Welcome

By Gayle D. Tulipano

A Welcome from the Editor to Northeastern Illinois University’s Stateville Speaks

Welcome to this edition of Northeastern Illinois University’s Stateville Speaks. Though much has happened since our last issue, it seems apparent that little has changed. Gone is Michael Randle as head of IDOC, in is Gladyse Taylor as acting Director. Many feel Randle’s demise was a political one, as he was held accountable for everything that was wrong with the prisons, including the ill-received early release, or Meritorious Good Time (MGT) program. While there were no “secret” inmate releases and Randle followed the law, the political frenzy the media created was too great for his administration to overcome. While the resignation of Randle is a disappointment to many, we can only look ahead and hope that the current Director will follow and expand on the programs that have been started.

After a long and relentless campaign, the abolition of the death penalty sat on the Governor’s desk, awaiting his signature. Though the Governor admits he supports the death penalty, he does acknowledge that the current system had serious flaws. While 15 people were on death row in Illinois, many, including the Governor, know the real dilemma was whether he was willing to take away the coveted bargaining chip that the death penalty had become for law enforcement.

The Governor had asked constituents for input on helping him make this decision. Many urged him to sign the bill including former prosecutors, judges, attorneys, victim advocates, abolition groups, as well as average citizens. Though many were hopeful that Illinois was on the verge of the repeal, it must be noted that in addition to the resistance of the state’s attorney’s offices, the Department of Corrections powerful American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union presence was feared to have a greater influence in this Governor’s decision. Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan was also urging the Governor to veto this bill. Much to both our surprise and relief, Governor Quinn did indeed sign the abolition of the death penalty into law.

Another newsworthy event was the sentencing of Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge, who was given four and a half years for perjury involving his cover-up of countless acts of torture, dating back several decades. Many following this case were outraged by the short sentence considering his heinous human rights violation and wondered if this is a barometer of the overall erosion of our civil liberties. The irony is the tolerance of such abuse in our society while being quick to judge and admonish other societies for their social transgressions.

Equally perplexing, Burge’s superiors were Continued on page 6

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Restitution or Retribution? On blame and victim’s rights
Anonymous
Victim’s rights in a murder case often aren’t the rights of the victim, but instead rights of his family, friends, or society. He has the right to dignity. This is different than arguing about whether a death is in vain. Dignity is restitution, which includes finding the killer. But as for the destruction of his life? That could come through eternity in the penal system, it need not be the worst form, capital punishment. Blame is laid squarely on the killer, no ands, ifs, or buts. Poverty is NO excuse. Suspiciousness is NO excuse. Jealousy is NO excuse. Once the other, the killer sees all this attention and … he is speechless.
Yes, I took a life.
Yes, I deserve castigation and final judgment.
It is only when, even if only for an instant, he glimpses the poverty, suspiciousness, or jealousy as part of the whole human experience that he can glimpse forgiveness of himself. This probably also is necessary for true rehabilitation. No, I will never do this again. I do not fully understand how I got to that point, but I was in poverty… and psychotically. I was suspicious and unbalanced… I was also emasculated in jealousy.
And for this I deserve judgment. I hope not to be defined: killer

Keep it coming…
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Lord I’m Thankful
By India Williams
Lord I am thankful for the things that you have done.
I’m thankful for you being god and all by yourself.
I’m thankful for the peace you gave me.
I’m thankful for the joy you put in my heart.
Lord, I’m thankful for the things that you have done.
And I’m grateful for the victory we won.
Lord I’m grateful for giving you my breath.
I’m grateful that you gave me my mom back.
I’m grateful that you saved my mom’s soul to save her kids.
I’m grateful for your son Jesus who died for you and me.
I’m grateful & thankful for the wisdom you gave me on a daily basis.
Lord, I’m grateful for the things that you have done.
And I’m grateful for the victory we won.
I could go on and on about your works.
Lord, I’m thankful that soon the troubles of the world will be over.
I’m grateful that you allowed me to walk in this journey to give you all the praise in the earth.
I’m thankful at the end of this tunnel there is a light of joy.
I could go on and on about your works because I’m grateful, grateful, so grateful just to praise you lord.
Flowing from my head the issues of my heart are thankfulness.
The New Acting Director Named by Governor Quinn

Houses of Healing at Stateville
By Minister Dennis Digby

I have been involved with the Houses of Healing program since 2003. I am one of the teaching mentors in the advanced HOH class. The class is an inside mentoring program for inmates to assist others with prison life and to share our experiences with each other. We have recently also began an outside youth ministry which is very productive. Our news letter, “American Prisoner,” conceptualized by Bilal Shakur, aka Patrick Paisley, has given us a vehicle to reach back to the youth in the community and to assist them as well.

The founder, facilitator, and mentor of HOH is Chaplain Lori Welt. Lori is a Deaconess in the Lutheran Church, a volunteer for IDOC, and was recently recognized for 25 years of faithful service in prison ministry. I conducted this interview with her recently to give her the opportunity to share her thoughts and to speak about the purpose, objectives, goals, and accomplishments of the HOH program.

When did HOH begin? I started teaching Houses of Healing in 2003. I discovered the book in the late 90’s along with Marge Ruezone, a Stateville social worker at the time. Marje and I decided that it would be an excellent curriculum that provided essential tools for those doing time at Stateville. Houses of Healing provided an opportunity for individuals to experience healing and enabled that healing to happen as a community experience and within a classroom of peers.

I feel strongly that the prison system offers classes that promote healing for individuals serving out their sentences within the prison community. This kind of healing is a win/win for everyone who has a stake in the system: offenders, offenders’ families, victims, and victims’ families, along with the community at large.

What prompted the class? The lack of programs at Stateville. There were many dry years at Stateville when little if any long-term programming was offered. When I first started teaching the class, I found the content of the Houses of Healing curriculum resonated strongly with inmates in a way that nothing else had.

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In Remembrance of My Dear Mother
Dr. M. T. Burroughs
By William T. Jones

“Nothing can dim the light which shines from within.”

Please, please listen for just a moment. What you hear is silence. What you hear is silence. The voice of Dr. Margaret T. G. Burroughs, my beloved adopted mother, has been silenced by death. But there is so much that can be said and felt in silence. Speech is not the only means of understanding between two souls. It is not the syllables that come from the lips and the tongue that bring hearts together. My readers, there is something different to be rehabilitated. But to Dr. Burroughs, I was somebody who needed love, guidance, and understanding. I along with almost every other member of row never found so much hope and life every third Sunday of the month when Dr. Burroughs and Queen Mother Helen Sinclair made their visit. Pontiac’s death row was a cold and barren place, not fit for people like Dr. Burroughs and Queen Mother, but there they were in their colorful African attire. And such big smiles on their faces. Dr. Burroughs spent her time out on a Sunday to walk the gallery throughout all the elements, from heat to cold. She did it to bring a little comfort to a few lost souls like me. She made me believe in myself. In my despair, she raised her voice and told me: “My son, do you know you are a descendant of kings, you are someone and I love you. Now get to your work station and write me a poem. I will be back the third Sunday of next month and you have to have something for me.”

I kept thinking about what that old lady said and that damn poem. I woke up one morning and decided to write the poem. My first poem was about a tree I my mirror out through the bars, there she was coming down the gallery, stopping at every cell. When she made it to mine, I stuck the little poem outside to her. She took it and then smiled at me, and said, “William Thomas Jones, you are a great writer. You’re destined to write books and do other great works of art.” Even though she may have building me up, I believed her. She gave me the power to believe and the motivation to do more. She gave me success in my accomplishments.

Dr. Burroughs, through her teaching, allowed me to strive for a better life, even on death row. “She put love in my heart instead of hate, and let me tell you, I am only one of the 9 percent of people who are not rehabilitated.” Dr. Burroughs helped over her many years. I miss her, and so will the rest of the inmates in IDOC, because she was a mother to the motherless.

Please rest Dear Mother, your work is done; it is now our turn to pick up the pace.

Margaret Burroughs was a well-known Chicago artist and the co-founder of the DuSable Museum nearly fifty years ago. She died November 21, 2010 at the age of ninety-three or at other records show, ninety-five. Her home, dubbed “Little Bohemia,” was like a museum of African-American history and a gathering place for the likes of W.E.B. Du Bois and writer James Baldwin. In 1988, she was inducted into the Chicago Women’s Hall of Fame and President Jimmy Carter appointed her a member of the National Commission on African-American History and Culture. Margaret Burroughs was a familiar sight at the inmates in IDOC, because she was a mother to the motherless.

Dear Bill Ryan:

I am an individual incarcerated at the Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill Illinois. Over the years of my incarceration I have come to understand some of the workings of politics within the Department of Corrections and Stateville in general, and how it affects us as prisoners. I must say that we are truly treated as society’s throw-aways! Take the example for your own. The Department of Corrections has been interpreting the commissary statute in their favor to overcharge up to 9%. The Auditor General has called them on this twice, telling them to get the opinion of the Attorney General’s office. To this day the Department continues to add up to 9% duplicative charge.

Not only is the Department overcharging but the Stateville commissary staff are playing for overtime and utilizing their union (AFSCME) for support to do so. The commissary staff appears to be on some feathers of a strike by refusing to continue to efficiently do their job, waiting for the administration to give in to their demands for overtime pay. This affects prisoners because commissary staff intentionally dragged their performance, this has cut our trade/shop from 3 percent to something I’m not sure how many of us can use in these hard times. And with that I leave as a result of the State, I.D.O.C. or Parole Board that shouldn’t be an acceptable practice.

On another note, I for a few years regularly received your newsletter, but within the past one and a half years only received one issue. Do you now have to pay for a subscription to continue receiving the newsletter?

Sincerely,

Dear Sir:

I am writing in regards to a current problem at Menard C.C. The prison law library has not received any new case law, statutes, etc., as a result of the State, I.D.O.C. or Menard itself defaulting on their West Publishing Co. contract. This problem began essentially in the beginning to mid August of 2010 and is ongoing. I work in the law library, I have written to the John Howard Association and have filed a grievance. All are unanswered. I am writing to your organization hoping to spur someone to action. I realize everyone is broke, but that shouldn’t be an acceptable practice.

Editor’s Note: People in prison do not have to pay for Stateville Speaks, they should receive them issue a year (winter, spring, fall). Let us know if the problem continues. Also, anyone who is transferred needs to send us their new address.

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708.531.9923
prison libraries. B 2 P buys books if they cannot get them donated. 

It does not mail books to prisoners, but focuses on dropping off books, saving the cost of shipping, to stock the shelves of prison libraries with books that they are lacking. Focusing more on circulation books, the B 2 P does not buy new books and manages to siphon off of donated books alone. The B 2 P works through chapters, each one linked to a prison, which allows for more scheduled drop offs and creates a community feel to the organization.

The 3 R’s is comprised of 10 people and is focused on starting a chapter at the Carbondale location. The 3 R’s works through chapters, each one linked to a prison, which allows for more scheduled drop offs and creates a community feel to the organization.

Currently there are three established chapters of the 3 R program. The first chapter, and only functioning chapter, is the Effingham

Chapter which is focusing on Robinson and Lawrence Correctional Centers, and has not started dropping books off at this time. The Third chapter is the Carbondale chapter that is focusing on TAMMS Correction Center which has not started dropping off books either.

There are hopes of starting other chapters in the near future in Springfield, Bloomington, Dixon, and near the South Side of Chicago. The 3 R’s has a good working relationship with IDOC and is very appreciative of the cooperation it has received. For example, Decatur Correctional Center appointed a new librarian in June of 2010. We look forward to more progress.

Coming Home

By Brian Nelson

I arrived at Tamms Super Max prison in Tamms, Illinois, in 1998. I was 23 and my life was solitary confinement. I was speaking what is known as a "time out". This is when the Department of Corrections gives extra time to a prisoner, taking away his “goodtime” and then reducing “goodtime” every 90 days. This year I was released on June 29. In all, I spent one month less than 20 years in prison.

Before I could be released I had to be transferred to another prison to do a pre-start/pre-release program and counseling. Tamms has no pre-release programs to help re-integrate prisoners into society. The reason to move a prisoner from Tamms to another prison is to reintroduce that prisoner into society, which has been in solitary confinement.

In late May I was transferred to Menard Correctional Center, a maximum security prison. I was a level III prisoner at Tamms. I had property, was good in the segregation unit and issued a disciplinary investigation report at Tamms. Upon arrival at Menard, I was placed in the segregation unit/annex. The cell had two vents but no air coming out of either one. It was extremely hot.

I was placed in the segregation unit/annex. The cell had two vents but no air coming out of either one. It was extremely hot. The heat in the cell was unbearable. It was impossible to sleep because of the lack of air. I wrote several requests to the major over the segregation unit asking to be allowed to purchase a fan or receive a state loan fan and was never met with a response. After a few days I developed a heat rash over 60 per cent of my body. I received cream and medication from one of the nurses who made rounds. I asked for a sick call, but I was never seen.

I did receive a visit from my mother and sister after a week at Menard. Both were very concerned about my rash and requested to speak to the segregation major. They were allowed the meeting, but nothing was done after their discussion.

Shortly after my arrival at Menard another prisoner was brought from Tamms. He was also being released in the next few weeks.

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Stateville Speaks
C/o Justice Studies, LWH 4062
Northeastern IL Univ. / 5500 N. St. Louis Ave. / Chicago IL 60625-4969

Update on 3 R’s

By Walter Woosley

After the last issue of Stateville Speaks there is a little clarification needed on the 3 R’s program (Readers Responds Recidivism). The 3 R’s is a new secular off shoot of the Books to Prisoners program (B 2 P). There are a few major differences between the programs even though many of the staff originated from the Books to Prisoners program.

Books to Prisoners mails books directly to inmates that request books due to the lack of materials in prison libraries. B 2 P buys books if they cannot get them donated.

Locating a Case

The Underground Railroad

Locating a Case

The Underground Railroad

The recentl y started second 3 R's does not mail books to prisoners, but focuses on dropping off books, saving the cost of shipping, to stock the shelves of prison libraries with books that they are lacking. Focusing more on circulation books, the 3 R’s does not buy new books and manages to siphon off of donated books alone. The 3 R’s works through chapters, each one linked to a prison, which allows for more scheduled drop offs and creates a community feel to the organization.

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Day-to-day incarceration. When responding to your letters, we will do our best to answer your questions, but with the lack of transparency at IDOC, it is often hard to get basic questions answered, though we will keep trying. We have almost completed our transition into the University, but we are still working hard to expedite the pace of our return letters and the timeliness of the paper. Although some prison mail rooms have been gracious enough to tell us you have been moved, please let us know if you have moved.

We still get concerned letters regarding Bill’s health. No, he did not slow down; he is voluntering and spending much time in Springfield, working the important legislative aspect. We will keep you apprised if and when legislative events unfold. He remains committed to this project, as do we all.

Finally, I would like to thank those dedicated to this project, including publisher Cynthia Kobil, Justice Studies Department Chair Chris Toffolo, and Professor Emeritus Kingsley Clarke, Badar and Ryan from the Justice office and the interns who worked so hard. Most of all, I want to thank you for reading, writing to us and sharing your works and wisdom with us. Remember, when you speak, we are listening.

8. What do you think needs to be done to reduce the recidivism rate in Illinois?

The implementation of the Illinois Crime Reduction Act will require the Department, the Court system and Illinois community to work together to address the growing prison population and its associated recidivism rates. There are several task forces working simultaneously to develop implementation strategies. You can find information about each of these task forces here:

- Adult Redeploy Illinois – https://comdata/vsb/education/RANA/default.jsp

Questions – (Continued)

9. In addition to the medical care, how many inmates have written about the slow mail service. Some consider it their life-line. Is the priority on addressing and correcting this systemic health care deficit?

The American Correctional Association standard for mail service in state prisons is to allow up to 72 hours for letters to be delivered from an incarcerated person to any person outside the Department, the Court system and Illinois community. We have found that this standard is not being met. See the chart below for more information.

Public Mail: 72 hours
Non-Violent Mail: 48 hours
Violent Mail: 24 hours

Underground Railroad:

The Original Underground Railroad was started in order to lead slaves, who were brought from Africa and forced to work in southern plantations, to “freedom.” Sadly, the Underground Railroad’s trains stopped running before slavery was ended. The widespread misconception in America is that slavery was abolished after the Civil War. However, a simple reading of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution proves contrary. Straightforward and simply put, it states, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” Amendment XIII (1865)

After the Civil War, slavery was never abolished, rather it was revised. Since 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, the new slaves of America have been the prisoners of America. True, most of America’s modern-day slaves don’t toil under the hot sun picking cotton. In fact, most slaves now-days do anything at all. They are simply “warehoused” in cells producing a year-round yield for those who choose to benefit from their toil. With a little bit of imagination, the masses into thinking they were citizens of a free nation. The fact remains that the incarcerated citizens of America are the modem-day slaves, considered nothing more than property of the Department of Corrections of an individual state.

This being understood, the Underground Railroad is still needed to lead today’s slaves to freedom. In response to necessity, this newsletter has been born. It will deal exclusively with criminal law. For only through the courts can our freedom be restored. For those yearning for liberty, may the knowledge contained within these pages lead you to freedom.
Repealing the Death Penalty
One Mistake is One Too Many By Silvertre Delgado

On January 20, 2009, Illinois State representative Karen Yarbrough introduced the bill to end the state’s death penalty. Rep. Yarbrough, a death penalty abolitionist, along with groups such as the Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (ICADP) urged Illinois to get out of the business of state-sponsored killing. “Illinois should not be in the business of killing its own citizens,” Yarbrough stated in interview with Stateville Speaks. The legal system, she said, should not be in the business of killing and shift funds being used to pay for appeals and direct them into a fund for victims and law enforcement training.

During the House Judiciary II Committee hearing, there was testimony from family members of victims, former and current prosecutors, anti-death penalty groups, and a person who was exonerated. Before the former and current prosecutors was that the death penalty should be reserved for the most heinous crimes. Kevin Lyons, the Peoria County States Attorney, used the example of Andrew Kokoraleis, the last person to be executed in Illinois. Kokoraleis, he said, three others, killed and mutilated several people. "Illinois should not be in the business of killing its own citizens," Yarbrough stated in interview with Stateville Speaks. The legal system, she said, should not be in the business of killing and shift funds being used to pay for appeals and direct them into a fund for victims and law enforcement training.

During Mayor Daley’s tenure as Cook County States Attorney, his office prosecuted Leroy Orange, Stanley Howard, Aaron Patterson and Madison Hobley. All these men were convicted and sentenced to die on coerced confessions. Mayor Daley, the former Cook County States Attorney from 1980-89, told XRC Chicago, “I believe in the death penalty. . . I’ll be very frank. I know there’s been abuses in the past. Yes, there have been abuses under our system, we should really protect the outside world. Our system should be a death penalty case.” Mayor Daley is asking for the death penalty for the murder of Michael Fisk. Officer Fisk is one of five Chicago police officers murdered in 2010.

Dear State Representatives, Journalists, and Concerned Citizens...

I am writing this letter in response to the statewide elimination of the Business Management and Computer Technology classes in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The notion that minority inmates are not capable of returning to society and being able to obtain an entry level position in the work force dealing with computers is a total contradiction to the mission statement given to offenders upon entry to the IDOC. It clearly states that programs are offered to “enhance the success of offenders re-entry into society.” Not all inmates who come to prison seek to obtain employment in a field of operations dealing with manual labor. Clauses that deal with manual labor have not been cut including automotive, construction, and horticulture.

Students that are accepted into Business Management and Computer Technology are accepted based on the score of their mandatory T.A.B.E. Test Score. Being enrolled in classes that deal with computer concepts gives us the ability to learn about the ever evolving world of technology as it is increasing to be vital to the world which most of us incarcerated will surely see again.

For those of us who have made the decision to enroll in such thought provoking classes have benefited from the ever evolving world of computers. I’ve been incarcerated for over eighteen years, and since being incarcerated at Western Correction Center I’ve successfully completed Computer Technology and Business Management in an attempt to educate myself and be prepared to reintegrate back into society upon my release.

Continued on Page 9...

No One’s Paying Attention, So Nobody Cares By Anonymous

What’s going on inside the Department of Corrections? I am seeking assistance with regards to the controversial policy at Shawnee Correctional Center. What started out as a simple injustice concerning myself as an abused inmate has allowed me to realize the atrocities which occur each and every day throughout the IDOC. My situation is not uncommon and it began long ago from the beginning of my sentence.” In February 2009, I reached my destination at the Vandalia CC in March 2009. I found myself facing a lot of in-your-face-racism, which struck me, considering one would like to believe that we as a people have moved past some of these times, and racism of this degree no longer existed.

However, I found myself feeling more stressed, and repressed. This caused me to become rebellious against the employees. With a long term with a relative, I became aware of the correctional officers’ behavior, which was very disrespectful, as well as immature regarding their ability to confront and deal with human beings from all walks of life. I was respectful, as long as the human beings, and as not deserving of fair treatment as another citizen. However, because I refused to be constantly verbally abused and used as a correctional officer’s pitbull, they continued to use abusive words and racism to oppress me, in order to keep me from mentally functioning as a productive person serving his time.

I refused to allow myself to be subjected to the conditions at Vandalia CC Major Fox, and the Vandalia CC transferred me out into Graham CC, in Hillsboro, Illinois. I arrived at this institution only to be faced with conditions similar to that of Vandalia, but even worse. I have written countless letters to the John Howard Association seeking assistance with confronting and dealing with these atrocities. I have written letters and inmate grievances, as well as other documents and have had a relative send copies to the Director of Illinois Corrections trying earnestly to get their attention. I ask you, where is the rehabilitation? I am at another Department of Corrections facility finishing up my time at Shawnee Correctional Center, Where I have moved past some of the times, and racism of this degree no longer existed. I refused to allow myself to be subjected to the conditions at Vandalia CC Major Fox, and the Vandalia CC transferred me out into Graham CC, in Hillsboro, Illinois. I arrived at this institution only to be faced with conditions similar to that of Vandalia, but even worse. I have written countless letters to the John Howard Association seeking assistance with confronting and dealing with these atrocities. I have written letters and inmate grievances, as well as other documents and have had a relative send copies to the Director of Illinois Corrections trying earnestly to get their attention. I ask you, where is the rehabilitation? I am at another Department of Corrections facility finishing up my time at Shawnee Correctional Center, Where I have moved past some of the times, and racism of this degree no longer existed.

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By Cari Carpenter

When we walk to the main building she points out cracks in the sidewalk to a woman with a cane, who walks behind her. This gesture is a kind of candle in itself, I think. We become an odd, stately, counseling ex-offenders. There are counselors who teach pre-class but the participants make it and help new students entering class for the first time. Also, an individual will get out of the class that he or she put into the class. The more someone invests of self, the longer the return. I facilitate the class but the participants make it happen. Peer accountability is everything, we all need others to help keep us in line and remain accountable. I expect students to participate in all the required elements or move on. There are correctional institutions that are putting people on the Waiting list who want to join the program and we cannot afford to keep someone around who is not working as hard as everyone else.

Do you see genuine changes within individuals? Yes, all the time. Some folks are ready to make changes and some are not; like anywhere else, people who have given up trying back into society - none of this was given to me. How many other prisoners are walking out the front door of a prison without the tools to adjust in the community?

Health Care Needs (Cont.)

Such complaints served to concentrate Illinois' officials' attention on a couple of related questions. How does the state care for the elderly? And what kind of services can the state afford? Indeed, prison officials everywhere are worried, though they're shelling out an increasing number of taxpayer dollars to questions: What kind of health care should the state provide for its inmate population? And what kind of services can the state afford? These days, the state has stopped paying for self-rehabilitation and has taken the position that prisoners should work. For no state prison has a particular view point that is too much prison or move on. There are too many people on the waiting list who want to join the program and we cannot afford to keep someone around who is not working as hard as everyone else.

Despite various issues with overcrowding and increased healthcare expenses, according to a 2000 study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, the average daily spending in 1998 on health care for each inmate ranks Illinois second lowest among the states at $31.54.

Ultimately, this is not a problem that can be solved with panels and constant article discussions. The problem will only be amended by legislative action and implementation. Maria Summa of the Illinois Nurses Association, a lobbying group for state nurses, says privatization could have worked in the short term to solve nursing shortages. But as it has grown, she says, the goal of better health care for everyone has been lost. There still exists the day for credit that applies to nonviolent cases such as drug sales, theft, forgery, prostitution, and drunk driving. Prison halls all offenders together. Over the past 30 years I’ve had cellmates whose release dates were coming in a matter of months. Most women in prison are mothers and grandmothers who may not exist physically in the home but do very much exist in the spirit of the home. Children are at the forefront of every aspect of their lives. They provide in ways that are imaginable and unimaginable. I have written senators, state reps, magazines and other newsletters that aspire to helping prisoners, promoting change and the possibility of release to everyone who has served a substantial amount of time and can show self improvement, behavior change, scholarly achievements or growth. I am proposing a letter to President Obama because he spoke on equality and was considering the possibility of release when he took office.

The only kind of fights worth fighting are those you’re going to lose, because somebody has to set the record and lose and lose until someday, someone who believes as you do.

－LF Stone －

And Justice For All? (Cont.)

Fund of Chicago violated Illinois' pension by allowing Burge to continue to receive his pension. While many members of the public and state officials like Attorney General Madigan believe they are seeking justice, members of the board that voted to let Burge keep his pension disagree. They argue that Burge's crimes do not relate to any police-related duties when these crimes were allegedly committed. While many members of the public and state officials like Attorney General Madigan believe they are seeking justice, members of the board that voted to let Burge keep his pension disagree. They argue that Burge's crimes do not relate to any police-related duties when these crimes were allegedly committed.

Madigan seeks to have Burge return the funds he has received since his conviction. Time, however, is running short on this, as Burge is scheduled to report to prison on March 16.
Are Inmates’ Health Care Needs Met?

By Justin Carter

contact, mother-to-child, having sex with an infected person, being tattooed or pierced with an unsterilized tool that was used on an infected person, getting an accidental needle stick with a needle that was used on an infected person, using an infected person’s razor or toothbrush, sharing drug needles with an infected person. Most people have few, if any, symptoms after the initial infection, yet the virus persists in the liver in about 85% of those infections; persistent infection can be treated with medication.

Knowing that he had not received any outside medical care in 35 years, he questioned the medical uterine cleanliness and wondered why he is just being diagnosed. He said that since his incarceration, his blood has never been drawn other than for medical purposes. In the letter he stated, after receiving his diagnosis, he had not seen a doctor in several months, and he is very concerned about his well being. This letter raised a concern at Stateville Speaks about efforts to provide medical care in Illinois prisons.

Are inmates’ health care needs met behind bars in Illinois? This question was posed Monday afternoon to a panel of three experts. Dr. Michael Puisis, chief operating officer for Cernix Health Services, Benjamin S. Wolf, associate legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, and Frank H. Euston, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The lunch-time event was co-sponsored by John Marshall Law School student chapter of the American Constitution Society, the Chicago Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society, and the ACLU of Illinois. Although a number of important questions were posed to the panelists, the panel did not set forth an outline of actions that will be taken to address the growing problem.

One writer has described the problem this way: Picture a pristine waiting room with two patients lying quietly on cot. Next door, a doctor checks someone who has a sore throat, while a nurse treats a man who complains of stomach pains. Just down the hall, patients fill in and out of a doctor’s chair for regular check-ups. Then picture another waiting room. This one is overflowing with patients, sprawled out on cots, across the floor and into the hallway. Nurses check on several men who complain of headaches and chills, but they can’t be treated because the staff has run out of aspirin. The grooming of the sick can be heard down the hall, and some have spent days waiting for attention.

These two imagined scenes would seem to come from vastly different locales, but critics contend they can both be found in Illinois prisons run by the Illinois Department of Corrections. While some Illinois inmates receive quick treatment from well-trained medical units, others, housed in prisons that lack adequate resources, must endure inferior care. In fact, for the past few years, a number of prison nurses have begun to complain about poor health services in some of the state’s prisons. They maintain that at some prisons private contractors don’t provide enough supplies to treat inmates and restrict treatment for inmates with serious health problems. Further, they charge that when medical staff complain, they’re rebuffed, even punished, for insubordination.

Dear State Reps – (Cont.)

The purpose of incarceration aside from paying a debt to society is to “correct and rehabilitate” the offender who broke the law. How can we be rehabilitated when those who are made to eliminated programs that assist inmates in computer literacy, job preparedness, and the vital tools needed to obtain employment once released from prison?

Being able to enroll in a college course that offers you the ability to enhance your own understanding of academic achievement is priceless. Having instructions and a college learning how to do work that requires manual labor. I am honored to have been given the opportunity to attend College Technology and Business Management classes that Lakeland College provided inmates at Western Correctional Center. I thank both my instructors and Mr. Fullman for teaching me the fundamentals of computers and business management. I also would like to thank Mr. Billingsly and Lakeland College for making me a chance to further my education beyond the high school level.

In closing I hope that state representatives, journalists, and the other men thought it would be an opportunity to get to know the youth before they make decisions that will bring them to prison. Many youth and young adults prison life in a way the men know is a myth—a lie that leads many youth to prison or an early death. The newsletter is a way to reach these kids and help them to think as they read the stories of men who found out too late what street life and gangs lead to. Two high schools in Chicago have used the newsletter in their classrooms and were so impressed with the content that they had continued. The newsletter is an important resource for those involved on the articles, reflecting on the material and how it affected their thinking. Another newsletter for younger kids, ages 7 to 13, is in the works.

What obstacles are you faced with in order to keep the program going? Raising awareness and funding through the churches and community to support the classes; this is an ongoing process.

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United States. Though IDOC’s official statement has been that they provide an alternative diet for inmates with these allergies can you confirm this? If so what is the alternative? What process must an inmate go through to prove that he has health problems due to the diet? We cannot comment on pending litigation.

11.) Almost everyone agrees that more programs are needed:

Programs to prepare those entering society and programs for long-term prisoners so they are more than just warehoused and as a probable incentive to good behavior.

Costs are almost always sighted as an obstacle. As representatives from a state teaching university, who can we speak with to try and implement some free volunteer programs? What can be done to hasten this process? Safety is often the other concern sighted, yet aren’t the majority of inmates in for non-violent offenses? Does most inmates strive to obtain training and perhaps use it for employment both inside and out?

IDOC operates under union staffing vs. volunteer constraints, so we continue to work to provide more programming for inmates while adhering to union contract rules and stipulations. A little more than half the prison population is incarcerated with non-violent offenses, and the Department makes every effort with available resources to provide these types of volunteer service programs prior to release to the community.

14.) What is your response to the article that sighted 1.5 million dollars were paid out to workers’ compensation claims at Menard? Is that being rectified?

Workers’ Comp Claims are handled by CMS and the Worker Comp Commission. Therefore, although the Department has been in communication with these agencies regarding these cases, we have no authority to resolve these cases.

15.) We are hearing about this Strategic Plan. Can you briefly explain the plan? When will it be available?

We will be presenting to the Administration next week. Public disclosure will follow the Governor’s Office review and approval.

While we think Director Taylor for the taking for the time to meet with us, we feel there are still many questions and issues that need clarification. Please give us time to contact constituents and opinions on what information, if any, you gained from this interaction. The Department must agree that I did not either.

Reactions from unlocked and courtroom members varied. Mark A. Clements, an alleged torture victim of Burge, stood in front of the press with hands shaking and tears in his eyes. “This is a smack in the face once again to the African-American community. This is a complete injustice. These people stole my [bleep] life. I hate to tell you the truth. I sat in a prison cell, and prayed for this day! I was sixteen years old! This is America! Sixteen years old! What are we going to do about other people sitting in these prisons?” When asked how he felt about the verdict, Clements stated, “I’m relieved that finally at least one of these people is now going to finally feel the pain. My daughter is twenty-nine years old. I missed all of those years with my daughter, sitting in them prison cells for a crime I did not commit. I do not feel sorry for Jon Burge. That’s all I have to say.”

The defense was clearly upset with the sentence. Asking for only 18 months behind bars, defense attorneys expressed concern at the court’s decision. One of Burge’s attorneys, Richard Beuke, believes this trial sent a bad message to the public. “I’m concerned that this type of sentence, what happened today, may cause lawyers to think that it’s open season on suing the police,” Beuke said.

Prosecutors and several other legal professionals believe some good has finally been done “Justice should have come sooner,” said U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald. “But justice delayed isn’t justice completely denied.” In fact, Judge LeFKow issued a sentence longer than that stipulated by law for the crimes of perjury and obstruction.

However, a question still remains as to why nothing was done sooner? Chicago’s current Mayor, Richard M. Daley, was Cook County State’s Attorney at the time the previous allegations were taking place. In 1982 a doctor reported on that lawsuit, Illinois Department of Corrections, was investigating allegations of torture... Continued on Page 13…

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