degree murder, he is to serve all his sentence 725 ILCS 5/3-6-3 meaning there's no mentioning of mandatory supervised release to be served with 100% sentences. For example, an individual is sentenced to 60 years at a 100% and then add 3 years mandatory supervised release to the sentence would be greater than the authorized by statute of 20-60, and if you sentence an individual to 20 years for first degree murder with mandatory 3 years mandatory supervised release knock off. The conviction would be no longer first degree murder. However you look at it; the truth in sentencing statute is unconstitutional. The Federal Courts understand that Courts cannot have 100% sentencing and expect to have mandatory supervised release, or parole, that's the reason why the Federal Courts sentences are 85% in order to leave room for mandatory supervised release or parole whichever the Federal Courts relies on in today's times.

Milton Jones

Voice From Inside...

We inmates have full knowledge that we have no voice, some care and

some don't care or maybe don't even know. But we thank you Stateville Speaks for your Special Edition and ask that you please keep them coming. most of us don't receive mail, and when we do get any mail

it's like getting a birthday card. I just want to let you know that your mail is the talk of the week in this prison and we can't wait to get more. Only if the people knew how many inmates that's in this prison that is innocent and or didn't receive an fear trial. Look at

all the corruption in Illinois, if that's going on, what do you think going on in the criminal system. You have retained Attorney all

through Illinois waiting to scheme someone the people that never been through the criminal system before their families become victims of scheme, and it is so bad that these cases need to be investigated because of the rush of Judgment.

A REQUEST FROM THE VOICES INSIDE

From a program viewed on CBS July 12, 2009. at 6:30pm call 60 minutes Subject "Eyewitnesses", we are requesting for your help in retaining the transcripts from that program. I am willing to pay the cost for them, Please inform me of the cost and for an copy for you also. This information needs to be brought to the attention of Illinois. It is something that you and the people of Illinois need to review, and this same thing is going on here. Please look into this. Thank you for taking the time out to read my request and may GOD BLESS YOU.

Mr. Milton Jones**

*Randle Confirmation
Hearing Continued from
page 7...*

Director Randle agreed that TAMMS is necessary for safety. He also added education could be a way out, by maintaining good behavior. The General Assembly put emphasis for the need of a strategic plan while keeping population projections in mind in order to make decisions appropriately. Director Randle was ready with what he called a Ten Point Plan. The General Assembly approved his appointment. **

Stateville Speaks

I often wonder why a company does not go into the prison and allow our prisoners to do their work instead of having American jobs go overseas. I do not see any negatives on this concept at all. Just some of the benefits are as follows:

- 1) Illinois prisoners get paid half of minimum wage; with retraining, job merit raises and promotions.
- 2) Job-retraining to get ready for parole with a resume in hand; or if you are a long-timer, self-esteem and something to get up for in the morning.
- 3) Self-esteem, worthiness.
- 4) Learning work ethics and cooperation and nurturing.

I have a daughter at Dwight and although I feel she has the best possible job at the prison, others sit in the visitor's room waiting for someone to throw away garbage so they can get up out of their seat. Many have no jobs - what is there for them to do? They are caged people!

These women have nothing to look forward to: to better themselves and help themselves become better people.

Yes, I know everyone will balk at the security issue, however, these people are motivated and in the outside world crimes are being committed, unseen, every day in

businesses. This is not something new and can be worked out.

Prisoners are not animals. Although their crimes may be heinous, they are still human beings and I feel that the morale in the prison would heighten as the crime rate drops inside. They will not have to steal, for those who do not have support in the form of money each month, as they will be paid. The same conditions as an employer has outside would apply inside. What could possibly be the downside? We are giving jobs to American citizens and not sending work overseas. What a concept?

It's tempting to slap a label on an inmate and lock her up, rather than look beneath the surface of her conviction to the complexities that shaped her for prison.

These women's treasures are buried under piles of emotional and institutional rubble, yet the treasures are there waiting to be unearthed and discovered. Our nation is enormously charitable and stubbornly unforgiving. We build and rebuild prisons, but I am more and more convinced over the years that they are not the prisons we need.

Mary
Daughter at Dwight Correctional Facility**

Artists in Prison

There are many talented artists housed in Illinois prisons and their achievements are rarely recognized. Achievements include publishing books, plays, painting, and poems, earning a high school, college diploma and paintings. Beginning with this issue, Stateville Speaks will publish achievements and prints paintings as we have in this issue. Please forward any of your accomplishments to Stateville Speaks

Marjorie Majos: I Did Not Die is the personal story that takes you on the life long journey of a shattered girl who grew up to be a courageous woman. Majos expresses the importance of God in transforming your mind. The author is a strong advocate for woman suffering with post partum depression like her.

Rich Dyches: Homeward Bound A play presented at Kennedy Center depicts a prisoner about to leave correctional institution finds his shortcomings are still in need of correcting as he prepares to face his way and confused son. Dyches has published several books, including several children books. **

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Keep it coming...

Stateville Speaks would like to thank you for your membership and continued support. Please let us know if you have been transferred so we may forward your issue.

We encourage you to send your articles, essays and artwork for possible future publications. Please continue to write. Although we may be unable to answer each of your letters we will compile and present your most frequent, or pressing issues to Director Randle for answers.

We will try and answer as many questions as space will allow. Submissions can be sent to: Stateville Speaks 2237 Sunnyside Westchester IL 60154

Creative Corner

WHEN INSPIRATION HITS...POEMS WRITINGS CONNOTATIONS...

Who am I?

A free association by a mental health patient.

Hitler was a sick man.
who am I?
Homeless people who talk to themselves on the train are schizophrenic.
who am I?
Advocates who preach recovery and that learning that to make mistakes is a part of being human are triumphant examples of those who are mentally ill.
who am I?
Institutionalized dependents on the system grow old, befuddled by their distance from friends and family, and the way things work.
who am I?
The criminally insane are locked up years, sometimes for life, for having believed God, or the devil, or even something like a man-made voice encouraged them to do their crime.
who am I?
Mood swings help some excel in areas of interest, but non-dependable communication leaves others doubtful of our worth
who am I?
Seeing things for the worse actually lends appreciation to minor good things that otherwise are unnoted, even the gloomy demeanor is left to marvel, one finds.
who am I?
Poor communication skills dwindle one's set of acquaintances, a convenient need arriving for a psychiatric services community to belong to.
who am I?
Writing is the survival skill that moved mankind from the caves to the castles

Who am I?*

(INSTITUTIONAL REALITY)

Like a fish out of water
I wish I had something to believe in
Without stimuli the human mind begins to falter
Stagnation is the name of the game
A system that refuses to educate me is to blame
Lock him up and throw away the key
An industrial prison complex that doesn't want to rehabilitate me
They'll lock you away for the rest of your days
Being confined to a cell tortures you in a million ways
A life that is truly wasted
A chance at freedom that will never be tasted
Remorse, sorrow, and change are not accepted
To the Illinois Department of Corrections I'm indebted
To know that tomorrow will be a continuation of today
It's a very hard price to pay
I believe policy will never change
Politicians need a platform and don't find it strange
So I guess I'm stuck in this situation
I'll be in prison for the duration
A harsh reality leads to depression
It's hard not to feel that way amongst all the oppression
Fences, walls, bars, concrete and steel
Cheap starchy foods that will turn you into a diabetic, fed to you at every meal
The killing of my spirit has been done in a slow deliberate fashion
All so the prison system can cash in
This place has given me so many woes
They can treat you how they want and anything goes
I wish I had something to believe in
However, politicians believe letting out long term offenders is a sin
So things will go on as they have for years
I'll be spending the rest of my life here in completion to all my fears
And in the end who really cares what happens to me
Few people know I exist and fewer care to see

So my institutional nightmare will continue
Being used as a political platform while the public doesn't have a clue
It's a systemic problem that's too hard to face
The free world hides from it and calls me a disgrace

"AN INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE!"

By Willie D. Scales

The Illinois Judicial System believe that all people who are arrested for a crime are "guilty until proven innocent".

We have witnessed "Chicago Police brutality".

We have witnessed "corruption" in our Illinois criminal courts room.

We have witnessed "coercing witnesses".

We have witnessed "overzealous prosecutors".

Who hide evidence and twist truth, who's main goal to railroad innocent people into our Illinois Prison System.**

PRISON

By Willie D. Scales

Prison is a lonely place at times.
We feel forgotten, cast away but God uses
This time to show how he never forgets
us no matter what.
He uses ministries like yours to reach us in here all the way.**

"I Need A Poem"

By Delbert Tibbs

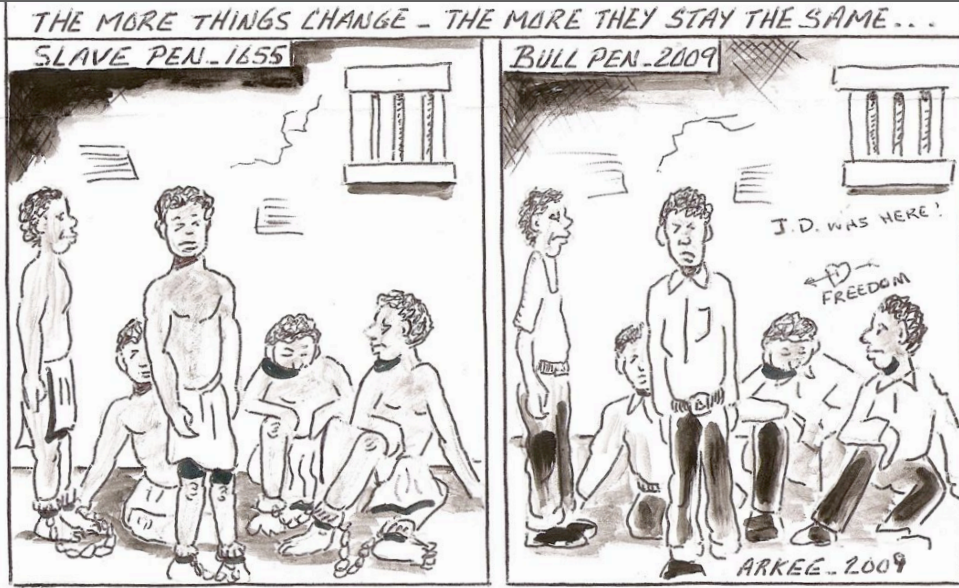
I need a poem, need a poem, a master poem once and for all
I need a poem to destroy poetry and break these iron bars
A poem to make the stars weep
I need a poem to trouble the sleep of the chained, some words and strikes of magic to be heard though all the worlds
Power sounds to hurl all wrong to appropriate places, a poem to make spaces for feeling and being

An easy but invincible poem for the sick and the lame and the maimed in mind, for the blind with eyes, for the deaf with ears, a poem of peace in war years
And a poem of war when war is Holy

For the un-born and the dead, a poem to be read when all books are blank pages, a poem for judgment day and a poem for the ages and epochs and eras

My poem, your poem, our poem for all and it is
Delbert Tibbs was on death row in the state of Florida when he wrote this poem. Eventually, he was found not guilty of the crime he was sentenced for, exonerated and released from prison. He is living in the Chicago area where he has published several books of poetry. If you would be interested in purchasing any of his books, please contact us at Stateville Speaks.**

Political Toons



There is a new Illinois CURE chapter started by Madeline Ward. Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants is a membership-based grassroots organization that believes that prisoners should be given the resources to turn their lives around. Join and help Illinois prisoners tap into this strong voice, already recognized by the United Nations.

Electronic Home Detention is the law, 730ILCS5-5/8/1. Please apply for it, and then contact or have a family member contact Illinois CURE at 312-590-6129 or 4904 S. Drexel Blvd, Chicago, IL 60615 or madeoday@gmail.com.

Join CURE and unite for prisoner rehabilitation!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

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