

# STATEVILLE

## SPEAKS

VOICES FROM INSIDE...

SEPTEMBER 2006

## New Position for Dee Battaglia

Bill Ryan

**W**arden Dee Battaglia was promoted August 14 to a newly created position, Chief of Assessment and Programs for Maximum Security Prisons. Battaglia will also represent IDOC on the HJR 80 Committee. At first blush, it appears that the appointment of Battaglia to a high-level position is a major step forward by the IDOC and the Blagojevich administration. The Blagojevich administration has drawn praise for the establishment of Sheridan for drug offenders. By dramatically improving services in maximum-security prisons, Illinois will become a leader in Corrections in the country. However, changing the culture and increasing programs within the IDOC may be the most challenging job in state government. It will require commitment, resolve, and money. Battaglia will face serious obstacles. Many within the IDOC and current prison culture mitigate against positive programming, and money for programming is scarce.

Battaglia will need the unqualified, active support of Director Walker and the Blagojevich administration. Battaglia does not have direct authority over the wardens so it will be up to Director Walker to insure programs are implemented and up to Governor Blagojevich to insure money is available for programming. It is one thing for the



Governor and Director to talk the talk, and another thing to walk the walk.

Battaglia was the first woman and the first African American female in the United States to head a maximum-security prison. She is a 30-year

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# Coverage

WHEN YOU NEED IT

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## Status of Long-Term Prisoner Study Committee Appointments

### Committee Appointments

#### Michael Madigan - Speaker of the House

Jorge L. Montes - Chairman, Prisoner Review Board  
Rep. Art Turner  
Bill Ryan - Westchester

#### Tom Cross - Minority Leader in the House of Representatives - 2 vacancies

#### Emil Jones - Senate President

Sen. John Cullerton  
Sen. Kwame Raoul  
Geraldine E. Tyler - Olympia Fields

#### Frank Watson - Senate Minority Leader - 1 vacancy

Sharon Beeler - McLean

#### Office of the Cook County Public Defender

Edwin Burnette, Cook County Public Defender

#### State Appellate Defender

Katheryn Saltmarsh, Office of the State Appellate Defender

#### Attorney General - 1 vacancy

#### Governor - 1 vacancy

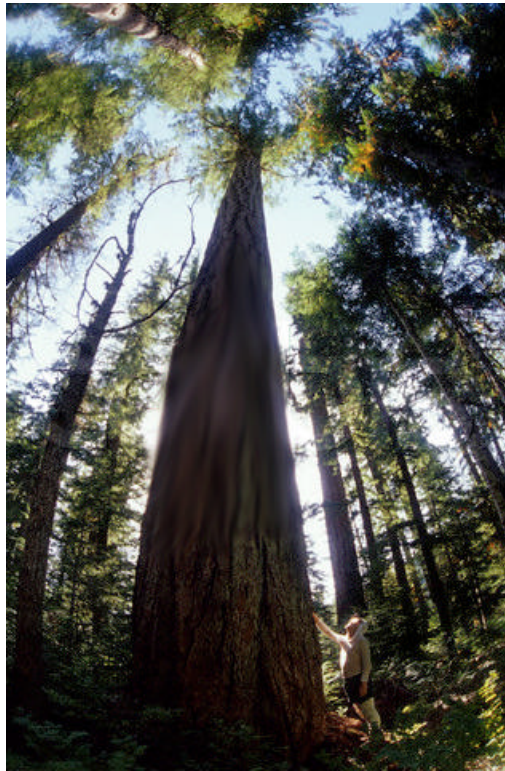
#### Cook County State's Attorney

Gerald Nora

#### State Appellate Prosecutor - 1 vacancy

#### Department of Corrections

Dierde "Dee" Battaglia, Chief of Assessments and Programs for Maximum Security Prisoners |



#### Companions Offers Programs Which Foster Communications

Jana Minor

Companions, Journeying Together, Inc. has had the privilege for 20 years of serving men and women who are imprisoned and their families. These projects include:

- ✍ Aunt Mary's Storybook (AMSB) offered at Dwight, Cook, DuPage and Kane County Jails and the Metro Federal Prison. Women choose new books for their children; read the stories onto audio tapes. The books and tapes are sent to the children as her gift.
- ✍ Father's Read – same as AMSB but offered to men at Sheridan and the farm at Stateville.
- ✍ Family Stories for children of women at Dwight. The children of

those women who have signed up for this project receive a new book every other month.

- ✍ Mail projects – open to any prisoner. We mail a newsletter three times a year, Christmas and birthday cards, and sometimes other mailings. We do have some volunteer pen pals, but never enough for all the requests we receive.
  - ✍ Mother's Day Project – writing materials are delivered to women and youth confined in prisons and jails in Illinois.
  - ✍ Pamper Yourself Kits – given to women as they are leaving Dwight as a gift to say we hope your new life outside the walls goes well.
  - ✍ Parenting Classes at Dwight.
- If you would like to be added to our mailing list or to inquire about any of these projects, please write us at PO Box 457; Western Springs, IL. People in the free community can also contact us at [amstorybook@aol.com](mailto:amstorybook@aol.com) or [www.cjtinc.org](http://www.cjtinc.org) |

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## Resources for Prisoners

by Joe Dole

**Not In Vain Foundation**, 600+ members: To better society by assisting to reduce prison overcrowding and recidivism. Call to support the N.I.V. petition. N.I.V. collects memberships as a lobbying force in the support of positive reform.  
Ph: 312-637-9803  
Fax: 773-846-0734 Works with LT3P.

**November Coalition**: publish a quarterly newsletter covering criminal justice, education and advocacy work by numerous sources. 795 S. Cedar, Colville, WA 99114; 509-684-1550.

**The Sentencing Project**: examines international rates of incarceration, minority male rates of incarceration, causes, consequences, and provides recommendations for policy. 514 10th St., NW, Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20004; 202-628-0817.

**The Prison Activist Resource Center**: changing prison conditions through various means of legislative reform. P.O. Box 339, Berkeley, CA 94701; 510-845-8813.  
[www.prisonactivist.org](http://www.prisonactivist.org).

**Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)**: history of submitting material to legislate prison reform. 1612 K Street NW, Suite 1400, Washington, D.C. 20006; 202-822-6700; [www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org).

**The American Correctional Association (ACA)**: a Government Legislation Affairs Department serves as the liaison between ACA and decision-makers at state and federal

levels. Actively work to support laws, administrative procedures and adequate funding to safeguard the rights of correction workers and offenders. This department is also responsible for the development of information programs for legislators, government leaders and the public in order to promote rational legislation governing the criminal justice process and programs for adult offenders. Research Manager, 301-918-1894.

**ACLU National Prison Project**: biannual newsletter featuring articles, reports, legal analysis, legislative news and other developments in prisoner's rights. Also list and describe local, state, national and international organizations that provide services to prisoners. Contact Harvey Grossman and/or Benjamin Wolf at The Roger Baldwin Foundation of ACLU, Suite 2300, 180 N. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60601-1287; 312-201-9740; Fax 312-201-9760, [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

**John Howard Association of Illinois**: 300 W. Adams St., Suite 423, Chicago, IL 60606. 312-782-1901. [www.john-howard.org](http://www.john-howard.org).

*New Position for Dee Battaglia Cont...*

veteran of IDOC, beginning her career as a counselor in a youth prison and serving as Assistant Warden in Dwight and Warden in Stateville since March 2005. Miss Dee, as she is known by inmates, has earned the respect of both staff and inmates and has worked tirelessly to maintain security and improve programming at Stateville. Effective security was established at Stateville and some progress has been made increasing programs during Battaglia's tenure. She initiated a Kairos program as well as the Book Club, and increased several self-help and educational programs. Battaglia was able to make these small but significant program improvements despite considerable opposition.

Yet, these improvements only scratch the surface of what is needed in Stateville and Illinois prisons, especially in maximum security. If Battaglia's track record is any

*Continued on page 8...*

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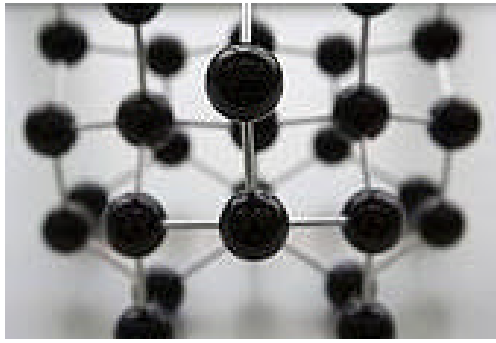
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## Kairos Weekend Retreat, April 27 –30, 2006

by Anaviel Ben Rakemeyahu

Forty-two Stateville residents were given a treat at this year's first ever Kairos Stateville weekend. "Kairos" is a word of Greek origin which means God's Special Time. And those in attendance truly felt that it was God's special time to bring men of different faiths together for a common purpose.

Although the Kairos weekend was a Christian sponsored event that has grown into a world wide movement, it has opened its arms to men and women of all faiths. I saw Christians, Muslims and Hebrews coming together in the spirit of brotherhood, showing love and support for one another.

As the men were brought into the theater building, we were paired with a Kairos volunteer and received a warm welcome. The volunteers were to be our guides and servers for the entire weekend. We were served cookies, coffee and lemonade which was definitely a treat!

The volunteers were awesome! They were older gentlemen from different Christian denominations, all coming to Stateville for one universal purpose: To share God's love with the men in Stateville. Hoping to enrich and inspire us to be the men that God has called us to be. One brother commented that those were "the coolest White men he had ever met."

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

embracing each other with the spirit of brotherhood. This display of universal brotherhood was truly amazing to witness.

The entire retreat was very interactive. Three volunteers were placed with six men and we discussed the many different topics that were presented by the volunteers. We had discussions on faith, brotherhood, love and forgiveness—universal topics that go far beyond race and religion. Each presenter poured his heart out and shed many tears. After each presentation, we broke off into group discussions. We also had the opportunity to express ourselves through art and singing. It was an environment of love.

My experience was very special, something that I'll always remember and take with me wherever I go. One special moment I'll never forget is the Saturday of the retreat. Myself and a group of Hebrew Israelites went off on the side to pray together on the Sabbath. Mr. Bill Ryan asked could he pray with us. After our prayer he said although he didn't understand the Hebrew that was spoken during the prayer he did enjoy praying with us. This sincere display of brotherhood touched me deeply.

I also learned how to interact with people of different faiths in the true spirit of brotherhood. I learned that I could have conversations with people of different faiths and it doesn't have to be a hostile or threatening encounter. I enjoyed the differences of opinion and learned that it's alright to disagree and yet still have respect for the opinions of others.

On the last day of the retreat Warden Dee spoke to the crowd with tears in her eyes, expressing how she can see the changes in the men that were there. After she spoke, the men thanked Wardens Dee and Dominguez for opening up the doors again for programs such as Kairos,

*Continued on page 4...*

# Essays, Letters and Insight

PROPOSALS AND PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS

## Rest

Andre Patterson - *Continued from the Creative Writing issue*  
(June 2006 Literary Issue)



He had been drinking heavily since 16. Now, his alcohol consumption had reached an all time high. But, it wasn't enough to keep his conscious at bay. He and liquor had enjoyed a monogamous relationship for years, until he was introduced to PCP, now there was no one without the other. They plagued him deeper and deeper into a pit he couldn't see the top of.

Once, he found himself sitting alone in a water-logged basement; the smell of mildew stinging his nostrils and despair hovering over him like a dark cloud. In each hand he clutched his poison; relishing the results of each sip and each puff, when he heard a voice so clear, yet so inaudible. You really think you can survive like this? You can't run forever. You're gonna get caught. And when you do, you'll never see the light of day again, so you might as well take out your gun and. The voice was so seductive; so reasonable. He couldn't shake the urgency of it. He reached for his gun several times and several times; something kept him from staring it in the eye.

Now, here he was at what seemed to be his final destination; the hope of the future darkened by his past and the possibility of finding the identity that he had fortified early on in his life while wandering through a house of smoke and mirrors all

those years. There was no more stalking the night and wandering aimlessly like a vagabond. All he could do now was cry under the cover of darkness. Cry and wish for reprieve from the torment of a soiled conscious and distraction from the convincing voice of death which chased him around the four corners of this box.

Was shelter and deliverance within this book? He focused on it once more as he began to read. The words seemed to come alive and wrap themselves around his soul; a gentle, yet restless embrace that wouldn't let go. He tried weakly to tear his eyes away from the page. He hoped to shake the uncomfortable grasp these words held him in, but it was as if he were enchanted. They had drawn him in and nothing else around him mattered. As he read further, the embrace grew tighter and became more stifling. The more he resisted, the more audible the words became; whispering in his ear things only his spirit could understand. It was different from the tempting voice of death that had been speaking to him since birth. It sounded like an entreaty to live; an invitation to freedom. But, he was hesitant and fearful. Still he read.

Suddenly he felt something sharp pierce his insides. His breath was caught in his throat, and when he tried to breathe, all he could expel was a loud mournful groan. His vision became blurry and he felt something wet running down his face. When he raised his hand to one cheek, he realized they were tears. He felt weak. The pain was searing through his heart and seemed to trigger memories of his past; memories that had lain dormant, but now awoke with the fury of a sleeping giant demanding revenge.

As each scene flashed across his mind, the pain became more unbearable.

*Continued on page 8...*

*Kairos Continued...*

hoping that there will be many more programs in the future here at Stateville.

The Kairos weekend retreat will return to Stateville on September 28, 29, 30, and Oct 1. This time it will be open to a new group of men. For those who are blessed with the opportunity to attend, I know that you will all walk away from this experience better men, as I know I did. |

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## What Is My Life About?

by Minister Donzel "Dennis" Digby

I am in a place where life has little, if any, meaning; little, or no, value. Being placed in prison for the rest of my natural life is something I initially had trouble dealing with. I thought it would be a substitute existence, all purpose being finished. That is, thank God, not the case.

I feed on my past which propels me forward to new purpose, meaning, goals, objectives, and accomplishments. The gifts and talents that heralded my life prior to prison provide the same energy and opportunity for me to continue to be constructive, productive and, if you will, useful. I'm more focused on the issues of life that affect me and willing even to champion causes when it seems I stand alone.

With the eyes of youth, peers, and authority ever watchful, I strive to be consistent in lifestyle, and true to my faith, principles and beliefs. I'm quick to mentor, advise,  
*Continued on page 5...*



## Okay I'll Fight for my Child

by Minister Donzel "Dennis" Digby

"Please, may I be excused? I don't want to do this no more!" This was the question asked a young woman by her interviewer on a television program. She was being interviewed on a show dealing with former inmates of juvenile institutions. She had served time for attempted murder. She froze mid-sentence, began to break down, and asked to be excused from the interview. She was excused from the interview and was escorted backstage by one of the counselors in attendance. Up to that point in the interview the young woman, nineteen years old, had struggled to answer questions. It was apparent, however, that she was doing her best to be honest and helpful in her responses. She nonetheless hit her breaking point and just couldn't go on.

The support that young woman had on that day was a counselor in attendance who was probably only there for her on that day and for that moment. We need to ask ourselves, "Where was the support she so obviously needed prior to that moment? Well, this particular young woman was raised by her grandmother. Her mother was serving time in prison and apparently made no contact with her daughter. Her grandmother also had neglected her daughter so it's no wonder this young woman was so wanting.

Her grandmother and mother both abused drugs so this young woman was introduced to a lifestyle that was to

ultimately become her destiny. Should this have been her legacy as well? Will she only have more prison time to look forward to? What will end the cycle she is unfortunately caught in? She, and her mother, both have served time. They now have a very strained relationship due to the lack of prior contact. The young woman wants to pursue being a rap singer, but with no education, job prospects or real aptitude this is only a pipe dream.

Those of us incarcerated in prisons and who have young children need to be concerned about their overall well-being—mental, physical, social, etc. We must begin to reach out to them and let them know we are still concerned about their lives. You see, it's not about us anymore. And, what, you may ask, do we have to offer them? It's not about things or money, it's about loving them enough to show we care. That has to be our motivation for doing whatever we can to help them. It doesn't matter what our relationship was prior to our incarceration. We have to fix whatever needs fixing and rebuild the bridges. Give them your heart and soul until you have their attention. Share your experiences, give them an idea of what's out there, both good and bad. If they are prepared and can see trouble coming, this will give them a chance. This young woman was left to fend for herself and was influenced by everyone and everything. She had no chance. |

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*What is My Life About Cont...*

encourage, teach, or humbly observe until a place opens up for my involvement. I have been truly humbled by those here, and in the world, who have said my life, has been beneficial to their lives. I keep some of the letters and comments as markers to refer to when I question this life. The life I live now is much akin to my pre-prison existence. The change in environment has not stifled the growth factor inside me; nor would I ever allow it to. I still, and always will, have a vision; hope is ever present. My spirit is quickened daily by opportunities and I refuse to accept the present state or situation I'm in. As life greets me each day, by God's grace, I will welcome life with open arms. I have decided to be. |

## From the Publisher

Bill Ryan

The March 2007 edition of *Stateville Speaks* will be devoted to women's issues. Lately many women have written me, and I hope they and several others will contribute to this issue. Topics can be whatever women prisoners want to write about: healthcare, family, programs, spirituality, etc.. Poems and essays are encouraged but please no individual cases.

*Stateville Speaks* has grown tremendously over the past two years. We started with an eight-page mimeographed issue with less than 200 issues printed. We now feature at least 12 pages (and could have more if we had the money!), and regularly print over 2000 copies with about 75% going to prisoners. Our distribution is evenly divided between prisoners and people in the free world. Subscriptions are free to prisoners (donations are accepted and needed). To join the mailing list, write me at 2237 Sunnyside Westchester, IL 60154.

In this issue you will find the names of appointees to the HJR 80 committee. Not all appointments have been made and *Stateville Speaks* will provide additional updates and reports on the Committee.

*Stateville Speaks* will soon have Assistant Editors in prisons other than Stateville, including some who will focus on special sections, such as Women's Issues, Sports, and the Law Page. Please submit ideas for additional sections to me. These Assistant Editors will encourage prisoners to contribute, read and subscribe to the newspaper. Any prisoner who wishes to be part of the *Stateville Speaks* staff should write and let me know. We are also discussing with CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants)—a Washington DC-based advocacy organization—the possibility of creating

*Continued on page 7...*

SEPTEMBER 2006

## Why I'm Not a Thug

by Sergio Torres

We start at an early age as rebellions young people who live by ideas that are of interest only to us and our peers. This interest comes watching elder brothers and sisters in the hood, who we respect for their cunning ways and for being down for the "hood" and the people in the community. In everyday parlance, this is the proverbial "thug," the bad boy/or girl image that our elders conveyed to us, the younger shortys and who we in turn marveled and glorified. Many of those "thugs" were and are not criminal in nature, but the majority of us have been forced into a criminal environment by economic, social and political ideas and the easy illusion of being afforded an easy way to do "well"

I make no excuse for what I do or did. I don't advocate the "easy" way of surviving an environment created to bring us down as a people. I don't look to portray an illusion that the proverbial thug life is the means to crush the social, political structures of a capitalist society. You can not comprehend the thug life until you grasp the political economical and social interaction of a thug.

What I do attempt to convey is that thug life has no political, economic or social powers to lead the people. What we must do is abolish the facade of thug life and the current norm of raising a generation of thugs with no sense of culture, political and economic expectation, or social involvement outside of thugism. We must educate ourselves in order to raise our consciousness and those in our surrounding environment, who have no consciousness of their culture. What we, as a whole, must do is reveal how this destructive illusion of thug life, glorified and portrayed by rappers and rap videos, destroys the characters of our individual selves.

This process has come about through psychological indoctrination created years ago for the purpose of capitalism: cars, clothing, money, rappers. As the thug life and its ideals progress, the power structure of the ruling or the rich goes unchallenged.

Together as a people, we must correct this thug life and expose it for what it is; it is a path to death and imprisonment and the thievery of an opportunity to create a social class of leading people. This pervasive miseducation of our people through the thug life image must be replaced with pride of whom we are as a people, with understanding and reasoning that we are still fighting for equality, liberty, justice, and the people. |



## The Measure of a Man

by Jerome Franklin

A tradition of destruction exists that has been passed down from one generation to the next. This tradition has to be stopped. It makes no sense to complain about there being a conspiracy when you have done nothing to educate yourself and deepen your intellectual understanding to fight against said conspiracy. When an individual deals drugs, sells women, encourages the youth to join gangs and kills someone over a jacket or a pair of shoes that person is just a pawn in a game he does not understand. Not only is he continuing the tradition of destruction, but he's running in and out of jail doing life on the installment plan. Something is

*From the Publisher Continued...*

a nationwide newspaper that would address issues facing lifers and long-termers.

We could not have achieved what we have without the prisoners who contribute regularly as well as supporters like Ibi Cole, whose talent for formatting changed the face of *Stateville Speaks*; Katy Ryan who does the copyediting; Shaena Fazal who assists in a variety of ways; Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal, Loevy & Loevy, and the Uptown People's Law Center whose *pro bono* support of *Stateville Speaks* allows us to continue to exist. A special thanks to the Mychael Thompson family and to Illinoisprisonstalk.com for posting *Stateville Speaks* on its website.

During the past two years as a result of viewing prisons from the inside as a volunteer who spent considerable time "walking the galleries," I am acutely aware of the funding issues facing the IDOC. There must be more staff in order to develop programs while maintaining security if the IDOC is to become what the name implies, a Department of Corrections. *Stateville Speaks* will advocate for additional monies for IDOC. Also, I would like again to encourage IDOC staff to submit articles to *Stateville Speaks*. One of our primary goals is to promote a safe, secure prison environment, and we hear a lot from the prisoners but we would like to hear more from staff. We will devote a section of each issue to IDOC if enough people submit articles.

Please keep supporting *Stateville Speaks*—with submissions, subscriptions, and donations. |

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wrong when a man won't learn a skill that will pay \$20 per hour on the outside but will come to jail and break his neck to work for \$20 per month.

What kind of man are you? What kind of words come out of your mouth? Do

*Continued on page 8...*

## Am I my Brother's Keeper?

by A. McNeal

Am I responsible for my brother's thoughts and actions when my brother refuses to acknowledge responsibility for the same? Do I have a duty to show my brother how to fight for his life when my brother has no interest in living? Am I obligated to free my brother from his slavery of lunacy and ineptitude when my brother desires the precious jewelry that binds him? How do I care for my brother, when the throes of incarceration have robbed him of his ability to reason? Why should I pick my brother up from the floor, when he has absolutely no passion for the struggle? How can I give my brother the gift of sight when he won't accept that there are rewards in vision? In this place, my brother has succumbed to the perils of adversity. He has embraced his end, an end in pusillanimity where he has devoted his remaining time simplifying life, while pursuing confusion and self-condemnation. He possesses the tendency to mismanage everything and everyone around him. And what is inconceivable, is that he doesn't understand he's drowning. And death is inevitable, death by complacency, which is mind boggling, considering there is nothing about this place that remotely resembles the comforts of home. And since my brother fails to recognize this, his suffering is justified. It kind of reminds me of that old urban parable, "we all come into this world desperately gasping for that first breath of air, and from the looks of it many of us will go out the same way."

So, am I my brother's keeper? Not if my brother is unable to keep himself. |

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### *New Position for Dee Battaglia Cont...*

indication, she will be heavily focused on education and self-improvement and programs, such as Kairos. One can also expect a concentrated emphasis upon development of volunteers in all the prisons. She would do well to visit Angola Prison in Louisiana, the largest maximum-security prison in the U.S. with over 5,000 inmates that is also a progressive, program-driven

facility.

*Stateville Speaks* supports this important initiative in programming and kudos to Director Walker for initiating the project and appointing Battaglia to head it. We will be watching and monitoring developments and will do anything we can to improve programming within the IDOC. |

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### *The Measure of a Man Cont...*

you seek to enrich the lives of those connected to you or are you a cancerous tumor that eats the life out of everyone around you?

I've asked these questions to provoke thought. Hopefully that thought will give way to a priority shift in the mind. It takes more than having testes to be a man. It also takes more than being a financial provider although that's a great start. Many of us make the mistake of thinking that's where our responsibilities end. As men we are also responsible for the emotional, mental, spiritual and academic development of those dependent upon us. This may sound like a tall order but it comes with the territory of being a man. Being able to supply this kind of support is what separates true men from the frauds masquerading as such.

It is convenient not to make oneself a target by not speaking and acting against the perpetrators of death and destruction in our communities. But it's been said, "evil men abound when good men stand by and do nothing." Somewhere along the line many of us have bought into the idea that it's cool to live a life of ill deeds rather than a life of righteousness. If you have had it on your mind to change, I encourage you to take that bold step. Don't get discouraged if and when things get tough because going against a society that embraces the perverse side of things is not for wimps. Maybe you can't change for yourself but are selfless enough to change for those that depend upon you. Let them be your motivation until your new lifestyle becomes as natural as breathing. True men are valuable pace setters and in this day of misguided ideas they are very much needed. |

## What Can You Do?

### Stay Informed.



Help N.I.V. support and lobby to legislature for positive reform.

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The power in numbers of voting citizens gives a N.I.V. a stronger voice to make CHANGE.. |

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### *Rest Continued...*

He knew for sure he was dying. He cried with remorse for those he saw in his head; those who had been victims of his ignorance. He sobbed for those who had been unsuspectingly trapped by his delusion and had to suffer because of his selfishness.

He could still hear the voice, the good voice. But now instead of an alluring whisper, it sounded like a desperate cry. Each word uttered felt like a knife plunging deeper and deeper into his heart. "Life. Purpose. Forgiveness. Sacrifice. Faith. Redemption."

He grew weaker and found himself losing his will to fight; or was it surrendered? He was so, so, tired. His eyelids grew heavy and he lay his head on top of the book before he faded into unconsciousness. A resigned whisper fell from his lips.

"God, forgive me."

And right before darkness enveloped him, these words resonated throughout his soul.

"Rest." |



# Post-Conviction Hearing Act

## Assistance

Joe Dole

The Post-Conviction Hearing Act is a confusing morass of procedural headaches. Just getting started and learning what not to do can be, and usually is, overwhelming for prisoners. The following 12 cases, statutes, and resources will help you get a better understanding. So if you're getting ready to file a post-conviction petition take the time to get all of the following and go over each thoroughly.

1) Write to the Illinois Bar Association and request a free copy of *Post Trial Remedies — A Handbook For Illinois Prisoners*. Illinois Bar Association; 424 S. 2nd Street; Springfield, IL 62701-1779

2). Next go to the prison law library or have someone **find Lawfmdr.com** and other free websites and download the following study, statutes, and 9 cases (all decision dates and docket numbers are included to make searches easier):

- Post-Conviction Hearing Act, 725 ILCS 5/122-i to 5/122-8
- 34 Loy.U.Chi.L.J.639 -- Impact of Recent Decisions Upon Proceedings Under the Post-Conviction Hearing Act- Loyola University Chicago Law Journal, Spring 2003
- People v. Coleman, 183 Ill. 2d 366, 701 N.E. 2d 1063, 233 Ill. Dec 789 (Decided oc ,1998, Docket # 81441 )
- People v. Edwards, 197 Ill. 2d 239, 757 N.E. 2d 442, 258 Iii. Dec. 753 (Decided Sept. 20, 2001, Docket # 87930)
- People v. Smith, 326 Ill. App. 3d 831, 761 N.E. 2d 306, 260 Ill. Dec. 462 (Decided Dec. 7, 2001, Docket # 1-00-1341)
- People v. Pittsonbarger, 205 Iii. 2d 444, 793 N.E. 2d 609, 275 Ill. Dec. 838 (Decided May 23, 2002, Docket # 89368)
- People v. Bocclair, 202 Ill. 2d 29, 789 N.E. 2d 734, 273 Ill. Dec. 560 (Decided Aug. 29, 2002. Docket #'s 89388, 89471, and 89534)
- People v. Rissley, 206 Ill. 2d 403, 795 N.E. 2d 174, 276 Iii. Dec. 821 (Decided June 19, 2003, Docket #

82536)

People v. Paleologas, 345 Ill. App. 3d 700, 803 N.E. 2d 108, 280 111. Dec. 878

(Decided Dec. 23, 2003, Docket # 1-02-2631)

• People v. Blair, 215 Ill. 2d 427, 831 N.E. 2d 604, 294 Ill. Dec. 654

(Decided June 3, 2005, Docket # 96198)

• People v. Lander, 2005 WL 1342246 (Decided June 3, 2005, Docket # 98433) }



## Addressing the Reason

by L.M.L

As a prisoner I am often rebellious as to why I was convicted. I complain that I am innocent: that I did not receive a fair trial because of my race, my education, my incompetent lawyer etc. etc. I got railroaded I say; it isn't my fault. But after many years of believing that I was dealt an unfair blow I had to evaluate my sins, my faults, my errors. I had to go beyond the judgment of man into the vision of God.

Some people did commit the crimes for which they were convicted and some are innocent but we are all accountable for our sins whether society sees us as guilty or innocent. How God allows us to be punished varies. Some people have expensive lawyers and are acquitted of crimes they committed but are followed by a force of calamities, bad health, death of loved ones etc. Some people are never brought before the court of man but suffer invisibly by the will of God.

All of us, whatever our situation, will face judgment day whatever our fate on this level of existence. I know I did not commit the crime for which I was convicted and I know that God knows what I have done and have not done. True repentance, honest communion and a serious heart-to-heart with God about our sins is essential for our

rehabilitation and preparation for judgment day. We must have remorse, pray for forgiveness and live our lives to forgive others in hopes we are forgiven.

Some people have committed crimes so cruel, gruesome, heinous and cold-hearted that I fear they should never be free. Sometimes I question whether they should be put to death or spared for a life sentence. But God still calls the shots and decides who is to be forgiven. Only God knows what is in people's hearts and the reason for their actions. It might be an abusive childhood, a life empty of love or mental illness. So long as a person makes amends with God, repents and is sincere he has a chance for God's mercy. God's love is bountiful. The person who repents has true freedom that brings true peace. }

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### To Stateville Speaks

I read the April issue and I can't believe how much more professional it gets each month. You gotta be pretty proud of the men and women, and of your own progress with them.

Great job.

-John F. Manion-

Secretary, Notre Dame Class of 1956

### To Stateville Speaks

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the endless efforts of kindhearted volunteers that are involved in raising awareness about life in prison. Special thank you to *Stateville Speaks*, N.I.V. Foundation, the Long Term Prisoner Policy Project and C.U.R.E. I personally thank you all for everything you do and have for those of us in the struggle. Your publication and support brings into our lives bits and pieces of a world we once knew. Your dedication and persistence to stand for what is right and fair, to stand for those of us who can't, pushes people like myself to be something amazing.

I cannot imagine life without your voice and support for us. How could we hang on to hope or be heard? Your courage and commitment will make a positive impact for many, especially on the inside. May the Creator continue to bless your warm and kind hearts. Keep up the good work.  
-Angel Torres-

# Creative Corner

POEMS, WRITINGS, CONNOTATIONS...

## A Prayer and Poem Dedicated To All the C-Numbers—Freed and Still

**Incarcerated—and Our Families and  
Supporters**

by Willie Sterling Jr.

To not sit idly and lament in self-pity or sorrow. To not dwell in our past negativity or wallow. To abandon and denounce anything that is shallow. To resurrect and regenerate a positive moral intellect and concentrate on the hopes of our tomorrows. To, with optimism patience, and pride, continue to struggle and strive. To, with courage and confidence, reflect on the antiquity of our past, that great force that's always been on our side. To, with reverence, remember to stop and pray, acknowledging God for his peace and grace and inspirational strength and how He has caused so many other adversities to dissipate in time. To continue, my fellow C-number brothers, family members, and friends, to stay strong and focused unceasingly enduring and enriching your heart, spirit, and mind. To determinedly wait for that special day to arrive to see the joy, our answered prayers of attaining our freedom in our wives', families', children's and champion supporters' of our cause, yes, those unsung heroes, saints, stewards of God's righteousness, social justice advocates. To soon be able to at liberty awake everyday to the beauty of the glorious sunrise. To foremost stand freely in the open fresh air under the blue skies reunited with our families saluting and shouting, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We praise and thank you God for answering our prayers and keeping us all those years and years safe, sane and alive! To those who are already free, remember to stay positive and succeed because what you do also affects those of us still in prison. Finally, to all of us stay encouraged. |



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## Peace

by Willie Scales

Peace is one of the great  
words of the bible  
Peace is harmony and oneness  
with God's purpose  
God is the God of wholeness  
the God who has it all together  
the God of Peace |

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### ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 7, 2006

October issue of *Stateville Speaks* will cover  
election issues.

#### REGISTER TO VOTE:

If you're not registered to vote and meet the  
criteria (US Citizen, 18 years old, not convicted  
and incarcerated), you have until October 10 to  
register to vote. Contact your local county clerk's  
office to find out where to register, or visit  
[www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov) to download a mail in voter  
registration form.

You can now **VOTE EARLY**: Early Voting  
begins October 16 and ends on November 2.  
Contact your local election authority or go to  
[www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov) to find out where the early  
voting polling places are in your area. |

## A Poem for Those That Continue to Care

by Jojulien Hicks

You've supported us through the  
toughest of times  
On the gloomy days, provided  
sunshine  
Never judged anyone or looked down  
on us,  
Even smiled on the days when you  
could have fussed  
Saying thank you is not enough, I  
wish I could do more  
For so many of us you have opened  
up doors  
You're an angel without wings, right  
here on earth  
And to me you're kings and queens  
for what its worth  
Your heart is sincere with no strings  
attached  
Your work here is dear and you can't  
change that  
So for the happiness you bring and  
the things that you do  
I just wanted to take time out and  
thank you! |

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## Wasted Lillies

by Donald McDonald

There is a cool breeze within my heart,  
drifting through the window of my mind,  
my soul no longer a light with the frills of open flight,

No white mornings of romantic song,  
whispered thrills and joyous giggles,  
infatuates my thoughtless muse,

The sweet taste of melodious dew  
no longer dries my pillow, and the  
reverberating sound of un-rushed gas  
escapes my ear,

Shadowy forms of nude delight,  
merely  
ghost within my wasting sight,  
haunted  
membrane of imprisoned thoughts,  
now lost to life not dear,

Scented lilies wilted in despair,  
daunted by frosted nights and  
moonless  
glare, crushed by the wingless angel,  
burned and left bare. |

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## My first day

By Sergio Torres

My first day prison  
I heard the falling rain

Silence spoke with a thousand voices  
to intensify my pain

Loneliness was like the cold  
It crept into my soul  
I sat in shadows dark  
age and felt the years unfold.

No tears have I to sacrifice for things  
that I regret

I'm jumping obstacles in my mind  
toward the goals that I have set |

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## Utopian Dream

by Jonathan Bartlett

The way a golden coin gleams.  
Sleepless nights with dark dreams.  
A culture of death too scary for thought.  
A repeated cycle of violence that leads to  
naught.

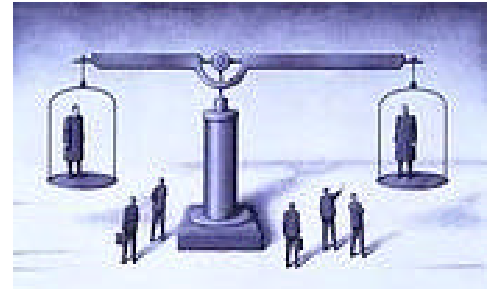
The story of life on the streets.  
Small victories followed by horrific  
defeats.

A game that was never meant to be won.  
Youths foolishly think that it's fun.  
It is the common story of innocence lost.  
The question is at what cost?  
Have the young become cold of heart?  
More likely our society plays a part.  
Children watching dogs be fought.  
No respect for life is what they're being  
taught.

Video games that are filled with blood and  
gore.

Brain dead activities that never give  
their minds a chance to soar.  
How many times have they ducked jail  
and the grave?  
Mere juvenile delinquents that mistake  
ignorance for being brave.  
Our existence in this world is so short.

We must ingrain in our children that  
random acts of violence are not sport.  
We must teach them the importance of  
education.  
Hopefully that will help them get past  
all this idleness and stagnation.  
This is the time to knock down all the  
walls they have built.  
In the hopes of helping them get past all  
their useless guilt.  
Its our duty as man to stop this  
subculture that's committed to ruin.  
Maybe if we make it happen society will  
sing a different tune.  
We must all be committed to making  
this younger generation think.  
If anything this should be our one social  
link.  
I think that education is the key.  
Enlightening our children's minds and  
helping them see.



## Don't Judge

by Lloyd Saterfield

I was told not to judge a book by its  
covers  
So judging I will not do.  
So when I approach to read a book  
I will read this book all the way through  
I will read this book line for line  
With no act of shame  
I will read this book to make a friend  
and  
not to pick its brain.  
So when I read this book again  
I will read it line for line.  
Removing out of my mind the label of  
crime  
And in due time I will find  
that this book has the finest mind |



## Learning to Lose

by James D. Price

I don't want to let go of my past, yet I want my future to get better. I want the old days – the old ways, where people were more strong and true.

How will my tomorrow get better if my head is still stuck up in the clouds chasing the past?

Must I forget the principles of old to become one with my inner self – to find my inner peace? To do this would seem absurd! For it would mean that my whole life up to now would have been all for nothing!

Will I still wrestle with these thoughts twenty years from now? That would drive me completely mad, don't you think?

When I was young I wanted to become just like the Old Man who always seemed to be one step ahead in the game. But now that the Old Man has taught me his ways it seems that his time has passed. And now it's my time. But I carry his ways with me.

The Old Man never told but a lie or two but he was so good at it that even they seemed true.

The point of it all then is that I really don't know what to do: either carry the Old Man with me or just toss him to his grave. Would he be happy to be laid to rest? Or would he toss and turn within his grave eternally with the thought that it was all for nothing, all that he learned, fought

and died for, all that he tried to teach me so that one day I might understand?

Somehow, deep inside, I know what I should do. Because in more ways than one that Old Man always got me through another day, another year, another decade with honor, respect and dignity.

“Honor thy Father and thy Mother,” was the commandment spoken unto Moses by God many ages ago. Honor the Old Man, the old ways, is what I believe He was trying to say. Because the Old Man already did all the losing, made all the mistakes, and that's what it takes.

To learn how to win one must first learn how to lose . . . to learn how to lose yourself so that you may find yourself.

Yes, I believe that is the answer I have been searching for. And it's all right here deep within the core of my heart.

The Old Man, the old ways are there to stay. And I pray they carry on when it's my time to pass away. |

LT3P



Place  
Stamp  
Here

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