

GRATERFRIENDS

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

Promoting a humane, just and constructive correctional system and a rational approach to criminal justice since 1787

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Helping Others Affects You in Unexpected Ways

by Kevin F. Johnson, #1424280, Green Rock Correctional Center (Va.)

I commend the honorable Bill DiMascio on the well-written and thoughtful article entitled, "Lifers Find Ways to Give Their Lives Meaning, Even Behind Bars." (*Graterfriends*, January 2012). It is an important subject that deserves to be explored, especially with the increasing lifer population in this country.

As a lifer, I have spent 25 years in prison for a murder I did not commit. Through the years, my concentration has remained focused on how I can help myself and why I must terminate my incarceration.

At some point, I realized that helping others had a positive and immeasurable impact on my spirit, self-worth, and good character.

Putting that aside, I discovered one day that I could use my education to teach prisoners to use computers, prepare resumes, perform certain types of research (i.e., legal, general, etc.), write letters, and complete forms.

This was my transformation.

Rather than focusing solely on my needs, I began concentrating my efforts on teaching others what I know.

Working in the education department as a clerk and teacher's aid enabled me to help even more prisoners. Over the years, I began to notice the positive impact I had made in the lives of so many individuals. After acknowledging the fruits of my labor, I continued to give more and more of myself to helping others learn.

At some point, I realized that helping others had a positive and immeasurable impact on my spirit, self-worth, and good character. Without question, I am quite proud of the legacy I have established for myself.

Upon arriving in Virginia nearly two years ago, I continued to work as a teacher's aide and law library clerk so that I could help those in need. Despite my circumstances, I refuse to turn my back on anyone who is worthy of my time and attention.

My message to all sisters and brothers serving life sentences (and non-lifers): challenge yourself. Find out how you can make a difference (positive change) in another human being's life. Do yourself a favor and put aside your own needs and desires for a change and find out how you can help someone today. Try it. The reward? Priceless.

On a side note, I am proud to announce that my education, determination, and persistence has resulted in a successful appeal. Stay tuned. Meanwhile, stay focused, stay strong, reach out to help someone today, and be sure to keep hope alive.

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From the Editors

As you can see, we are back to printing a 16-page news-letter — and we couldn't be happier!

Marissa Boyers Bluestine of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project has written an article regarding the findings of the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Wrongful Convictions (to the right). We look forward to hearing your thoughts about the recommendations that came out of this committee. You may find those on page 14.

We are very happy to feature some books in this issue (page 13), something we haven't been able to do for some months. We are featuring a review of Aja Beech's *Beccaria*, an anthology of poems and essays from individuals affected by crime — some who are in prison and some who have lost loved ones. The review is written by Reginald S. Lewis from SCI Graterford. You may also be interested in Christopher Zoukis' new book *Education Behind Bars: A Win-Win Strategy for Maximum Security*. Zoukis is currently incarcerated in Petersburg, Virginia.

Reesy Floyd-Thompson reminisces about her husband's favorite breakfast and how she and her family continue to remember him even though he is not physically there (page 10).

Finally, Sam Krakow has written a very personal story of his reintegration into society in his "From the 'Doc'" column (page 4). We hope that all of you can take encouragement from his words. Reentry isn't easy, and can be very stressful, but it can be done successfully.



News

GUARDING AGAINST WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

by Marissa Boyers Bluestine

Eleven people have been released from Pennsylvania prisons after DNA testing proved their innocence. The true perpetrators of only two of these crimes have been found. Since 1973, there have been 273 DNA exonerations across the nation. In 55 percent of these cases, the true perpetrators of the crimes were never caught. In the other 45 percent, the true criminals committed additional crimes while the innocent languished behind bars. When we convict the wrong person, all of us are harmed.

Recently, the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Wrongful Convictions issued its final report, calling for major updates to Pennsylvania's criminal justice system to help prevent wrongful convictions. Formed in 2006, the committee considered various proposals to prevent wrongful convictions. The report takes an exhaustive view of the problems and causes of wrongful convictions, and contains recommendations drawn from best practices already in use in law enforcement agencies across the United States. Many of these recommendations are grounded in more than a quarter century of scientific research. (See *Committee Recommendations*, page 14.)

An independent report from 14 members was also released, arguing that the majority report did not "reflect

(See *Wrongful Convictions*, continued on page 14)

GRATERFRIENDS

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We reserve the right to edit submissions. Original submissions **will not** be returned. We **will not** print anonymous letters. Allegations of misconduct **must** be documented and statistics should be supported by sources.

Letters more than a page in length (200 words) **will not** be published in their entirety in Mailroom or Legal Chat Room, and may be considered for another column. All columns should be no more than 500 words, or two double-spaced pages.

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If you have a question about *Graterfriends*, please contact Mindy Bogue, Communications Manager, at 215-564-6005, ext. 112 or mbogue@prisonsociety.org.

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MOTHER MARY

by Jon E. Yount, AC-8297, SCI Greene

Sixty-year-old Mary, disabled and impoverished, languishes in Philadelphia, wishing to talk to her son. He is incarcerated in a distant Pennsylvania prison. Neither she nor her son read or write well enough to communicate through letters. Medical problems prevent her from traveling to his prison. She can only communicate by phone. However, the DOC's imposition of a 44.4 percent socially regressive commission on Pennsylvania inmates' telephone contacts with families (*Prison Legal News*, April 2011) is a nearly impenetrable barrier for Mary.

The DOC contracts with Global Tel*Link, the telephone provider for prison inmates in more than half of the states. Mary's son cannot call her "collect" because she cannot afford a mandatory pre-paid account with GTL for \$6.25-per-minute collect calls, as GTL would charge her a 20 percent service fee for each \$25 payment she would invest in such a pre-paid collect call account.

Her son may buy pre-paid telephone minutes (\$5.15 per 15-minute call) at the prison commissary, but he has little or no personal income. Because the DOC requires that inmates purchase no less than \$10 (plus \$.60 sales tax) of pre-paid telephone time, his prison account is inadequate.

Mary's only option is to send \$10 to her son to pre-pay for two calls, but she learns that maintaining inmates' familial relationships is not a priority of the DOC.

Research confirms that: 1. Phone companies do not compete to offer lower phone rates to inmates' families, but rather to provide larger kickbacks to prisons; and 2. Such commissions are not controlled by state or federal regulatory agencies, so the only limit on the maximum rate for prison phone calls is the top rate of kickback permitted by a service contract between GTL and the DOC.

The DOC directs families to send funds to inmates through JPay, a Florida corporation that charges an additional \$4.95 if contracted by phone, or \$6.95 if by email, to deposit \$10 into a prison account. Mother Mary, \$14.95 poorer, awaits a call from her son. However the system has not yet finished fleecing her!

The DOC seizes 20 percent of each entry of wages, gifts, etc. into an inmate's account as payment of court-imposed fines, costs, and restitution. Thus, upon Mary's \$10 being transferred from JPay to her son, \$2 is automatically deducted – as well as an additional 10 percent for payment into a \$60 per offense victim compensation fund. With only \$7 of that \$14.95 actually deposited in his prison account, Mary's son is unable to comply with the DOC's \$10 minimum purchase of pre-paid telephone time. Notably, if Mary could afford to send her son \$25 to overcome such deductions, JPay charges would increase to \$6.95 via email or \$7.95 by telephone!

If you care for those like Mary, it is time for education, advocacy, coalition building, and community organizing. Identify those family members who are most like Mary and who are willing to serve as plaintiffs. Then help organize a legal battle against this rip-off!

DOES THE CONSTITUTION APPLY TO UNDERCLASS PEOPLE?

by Lorenzo Johnson, DF-1036, SCI Mahanoy

For 16 years, I've proclaimed my innocence to deaf ears. Every other day, I've witnessed new faces of injustice. Shortly after my wrongful conviction, I filed a direct appeal to the Pennsylvania Superior Court. One of several claims I raised was, my conviction was based on insufficient evidence, my appeal was denied but one of the panel of three judges filed a dissent and did not agree with the majority who went with the decision my trial judge made. This one judge said that I was innocent and he saw no evidence that linked me to this crime. Upon reviewing the dissenting opinion, I felt that on my next appeal, I would include it as support to my claim in hopes the judges will look into the case instead of just cosigning what my trial judge opinion stated. Well, that never took place.

For years I sought relief through various claims of my constitutional rights being violated. For every case I researched that got relief, there were 1,000 cases that were denied even when they showed the violation. Many times, cases were denied because of minor errors. So, basically

your constitutional rights can be totally ignored. Recently, I read an article about Troy Davis and the following was stated: "Every day the leaders of America tout the glory of the Constitution and the system while they systematically shred the Constitution and devour the poor." That statement couldn't be more on point. Our Constitution is selective at best.

It took me exactly 16 years to have the necessary representation and the right panel of Federal judges for my innocence to finally come out. I was one step away from my last Federal Appeal (Supreme Court). A panel of three voted two to one that the evidence used to convict me was unconstitutional. Insufficient evidence is equivalent to a verdict of Not Guilty, barring a retrial. I was immediately scheduled to be released, but as usual, the prosecution argued against my release until they exhausted their right to cross appeal (which was temporarily granted). Keep in mind, it was ordered that I be released ROR/BAIL pending their appeal. My sentence being vacated by the highest federal court in Pennsylvania, the Third Circuit, the prosecution filed for *en banc*, asking for a full panel of judges to rehear my case.

After a couple of weeks, the Third Circuit denied the

(See Constitution, continued on page 12)



From the "Doc"

by Samuel L. Krakow

READJUSTING TO LIFE AFTER PRISON

The readjustment process following imprisonment is one that involves a host of psychological conditions. Considering the fact that most, if not all of them, are risk factors for recidivism, I thought it would be an appropriate topic for my column. Rather than writing dry facts, I decided to write about the process from a more personal point of view — my own reintegration into society.

I'm writing this column on the precise anniversary of my release from SCI Mahanoy seven months ago. Looking back, it was a very bumpy road that started with great expectations. My release brought a sense of freedom that

Parole is very stressful, so don't do it alone. Seek help.

was giddy and slightly manic as I switched from an environment of complete control to one of wildly varied choices. However, this sensation was tempered by realities I could not avoid: unemployment, financial insecurity, and an impending divorce. Despite the fact that I had friends and family supporting me from day one, I felt overwhelmed.

I realized quickly that I was like many parolees – I'm an addict with the tattoo of "felon" forever imprinted on my permanent record. This fact made looking for a job a nightmare, as this label closed me out from all sorts of professional pursuits. Luckily, I found the Pennsylvania Prison Society and the Philly ReNew program. I quickly embraced their "Humble and Hungry" philosophy and dived into the economic reality of being in my situation – any job in America today is better than unemployment.

It took six months of dead ends to find employment as a valet at a local hospital. Despite my eventual success, the rejections led me perilously close to returning to prison as a parole violator. I straightened out quickly. I know a few good friends now back in the DOC who weren't as fortunate.

Now I'm looking for ways to improve my situation. Together with my father, I've started an extensive Amazon-based publishing company for medical e-books. That may not be your line of work, but something else will be. I never met an inmate who didn't have a natural talent. Use it. It will be your future if you can harness it appropriately.

What does this personal story mean to those facing impending release? Parole is a time of great stress. Unemployment looms large and your self-esteem can take a severe beating. Don't do it alone. Seek out help. And once you establish a job, keep looking for new ways to shine. You can make it.

DEATH ROW

February Birthdays

Shawnfatee Michael Bridges
DQ-0272, GRA

Kenneth T. Brown
DQ-1006, GRN

David Chimel
AY-5667, GRN

Carmen Camato
AY-2878, GRN

Anthony James Dick
HF-2262, GRN

Daniel Dougherty
EK-7623, GRN

John Eichinger
GL-3402, GRN

Francis Bauer Harris
DL-0556, GRN

Antione Ligons
DX-1687, GRN

Bernard McGill
CJ-8281, GRA

Dennis L. Miller
DL-1249, GRN

Ricardo Natividad
DL-3766, GRA

Walter J. Ogrod
DC-4162, GRN

David R. Ramtahal
HK-0148, GRN

Cletus C. Rivera
HS-2164, GRN

Saharris Rollins
AY-8832, GRN

Daniel Michael Saranchak
CM-8666, GRN

Christopher Smith
FX-4208, GRN

Mark Newton Spotz
DA-4586, GRN

Ralph T. Stokes
AY-9034, GRN

Sam Thavirak
BN-6754, GRN

Robert Wharton
AY-6874, GRA

Connie J. Williams
EY-4783, GRN

Terrance Williams
AY-3626, GRN

**GRA = SCI Graterford
PO Box 244
Graterford, PA
19426-0244**

**GRN = SCI Greene
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, PA
15370-8090**

If you do not want your name published, send a letter to Graterfriends each year you do not want it to be included. Be sure to note your date of birth.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

Below are the solutions to crossword puzzles printed in this issue and the previous issue of *Graterfriends*.

January 2012

S	L	O	T	P	A	S	P	I	N	E	
P	O	N	Y	L	I	T	A	R	E	A	
U	B	E	R	A	L	E	P	O	S	T	
D	E	S	E	R	T	E	V	E	N	T	S
	S	P	E	E	D	E	R				
T	I	P	G	A	S	T	E	N	T	S	
I	D	E	A	U	S	E	D	E	E	T	
N	O	R	T	H	A	L	I	B	A	Y	
	L	A	W	Y	E	R	S				
S	P	L	A	S	H	C	R	A	M	P	S
P	I	E	S	A	P	T	N	O	R	I	
A	P	S	E	L	I	E	D	R	A	G	
M	E	S	S	E	N	D	S	E	T	S	

February 2012

F	I	S	T	D	I	D	A	T	O	M	
O	D	O	R	I	C	I	R	O	L	E	
G	L	U	E	R	E	S	P	O	N	D	S
S	E	L	E	C	T	C	A	U	S	E	S
	S	A	I	L	O	R	S				
C	N	N	W	E	E	K	E	L	P	S	
U	P	O	N	R	A	T	D	I	R	E	
E	R	R	O	R	D	R	Y	B	O	X	
	T	I	S	S	U	E	S				
A	F	R	I	C	A	S	T	A	M	E	N
B	R	A	C	E	L	E	T	C	A	V	E
R	O	V	E	A	P	E	K	L	E	E	
A	M	I	S	D	A	D	S	E	N	D	



Legislative Highlights

Ann Schwartzman
 Policy Director, The Pennsylvania Prison Society

The PA General Assembly reconvened on January 17 for the second year of the two year 2011-2012 session. Here are several criminal justice bills that you may find of interest. Please note that this list is current as of January 11, 2012, before the General Assembly reconvened.

BILL No. PRINTER No.	DESCRIPTION	CHIEF SPONSOR	PPS POSITION
HB 934 PN 2166	Requires everyone to show picture ID before they are allowed into a voting booth. This bill may impact individuals without driver's licenses, including senior citizens, people who use public transportation, young people, and individuals just released from prison. (Passed House; passed Senate State Government Committee; now in Senate Appropriations on 12/14/11. We expect a vote on this very soon.)	Rep. Daryl Metcalf R-Butler County	Oppose
SB 1183 PN 1821 Act III	Extensively revises provisions relating to registration of sexual offenders, pursuant to federal mandate; makes editorial changes. (Approved by Governor Corbett 12/20/11; is now Act 111 of 2011.)	Sen. J.C. Orie R-Allegheny and Butler counties	Oppose
SB 1337 PN 1767	Establishes the Pennsylvania Commission on Conviction Integrity to investigate cases of those wrongfully convicted and to help prevent future wrongful convictions. (Referred to Senate Judiciary 11/10/11.)	Sen. Greenleaf R-Bucks and Montgomery counties	Support
SB 1338 PN 1768	Amends Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses), 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) and 44 (Law and Justice) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. Addresses issues leading to wrongful convictions, such as tampering with and preservation of biological evidence, informant testimony. Provides for post-conviction DNA testing and comparing with CODIS data, recording of custodial interrogations, and more. (Referred to Senate Judiciary 11/10/11.)	Sen. Greenleaf R-Bucks and Montgomery counties	Support
SR 6 PN 1833	Establishes a bipartisan task force and an advisory committee to conduct a study of capital punishment in Pennsylvania and to report their findings and recommendations. (Adopted 12/14/11, 38-12.)	Sen. Greenleaf R-Bucks and Montgomery counties	Support

UPDATE ON PHILADELPHIA'S BAN THE BOX CAMPAIGN

Ban the Box (The Philadelphia Fair Criminal Record Screening Standards Ordinance), went into effect January 13, 2012. This new law prohibits employers from asking about criminal convictions on job application forms and in the first interview. It also prevents them from making hiring decisions based on arrests or criminal accusations that do not result in a conviction. The ordinance impacts employers with 10 or more workers in Philadelphia (but there are a few exemptions). This should help formerly convicted individuals promote their skills instead of defending their past when hunting for a job. Stay tuned for more details regarding how we are helping the City of Philadelphia implement this law.



Legal Chat

ILLEGAL SPLIT SENTENCES

Here is some legal information that may assist those who have received an illegal sentence and/or illegal split sentence. I assert that this information is from my legal files and research that I have saved, and it is about time that I share it with others.

Issues of subject matter jurisdiction cannot be waived [Melograne, In re, 812 A.2d 1164 (Pa.2002)]. Appellant contends that his illegal sentence can never be waived, and may be reviewed *sua sponte* by the Superior Court [Com. V. Archer, 533 A.D2 1051 (Pa.Super.1998)].

42 Pa.C.S.A. §9721 is the only authority available for a trial/sentencing court to impose a split sentence. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court holds that, with regard to sentencing, 42 Pa.C.S.A. §9721 generally states that a court may choose among various sentencing options, such as probation, confinement, or intermediate punishment, unless “a mandatory sentence is otherwise provided by law,” [Com v. Koskey, 812 A.2d 509, 511 (Pa.2002)].

So, any of you fellow inmates serving a sentence of probation that runs consecutively to a mandatory minimum sentence should challenge it in a Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) Petition. You have an illegal split sentence.

Statutory authorization for a split sentence of total confinement and consecutive probation is not available to the court because a mandatory minimum sentence has been provided by law. If this happened in your case, argue that the trial/sentencing court had no jurisdiction to impose probation to run consecutive to the total confinement, and that the sentence imposed is illegal and should be vacated. (Please review the above supporting case law and statute.)

Lindsay P. Shuler
EY-9595, SCI Mercer

JPAY PROCESS IS ILLEGAL

In response to the letters concerning the new JPay procedure (*Graterfriends*, September 2010 and December 2011): It's without dispute this new process is unfair. However, the “unfairness” premise is unpersuasive. Change occurs through litigation. An objective examination beyond the smoke and mirrors will manifest the illegality of the JPay process concerning the money orders.

It's without dispute that money is property. Money sent

to us in JPay's name is an illegal “conversion” of our property for delivery and deposit in our account through a non-consensual “bailment” process. This process is a new regulation and change in administrative agency policy governed by the Commonwealth Documents Law (42 P.S. 1201 et. seq.).

A “conversion” is the wrongful possession or disposition of another's property as if it were one's own, willful interference with the property inconsistent with the owner's right; it deprives the owner of use or possession of the property [Baram v Farugia 606 F.2d 42, 43 (3d Cir 1979) (Blacks Law Dictionary)]. A “bailment” is the “delivery of personal property by one person to another who holds the property for a certain purpose under contract” (Blacks Law Dictionary). When the DOC creates new rules, it must provide public notice (4S P.S. 2101), get approval by the Department of Justice (4S P.S. 1205), and file the new rules via the Legislative Reference Bureau (4S P.S. 1208), or the regulation is invalid.

The JPay process concerning the money orders is illegal because it constitutes the tort of unlawful conversion of personal property through a non-consensual bailment contract, based upon an invalid administrative agency regulation. Research, exhaust grievance procedure, and file a property tort in court. A complaint without initiative is like whistling in the wind.

Frederick T. Ray III
GF-2852, SCI Camp Hill

DID YOU WITNESS MY ASSAULT?

My name is Mr. Kevin Rex, and I was a prisoner at the Philadelphia County Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility on February 6, 2011. I was housed on A2-POD-4. That morning, at approximately 8:45 a.m., I was assaulted by a CO who is now charging me with aggravated assault. I am asking anyone who witnessed this incident to please come forward on my behalf by contacting my public defender immediately:

Mr. Brian Collins
Defenders Association
1441 Sansom St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102
267-765-6373 or 215-568-3190

My trial date is February 6, 2012, so I need to obtain statements as soon as possible. Your time, assistance, and effort to clear me of this wrongful prosecution would be truly acknowledged and gratefully appreciated!

Thank you.

Kevin Rex, #110801
Carbon County Correctional Facility

TEAM: TOGETHER EACH ACHIEVES MORE

Does it really matter who's responsible for the creation of proposed Senate Bill 1153 (SB 1153)? The self-promoting aggrandizement among us keeps us wallowing in our own ignorance. While wasting time and energy on attributing responsibility, we continue to ignore the fact that, while helpful, SB 1153 is merely a mirage of hope.

In an April 24, 2011, *Philadelphia Inquirer* article, Senator Greenleaf attempted to clarify the primary purpose of the 60-Day Rule, i.e. the 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) amendments. He said, "The primary purpose of the 60-day rule was to avoid frivolous appeals, which we were flooded with ... The State Attorney General requested the timetable." Well, this is where our problem starts. Senator Greenleaf is a member of the legislature, while the attorney general is a member of the executive branch of government.

The constitution of Pennsylvania establishes three separate, equal, and independent branches of government: the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Each branch is granted certain exclusive rights and powers. The presumption of constitutionality must give way when there is any encroachment upon one co-equal branch of government by another. The complicit nature of Senator Greenleaf and then-State Attorney General Thomas W. Corbett's apparent concession encroaches upon the separate, distinct, independent, and "exclusive" powers of the legislative and executive branches of government.

The 60-Day Rule is but a miniscule part of our problem, for it is merely subsection to a subsection under the PCRA, i.e. 9545(b) (1), (2). The legislature amended the PCRA to enact a one-year time limitation to collateral petitions. A PCRA court is bound by the requirements of Section 9545, and can only entertain a petition for Post Conviction Relief if the petition is filed within one year of the date the judgment becomes final. This renders courts incapable of performing their constitutionally assigned duties beyond one year of the date judgment becomes final.

According to Section 9545, the time of accrual commences whether the injury is discovered or not. A defendant must not only scour the existing record for any issues (injuries), but also has the additional burden of raising any extra record claims that may exist. Many collateral appeals require further fact finding, extra record investigation, and where necessary, an evidentiary hearing. A defendant must perform this herculean task within one year of the date the judgment becomes final, except as otherwise provided by statute.

The fame seekers can have their light. We simply want our freedom.

Sabree A. Sharrieff,
CC-3542, SCI Frackville

REPORTER WANTS TO HEAR PRISONERS' EXPERIENCES

The Guardian, a UK-based newspaper, is running a series on American prisons and the impact of incarceration on individuals and communities. They want to hear from inmates, their families, prison guards, and anyone whose life has been impacted by the system of incarceration.

If you would like to contribute to the series, please write to the reporter's address ASAP:

Sadhbh Walshe
The Guardian
PO Box 1466
New York, NY 10150

NEW SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN WITH INCARCERATED LOVED ONES!

Life Support for Women with an Incarcerated Loved One is a new support group for women looking for a safe place to share feelings and concerns about incarcerated family members. The group meets the first Tuesday of every month, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the Pennsylvania Prison Society: 245 N. Broad Street, 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107 (Race-Vine station, across from Hahnemann Hospital).

For more information:

- Mason Barnett, 215-564-6005, ext. 106 (Prison Society)
- Desiree Cunningham 215-758-5877 or 215-787-2525 (Support Group questions only)



Mailroom

WHY THE HASSLE TO GET OUR MAGAZINES?

There is a rapidly growing trend of initially and systematically denying minority inmates their “urban” publications. Examples include *Straight Stuntin’*, *Craze*, *Assets*, and *Gorgeous*, among others. It may seem like a small matter at the moment, given what’s going on in the “real world” and compared to other hot prison issues, but if we keep allowing individuals to deny us our magazine publications without just cause, what else will they start denying us? I hate to even imagine. No! The time is now to spotlight this issue, especially at SCI Coal Township. They are attempting to deter minority inmates from ordering urban publications by consistently denying them and forcing us to get their decisions overturned on appeal from Camp Hill.

These publications do not contain nudity, depictions of violence or narcotics use. Let’s stand and unite in this common problem.

Carl Hill, JR-5005
Michael Peterson, GC-4660
Walter Harris, GN-5486
SCI Coal Township

Editorial note: We are checking with SCI Coal Township for an answer regarding this issue. We will let you know what we find out.

NEW POLICIES DON’T SAVE MONEY

I find it both ironic and disingenuous that the first two new policies from the new Secretary of Corrections, Mr. John E. Wetzel, are an inmate meal ticket and the reduction from 10 to eight free envelopes a month. All this is supposedly due to the DOC budget cuts – the very same DOC that recently paid Virginia and Michigan approximately \$42 million per year to house 2,180 Pennsylvania prisoners. Not to mention that you don’t need to be a certified public accountant to figure out that the lion’s share of the funds appropriated to the DOC goes toward salary of the various staff members (guards, counselors, kitchen, unit managers, secretaries, etc.). Yet when it comes down to penny pinching, it falls on the backs of the prison population.

Then, of course, there is the hypocritical aspect of these two policies: 1) the kitchen food staff actually throws away food and gives the pig farmers more food than they provide to the population; 2) many men and women throughout the DOC don’t use all or any of their 10 free envelopes every month. Therefore, when all is said and done, neither of these two new oppressive policies truly

save much money – especially when Governor Tom Corbett’s current state budget calls for a 52 percent decrease in education spending and an increase of \$115 million for the DOC.

George (Saleem) Griffin
JK-5015, SCI Retreat

RE: HELP FOR NON-SMOKERS IN PRISON

In response to Mr. Buyna’s letter in the October issue of *Graterfriends* about not liking the smell of cigarette smoke: Out of all the things that happen in prison you complain about something we smokers enjoy and are permitted to do. Smoking is very common in our society, so give it a break. For you to say we are “hopeless addicts” is absurd. Thanks for labeling us. Maybe we should raise a gripe over something you like and try to get it banned. We have a right to smoke if we want to. You can very easily put in a request for a cellmate who is a non-smoker. Do so if it’s that much of a problem for you. There’s your solution. Maybe you could also take a look at the true nature of *Graterfriends* and realize it’s not called *Mr. Buyna and Friends*. You can’t change other people, so focus on yourself. If you don’t like the smell of tobacco or cigarettes in general, then don’t smoke and stay in your cell. Give us “hopeless addicts” our right to smoke, and you enjoy your glorious non-smoking life.

Russell J. Nelson
JL-4723, SCI Forest

SMOKING INDOORS IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE

This is a response in opposition to Mr. Erwin’s reprehensible response found in the December issue of *Graterfriends*. Mr. Erwin represents a selfish and egocentric disposition of the prison tobacco puffing addict. Fact: Smokers are rarely seen smoking outside their cells, mostly due to other inmates seeking freebies. Fact: Secondhand cigarette smoke coming in the vents 24 hours a day causes non-smokers to constantly sneeze, cough, suffer from runny noses and eyes, burning eyes, nose and throat, swollen sinuses, and sleep deprivation, just to mention a few adverse effects. Fact: the surgeon general has confirmed that secondhand tobacco smoke, even in small amounts, causes immediate and long-range physical and psychological health problems to nonsmokers who inhale the 3800 components and 43 carcinogens (poisons) found in tobacco smoke. Fact: It is a criminal offense to smoke in your cell, pursuant to 35 P.S. §637.2, i.e., Clean Indoor Air Act, which carries a \$250,000 fine for the first offense, yet prison officials fail to even issue misconducts to the offenders. Fact: The DOC is legally liable for damages sustained from breathing in contaminated smoke-ridden air within the housing unit.

Jay Yunik
EK-5560, SCI Fayette

GIVE SMOKING A REST

I have to address the recent comments and misunderstandings in October's "RE: 'Help for non-smokers in Prison.'" There was absolutely no intention to insinuate a personal attack on any one person; however, the person who responded certainly staged a personal attack against me and the initial writer of the above mentioned article.

None of the information in my letter was rhetoric. It was certainly NOT insincere or grandiloquent language directed at any individual.

"Dear Abby" is a syndicated columnist who has an extensive background in valid information on major issues. My criticizer failed to comment on the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, and a multitude of other organizations that I just didn't mention, who all agree that tobacco, smoke or smokeless, is a cancer-causing agent. Add in all the fertilizers and chemicals used in the production of cigars, cigarettes, and chewing tobaccos, and users are ingesting POISON. I want to see anyone defend that!

Smoking is NOT a right, but an option; often a cell-partner is not an option, and a request slip is not going to change that. Any **Class A** carcinogenic is deadly to humans and animals. Most smokers who claim that they can quit any time are in denial. They are addicted to nicotine. Since being incarcerated for over 30 years, I have spoken to many – and I mean **many** – addicts, and they all think quitting smoking is harder than kicking a heroin addiction. Many have stated, "I wish I could quit, but I can't."

Non-smokers do not need a "right" to protect themselves from a poison that is being produced by willing smokers. I do not want a total ban on tobacco products. I do not want a U.S. Constitutional amendment banning tobacco products from society, either. I would rather they find a way to prevent wrongful convictions.

All I can say is quit smoking! Cigarettes cost too much, and I know for a fact that they are not good for anyone.

Allan D. Buyna
AP-8203, SCI Forest

KNOW THE TRUTH

If you're going to be returning to Allegheny County on probation from the Pa. DOC and are in need of an acceptable home plan address for State Probation and Parole, plan on spending some time at the Allegheny County Jail!

The Allegheny County offices of State Probation and Parole automatically tossed me into the county jail after turning down my home plan 24 hours before I maxed out in 2009 and I've been here in county jail ever since. After a year of detention they are willing to put you in Forcus House, where you would share a room with two others, each paying \$450 a month. But to get that you need to

pay two months up front and get someone to vouch that they'll pay your rent if you can't – or, according to jail officials, you need to have a job before leaving the jail.

You are entitled of course to a hearing for the technical violation they hit you with for having no approved home place. But I've gone in front of my judge 13 times and have yet to have a proper hearing. And of course, Probation refuses to ask the judge to sentence me – I'm homeless! If I get sentenced it gets appealed and kicked to the state courts, and nobody wants that!

I have asked to be sentenced. Allegheny Court of Common Pleas has yet to grant that request. I have filed for a *habeus corpus* hearing, but they have ignored that as well. Numerous due process rights have been violated over and over.

The Public Defenders office in Allegheny County is worthless so you best have a good lawyer and lots of money to get anywhere. Over half of my probation has been spent locked in total confinement at the Allegheny County Jail.

I'm homeless, I'm poor, I'm old. I'd like my freedom but it isn't going to happen.

Good luck.

Edward C. Stout
#109087, Allegheny County Jail

FEDERAL PROBE WARRANTED

In a recent article in the *Philadelphia Public Record*, State Representative Ronald Waters said that the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division is opening a federal probe of Pennsylvania's prison system. Although two specific prisons were identified, SCI Pittsburgh and SCI Cresson, Rep. Waters intimated that the probe would eventually cover all the state's prisons.

Pennsylvania is in dire need of an outside unbiased probe into the corruption and abuse toward prisoners at all the state's prisons. Prisoners who have suffered human rights abuse during their incarceration should contact this federal agency with specific facts and documentation of the abuse at the hands of correctional staff. Don't let this opportunity pass.

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Office of the Assistant Attorney General, Main
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dale Gardner
BI-5107, SCI Albion



Think About It

WHAT ABOUT CHANGE?

by Zechariah Thompson, HV-3696, SCI Albion

I wake up in a ghost town, among a thousand men who have let themselves fade, including myself. We are passed by guards as nothing but a number at their disposal. There **is** rehabilitation, but it is not in these places that offer mostly deprivation of one's needs and the blatant degradation of one's character.

Men and women who failed in society's clichés get thrown into these places. We are given rags to wear and miniscule wages for labor that pays well outside prison. We continue to keep these prisons up to code and we get no recognition for it, just a pat down search afterward. All of this brings meaning to the terms "modern slavery" and "oppression." Furthermore, we are still paying for it when we get released.

There are attorneys, ex-attorneys, and district attorneys who have shows on television where they tell people that we shouldn't be thought about and that our cries shouldn't be reckoned with. A lot of people on the receiving end are very — **very** —impressionable. They will probably never have a moment where they will understand that we're not all evil and that we are buried alive!

Well, ladies and gentlemen, we can keep thinking like this: Writing articles in prison publications; hoping one day an agency will come and sanction these prisons' structures for corruption, misconducts, etc... Or, we can start at the root of the problem. We can drop the cool guy/tough guy complex and strengthen our noble qualities. Let's illuminate the creativity that lives inside us and strengthen our knowledge, so that we can gain wisdom to pass on to future generations. Let's stop trying to look good and sound right, and do good and be right.

If we just took the time to close our mouths and open our eyes and ears for a day, we can see and listen to the senseless conversations and see the narrow paths that people take. Once you have taken it in, you'll then see that our lives and our generation are in trouble.

It starts with us.

It ends with us.



Mrs. GE-6309 Time

by Reesy Floyd-Thompson

APPLE PANCAKES

My husband loves breakfast. We often ate breakfast for dinner, pancakes, eggs, juice — a full buffet. He also loves eating breakfast at Shoneys, sometimes just the two of us, sometimes with my family (my two sisters, their husbands, their kids, Mom, me). Actually, our first wedding is at Shoney's, goofing off with the family, me, complete in a napkin veil. On every trip to his favorite eatery, he had another one of his favorites — apple pancakes (Ick!). I am a basic eater. I don't like my foods to touch, nor do I mix flavors. Fruit is to be eaten as fruit, not on top of, inside of, or mixed with anything else. Hand me an apple, I will eat it, put it on top of pancakes...not happening. I am a no butter, syrup only, kind of girl; butter pecan syrup, if I'm feeling adventurous.

Since his incarceration, my family and I have been to Shoney's several times. Despite an empty seat at the table, his place is always filled. I keep at least one picture of him with me at all times. Whenever we are all together at breakfast, I take out the picture, set it up on the table, and place a plate of apple pancakes in front of it. We all take turns "speaking" to him.

At the end of last month's visit, as my mom said her goodbyes, I overhear her telling Nivens that his plate of apple pancakes is waiting. It's my job to remember his likes but for my mom to remember is akin to saying "We miss you." In that moment, I feel as warm and gooey as those glazed, slathered apples.

Whenever I have my version of pancakes, I think about the apple version and what it represents — a time when we were a complete family, when I didn't have an empty seat beside me, when I didn't have to speak for him, when our love was just sweet without the added bitter.

I look forward to breaking the fast of not having Nivens home. He lists a trip to Shoney's on his upon-freedom-to-do list. This time a picture of him won't be necessary because Nivens will be with us and we will be complete.

I want apple pancakes.

Reesy Floyd-Thompson is the founder of Prisoners' Wives, Girlfriends, & Partners (PWGP). For more information about this group, please write Reesy at:

PWGP
P. O. Box 14241
Norfolk, VA 23518



H.O.P.E. FOR C.H.A.N.G.E. INMATE ORGANIZATION

by Rodney Derrickson, CW-6633, SCI Forest

H.O.P.E. for C.H.A.N.G.E. (HFC) is a newly approved inmate organization at SCI Forest. H.O.P.E. for C.H.A.N.G.E. stands for: Helping Other Prisoners Evolve for Confined Humans Aspiring New Goals Endlessly.

The HFC is geared toward promoting social awareness, growth, development, and change in one's character and outlook on life through reentry and outreach programs, while improving the quality of life for SCI Forest's population and giving back to outside communities.

The mission can be accomplished by offering real leadership committees, self-help classes (such as job training, reentry planning, parenting, communication skills, legal information, cultural studies, health and wellness, creative writing, and entrepreneurship), advanced activities, mentor programs, building staff and inmate dialogue, outside guest motivational speakers, banquets, outside community feedback and involvement, and fundraising projects supporting the HFC and other charitable organizations.

This is an organization that I hope our younger brothers will join because they are our future leaders and their involvement and ideas are needed in order to move forward.

Real change takes a collective effort from all who really want to see change happen.

Inspiration comes in many forms, and what better way than to join an organization full of positive people!

I personally wish to thank SCI Forest's administration for its approval and support of the organization.

Special thanks to: Superintendent Debra K. Saunders, Deputy Superintendent for Facilities Management Eric Tice, and Deputy Secretary for Pa. DOC Randall Britton.

SUPPORT REFORM FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

by Jeffrey Neal Saxberg, DX-5126, SCI Camp Hill

It's with great dispirit that I write this article. Hungry minds are suffering malnutrition from those who sit high upon their pedestal perches. These are the very same people who, from electoral platforms, preached that the key to success is education.

Our children are failed by society and its defunct system. Now these children find themselves incarcerated within our ever growing penitentiaries, lacking the skills they need to succeed in life. Created and run by people that have yet to understand, prison alone cannot fix what the people have broken.

When crime is reported to have decreased on our streets, why is Pennsylvania leading the country in incarcerating its citizens? It costs less to educate, yet we continue to build prisons and incarcerate. The State Judiciary Committee reported these same things to the public in late 1990 during its witch hunt for those responsible for the Camp Hill, Rockview, and Graterford riots.

Our legislators have fallen short by continuing to enact laws to increase prison terms. They ignore and reject proven and innovative solutions. Judges' hands are tied by these laws. The reason for this is nothing more than to advance personal positions and create profits for the elite.

Responding to a climate of fear, our get tough approach has proven to be a monumental failure. I find it ironic that Auditor General Jack Wagner praised State Repre-

sentative Thomas Caltigirone and Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf for their efforts to improve our system, as reported in the *Harrisburg Patriot* on January 28, 2011.

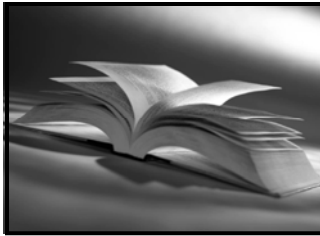
Budgetary woes are fueling decisions hiding behind a guise that they truly want to do the right thing. Was it not our "hero" Senator Greenleaf that wrote and supported measures that put us in the situation we now find ourselves in? Why the change of heart, Senator?

An explosive situation exists behind these walls and fences. Twenty years have gone by and we have done nothing more than report deficiencies. Why do we continue to turn our backs on a problem — and most importantly — our children? We are still being led by the nose down the same paths, knowing well the outcome.

Sucked dry by big government, you're getting what you paid for. Politics has no place here. District attorneys, unions, and our legislators tell us they know what is best for us and how to raise our children. Am I the only one who sees a problem here?

The solution is simple. Support true reform for the right reasons. Without education, we will repeat history. Society needs to get involved and not react to false fears. Support term limits and exercise your right to vote those out of office who do not get the job done! We have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Time to put up or suffer the consequences. Those of us in here are not the only ones who need to take responsibility for our actions, or lack of them.



Literary Corner

THE SACRED ROSE

by *Bernie Ryan, AP-6058, SCI Mahanoy*

There is an old Native American belief that the Great Spirit in its infinite wisdom blessed Mother Earth by creating colorful Roses for all occasions of the heart. This sacred flower of the plant people is said to represent:

White Rose – True Love
Red Rose – Love and Passion
Purple Rose – Love at First Sight
Orange Rose – Desire
Pink Rose – Friendship
Yellow Rose – Friendship and Joy
Black Rose – It's Over

Some Native American Elders say that the Roses are soft-petaled messengers of the four winds: with the power to express deep sentiments without the necessity of spoken words.

Thorns are Nature's Bear Claws that defend a Rose's awesome delicate beauty; while it's heavenly perfume fills the air with reverence giving balance to both life and death with a sweet alluring fragrance.

For the Rose by its nature is truly a gift and blessing to two-leggeds on the Great Medicine Wheel of life for all occasions of the heart. Aho!

Constitution, *continued from page 3*

prosecution's appeal and issued their mandate with instructions to the Middle District Federal Court to issue the writ. The same day, my legal team petitioned the Middle District Federal Court for my immediate release on ROR/BAIL. In turn, the middle district court gave the prosecution two weeks to reply. As predicted, the prosecution waited to the last day to file. A stall tactic to stretch out my unconstitutional detention. The prosecution stated I was a danger to society and a flight risk. This assertion is without basis. I have been judged innocent, if anybody was a flight risk it was the prosecution. Under these circumstances, the court has no basis to withhold its grant of the writ.

Under the Federal Rules and Procedures, I fall under Unconditional Release (Unconstitutional Insufficient

PHILAGRAFIKA PRESENTS DOING TIME | DEPTH OF SURFACE

Spanish artists María Jesús González and Patricia Gómez have created large-scale prints, photographs and related videos during their artist residency at the now decommissioned Holmesburg Prison in Northeast Philadelphia. The artists, neither of whom has exhibited previously in the United States, have a collaborative practice grounded in art conservation; utilizing a modified version of a technique known as strappo, they work primarily to preserve the surfaces of buildings — the veritable “skin of architecture” — by detaching a wall's paint with glues and fabric and transferring that surface paint, in its entirety, to a new canvas. In Philadelphia, they will work at the old Holmesburg Prison before it is demolished, creating large-format “printings” of drawings, paintings, and graffiti left by former inmates.

The artists' prints are a physical archive of the prison cells — including paint, drawings and markings left by the inmates who lived there. The project culminated in the Depth of Surface exhibit at Moore College of Art and Design.

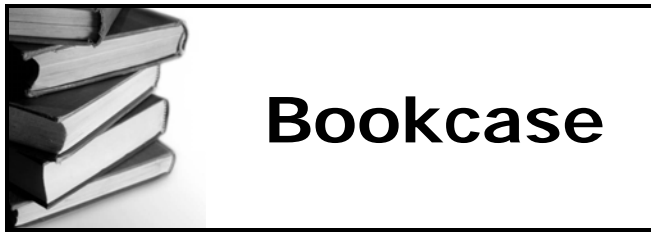
Holmesburg prison was built in 1896 following the widely replicated wheel and spoke plan designed by John Haviland for the Eastern State Penitentiary in 1829. It was in use for nearly a century, finally closing its doors in 1995.

Doing Time | Depth of Surface is on exhibit from January 28 through March 17, 2012, at Moore College of Art and Design. It explores urban archeology and past lives of historic Holmesburg Prison and is the first project since the successful Philagrafika 2010: The Graphic Unconscious.

*For more information, visit
<http://www.philagrafika.org/gomez-and-gonzalez.html>*

Evidence). The prosecution expressed its intentions to seek review by the U.S. Supreme Court of the Third Circuit's decision. Now they are asking that I be detained until the outcome. There is nothing left for this court to decide, other than if it wants to impose conditions for my release that I volunteered to subject myself to. The U.S. Supreme Court grants review in one percent of the 8,000 cases presented each year.

Despite the prosecution's unsubstantiated allegations of flight and concern for public safety, this court could fix bail conditions addressing them. Close monitoring by the U.S. Marshal Service, up to and including electronic monitoring, can certainly account for the prosecution's concerns. I state all of the above to say, if I'm entitled to relief under the Constitution, why when I fall in that category does it not apply to me automatically?



**BECCARIA: A CHAPBOOK ANTHOLOGY
BY AJA BEECH**

A LABOR OF LOVE AND LIFE

Review by Reginald S. Lewis, AY-2902, SCI Graterford

The first image you notice is the half facial features of an attractive young woman with smooth, soft, flawless skin, a cute little button nose, full, luscious pink lips, and stylish, flaming red hair. Against an aqua blue back drop, a sparkling blue eye stares out hauntingly. Flip over the front cover to the back and see dollops of bright red and gold paint from the intricate patterns that complete the outlines of the hair, brow, nose, cheeks, mouth and chin. Two images (the first of Dierdre Johnson, murdered by her fiancé; the second a painting of former death row inmate Marilyn Dobrolenski by Mary DeWitt) join at the book's seam.

In *Beccaria*, a chapbook anthology, poet/artist/activist Aja Beech brilliantly assembles a talented cast of death row exonerees, family members of murder victims, death row inmates, and poets that recount stories of beauty, tragedy, loss, love, and innocence lost. We can hear their voices — both near and far, far away. Children live and breathe in immortality. The grief of dotting grandmothers flies up from these pages and seeps into every crevice of your being.

In her beautiful essay, Jan Williams writes: "The grief of losing my boys isn't something that I will ever 'get over.' I will always miss them and mourn the milestones that I will never get to share... How do I put myself back together and figure out what to do next?"

Prolific artist Elizabeth Johnson contributes a beautiful image of an angel, which compliments her poem entitled "Cora." The angel, bathed in a beautiful glow, peers down, wings aflutter, her soft hand outstretched — "...as it snatched her daily hope from the ruins... ..across the ragged edges of the rooftops-flying... flying... flying away."

Seven-year-old Devon Williams poses in his astronaut suit. How could he have known that he'd now be orbiting in his own space — just beneath the Seventh Heaven? Poet Delbert Tibbs, a Death Row exoneree whose heart-breaking story was featured in "The Exonerated" also makes an appearance here. In a prose poem that flows with musical assonance of surrealistic jazz, in "I Need a Poem" his pen croons: "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 though we thank the Leeway Foundation for providing the author with a small grant that made this anthology possible, budget constraints prevented Ms. Beech from reaching out to far more readers than she desired. Perhaps a generous patron of the arts is willing to donate money, or a fund drive can be launched to make it possible for more copies of *Beccaria* to be printed and distributed to schools, libraries, universities, teachers, and at-risk youth. After all, we don't have to wonder what other powerful works of beauty Aja Beech could bless the universe with.

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Aja Beech is a poet and board member of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Beccaria was made possible by a Leeway Foundation Art and Change Grant, www.leeway.org.

	<p>Education Behind Bars: A Win-Win Strategy for Maximum Security by Christopher Zoukis is the latest resource in the field of prison education. Over 500 pages, it is the most comprehensive title on the market. At \$19.95, it is also the least expensive. To order, go to major online retailers like Amazon.com or BN.com, or write to:</p> <p>Sunbury Press 2200 Market Street Camp Hill, PA 17011</p>
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Wrongful Convictions, continued from page 2

true science” and cast aspersions on law enforcement. The independent committee acknowledged that adjustments and improvements can be made to benefit all citizens, but does not see the need for systemic changes to the criminal justice system.

Many states, localities, and law enforcement agencies are adopting the proposed changes in the majority report. Across the country, eyewitness identification procedures are evolving in order to fairly prosecute the guilty and not implicate the innocent.

State Senator Stewart Greenleaf recently introduced two bills to implement the committee’s proposals. Senate Bill 1338 would create a Committee on Conviction Integrity. This committee would look at any proven exoneration case to determine what factors led to the wrongful conviction, and if changes to Pennsylvania’s criminal justice system could prevent future injustices.

The other bill, Senate Bill 1337, calls for needed improvements to methods used by law enforcement. Many of these improvements mirror those in the report from the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Wrongful Convictions.

When an innocent person is convicted of a crime he did not commit, we are all affected: the wrongfully convicted individual usually spends years in prison, the victim gets no closure, and the public must deal with other criminal acts from a true perpetrator who escaped justice.

Convicting innocent people is not a new phenomenon in our society, but with efforts like these, it need not be a permanent reality.

Marissa Boyers Bluestine is the Legal Director of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

- A law requiring lineups and photo arrays to be conducted by someone who does not know who investigators suspect
- A law requiring the electronic recording of police interrogations and confessions
- State, rather than county, funding of defense services for the indigent, with adequate compensation for attorneys
- Electronic recording of statements made to law enforcement by informants
- Requirement of a hearing in capital cases before admitting testimony from an informant that is incriminated by the accused
- Extension of the length of time to petition for post-conviction relief (the “60 Day Rule”) to one year
- A law requiring the accreditation of forensic laboratories used in evidence collection
- A statutorily created forensic advisory board
- A law requiring the state to pay damages to those wrongfully imprisoned
- A statute enabling automatic expungement of the criminal history record for those found eligible

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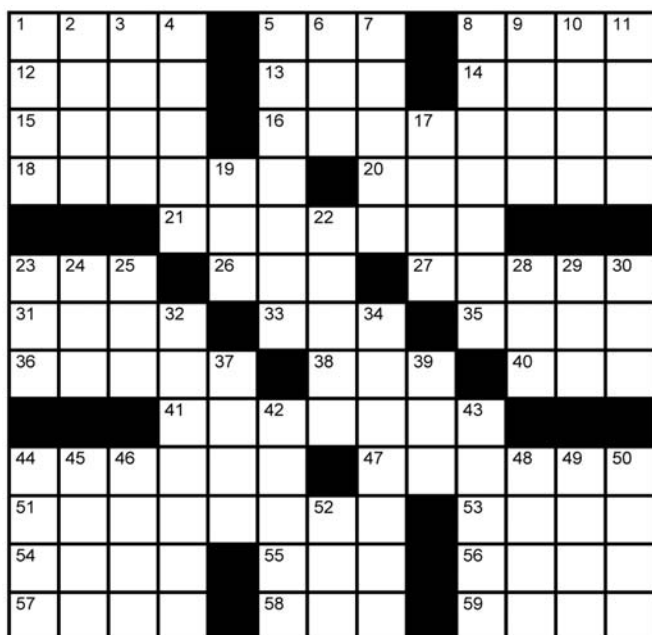
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Across

1. Handy weapon?
5. Accomplished
8. Part of a molecule
12. Scent
13. Here for Henri
14. Part in a movie
15. Crazy __
16. Answers
18. Choose
20. Triggers
21. Cruise crews
23. Ted Turner's news channel
26. Itsy-bitsy
27. Sea weeds
31. "Once __ a time..."
33. Remy, the chef, was one
35. Awful
36. Boo-boo
38. Use a towel
40. Use 1 across
41. Purse items
44. Nile's continent
47. Flower part
51. Wrist wear
53. Natural hideout
54. Wander
55. Empire State Building scaler
56. Famous abstract painter, Paul
57. Friends for Fernand
58. Pop
59. Button in an email window

Down

1. Visibility reducers
2. Not working
3. Music genre
4. They're in a forest
5. Not as clean
6. Diamonds, slangily
7. "Saturday Night Fever" music
8. Stimulated
9. A great deal
10. Ye __ Shoppe
11. Soldier's meal
17. Name of a famous avenue
19. Crow call
22. Shows the way
23. Signal
24. Commercial-free broadcaster
25. __'wester
28. Women's __
29. Not amateur
30. Gender
32. Sees
34. Confided in
37. W's Secretary of State
39. Still
42. Caesar or Waldorf
43. Certain tackles
44. __cadabra
45. Word on a gift tag
46. Sitar master Shankar
48. Stag or stud
49. All square
50. Call for
52. Clean air grp.

Easy Crossword #12 by Dave Fisher (puzzles.about.com) For solution, see page 4.

Education Behind Bars Newsletter from Christopher Zoukis is a bi-monthly newsletter devoted to promoting prison education. The newsletter is available for free to incarcerated individuals. To request a free subscription, write to:

EBBN
 PO Box 69
 Berryville, AR 72616

Those outside of prison may download a free copy from www.prisoneducation.com/ebbn/.

Children, continued from page 16

- Caregiver and support services – expand community-based resources, streamline guardianship programs, improve data collection and sharing, protect the rights of parents in prison to participate in dependency proceedings, and support effective mentoring and afterschool programs for affected children.
- Family and corrections interaction – encourage contact visits between parents and their children at all state and county prisons and jails, provide reduced charges for telephone calls to their children, arrange visiting hours that accommodate schedules of schoolchildren, support programs that enhance parenting skills.
- Reentry and reunification planning – eliminate penalties that make it more difficult for individuals to acquire housing, jobs and education; create case management positions for reentry planning at each correctional facility; support evidence-based family strengthening programs inside and outside the walls of correctional facilities.

Rep. Cherelle Parker, a Philadelphia Democrat, and Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, a Montgomery County Republican, introduced the resolutions in their respective chambers. Ann Schwartzman, Prison Society policy director, chaired the study group that included Prison Society member Dr. Rosemary Gido and Prison Society Advisory Council member Rev. Dr. Wilson Goode.

We often mouth sentiments such as, "Our children are our most important asset" and "Our children are the future." More frequently, though, we tend to ignore the traumas that devastate their unformed psyches.

Let's hope this is one study that doesn't become a dust collector like so many others. The recommendations are solid and will make a big difference in the lives of those otherwise "invisible victims."

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THE LAST WORD

New Study on “Invisible Victims” of Incarceration: Children

by William M. DiMascio

Executive Director, The Pennsylvania Prison Society

What is done to children, they will do to society.

—Karl A. Menninger, American Psychiatrist (1893-1990)

They call them “invisible victims” or sometimes, “collateral damage” of mass incarceration. They are the children of incarcerated parents and it is estimated that there are 1.7 to 2.8 million of them in the United States. The numbers vary from study to study, depending on the criteria used — some include only parents in state prisons, others also include parents in local jails.

The phenomenal growth in these statistics paralleled the rise in the use of imprisonment for non-violent (mostly drug) crimes, which included unprecedented numbers of women.

These statistics were drawn together as part of a recently completed, two-year study by an advisory committee of the state House and Senate. The report is entitled, “The Effects of Parental Incarceration on Children: Needs and Responsive Services.” (It is available through the Joint State Government Commission in Harrisburg or online at <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/resources/documents/ftp/documents/children%20of%20incarcerated%20parents.pdf>.)

As the title suggests, the 152-page report delves into much more than just numbers. The House and Senate resolutions that brought about this study charged the committee “to study the effects of parental incarceration on children of the incarcerated parents; to recommend a system for determining and assessing the needs of these children, services available to them, and barriers to accessing those services; and to report recommendations to the General Assembly.”

Members of the study group were keenly interested in the impact on the kids of those arrested and incarcerated. The report cites findings from a 2002 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

“While the initial arrest causes nightmares and flashbacks in young children, long-term psychological effects may include insecure attachments; internalizing problems such as anxiety, withdrawal, hypervigilance, depression, shame and guilt; and externalizing behaviors such as anger, aggression and hostility towards caregivers and siblings.”

Three policy concerns evolved from the study. One recognizes the dangers posed by separation of parents and their children and urges minimizing periods of separation. Another acknowledges the difficulties caused by disruptions in care giving and encourages policies that increase stability for the child. The third advocates minimizing the economic hardship inevitably associated with the incarceration of the parent(s).

The 38-member study group issued recommendations in the following areas:

- Arrests and judicial proceedings – heighten awareness of police and courts to the existence of minor children at the arrest site and accommodate the needs of the children during lengthy court proceedings.

(see Children, continued on page 15)