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STATEVILLE SPEAKS



Special Loyola University Chicago Edition



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too long**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS >>

Welcome to the Loyola University edition

This edition of Stateville Speaks was produced by students at Loyola University Chicago with various academic backgrounds, including majors in Journalism, Public Relations, Spanish, Criminal Justice and Chemistry. Together, we had the opportunity to correspond with current Illinois prisoners through letter-writing. For most of us, this was the first time we were able to connect with prisoners. We also had guest speakers with various perspectives, including former prisoners Reginald Berry Sr. and Darrell Cannon, IDOC representative Timothy McLean, victim rights advocate Jennifer Bishop Jenkins, media activist/educator Mindy Faber, and Loyola faculty Nicole Ferentz, Lester Manzano and Julia Lieblich. We also reviewed other prisoner publications from around the country for inspiration in designing our own edition. We hope that we have made the readers of Stateville Speaks proud



"Time Hard Behind Bars" (acrylic on canvas) by Hector Maisonet

and that you find this edition informative and uplifting. We welcome any reactions and comments. There were many articles, from students and prisoners, that did not fit in this edition. If you can, please see them on our website <http://>

help, support and knowledge, this issue would not have been possible. From the entire staff of the Stateville Speaks Loyola Edition, thank you for reading, and we hope to be able to work with you in the future.

statevillespeaksloyolaedition.wordpress.com. If not, you will see them in future editions.

The editors and entire Loyola staff of Stateville Speaks would like to thank everyone that made this edition possible, especially Bill Ryan, Cynthia Kobel, Elizabeth Coffman, our amazing guest speakers and the Loyola University School of Communication and Department of Criminal Justice. It has been a fun and challenging task, and we were glad to be part of it.

We thank all the prisoners for your letters and for all that we have learned from you. We would also like to say thank you one more time to Laurie Jo Reynolds, without whose

Kristine BREGANIO	Alyssa HILL	Michelle POMERLEAU	Mike SOFKA	Alyce WENGELEWSKI
Katie DREWS	Matt K.	Lauren RENNER	Joseph SLIPKE	Fareeha ZAHID
Amy GALANTER	Molly MARTENS	Lydia ROWAN	Lora SWATS	And a special thanks to:
Robyn HACKER	Mary MURRAY	Sonia SINGH	Gabby TZENEVA	Laurie Jo REYNOLDS

Stateville Speaks Staff

Publisher: Cynthia Kobel
Consulting Editor: Bill Ryan
Editors: Donald McDonald, Aldwin McNeal, Anaviel B. Rakemeyahu
Assitant Editors: Stanley Howard, Rich Dyches, Jeanene Clay, Vincent

Galloway, Renaldo Hudson, Tom Odle, Mychal Thompson, Ronnie Carrasquillo, Theresa Heater and Margaret Majos
Women's Issues: Millie Lee and Janet Jackson

Sports Page: Angel Torres
Legal Page: Joe Dole
Layout and Design: Ibi Cole
Copy Editor: Katy Ryan
Printer: Irish Press

Cover Obama image: "Barack Obama" by Christy Bobo

Correction: Paul Taylor is the author of the poem, "Trapped in Time," which was published in the September 2007 edition of *Stateville Speaks* and erroneously attributed to Teresa Heater. *Stateville Speaks* apologizes for the error.

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Criminal justice system perpetuates inequality

by Alyce Wengelewski

When comparing the rates of incarceration among racial categories, the differences are shocking. If current incarceration rates continue, a white male has a 1 in 17 chance of being arrested and going to prison, according to U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. A black male has a 1 in 4 chance. Although only 12.7% of the country's total population, African-Americans represent 48.2% of adults in state or federal prisons and local jails, and 42.5% of prisoners receiving the death sentence. Many believe that this is no accident and is the result of society's action, or rather inaction. As the Prison Activist Resource Center stated, "African

Americans are disproportionately imprisoned by racist drug laws, denied access to the economic and educational benefits enjoyed by Anglo-Americans, and robbed of their civil rights and human dignity by a pervasive white supremacy that lurks just beneath the surface of our so-called democracy."

People categorized as white have more and better options before they are incarcerated. The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* indicates that 21.5% blacks have no health insurance, 24% over the age of 25 have not graduated from high school, and 26.5% live below the poverty line. Only 15% of white Americans are living without health insurance, 16% have not graduated from high school, and

11% live below the poverty line. These factors about life before one enters prison may have a great deal to do with why one is incarcerated in the first place. When one has less education and money, they are more likely to lead a life of crime.

This raises the question of equality not only in the criminal justice system, but also in society at large. Since slavery, and through the Jim Crow era, there has been an ongoing force of oppression on many black Americans which has produced current inequality.

There is no way to stop crime if inequality is still pervasive. Some urban areas where black people live have become enclaves of violence and economic and social decay. The average American is removed from such circumstances and how they affect life outcomes.

Black Americans are not the only group in society to feel disproportionate pressure from the criminal justice system. The fastest growing demographic in the U.S. is Latinos. After the Mexican-American War, the U.S. forces took land from the Mexicans and then treated them as outsiders. Today these racist sentiments still pervade with laws made to keep the border secure and penalize non-citizens. Yet other outside forces affect the Hispanic population as many live in poverty, unemployment, and have lack of educational opportunity.

The *Statistical Abstract* reports that 34.2% of Latinos have no health insurance, 44.5% of Latinos age 25 and older have not graduated from high school, and a staggering 27.1% of Latinos live below the poverty line. Even though Latinos represent only 11.1% of the total American population,

18.6% of all inmates are Latino. A Latino male in the U.S. has a 1 in 6 lifetime chance of imprisonment. Of Latinos in state prisons, 22.5% were convicted of a drug offense.

The data reveals that racism is a dilemma in the criminal justice system, yet there are few people who are willing to acknowledge the problem or make a change. These findings may also imply that great social and economic inequality leads to higher crime rates and therefore higher incarceration rates. At this point, the root of racism has less to do with the color of one's skin and more with socio-economic status in society. Some people are given better opportunities than others, and those with more reap the benefits.

Fixing the inequality should not be the only issue, but also what uneven incarceration rates mean for future generations. In his famous "I Have A Dream" speech, Martin Luther King Jr. wanted his four children "to live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Taking his words to heart, maybe one day we will be able to overcome these patterns, and this stigma.



"Do You Miss Me?" (oil) by David Harris



"Redeemed" (ink) by Christy Bobo

An eye for an eye: House bill 4154 calls for an elderly sentence adjustment

by Lora Swarts

As of 1978, Illinois has eliminated the possibility for parole for prisoners. This means those incarcerated after this date are no longer able to receive parole and must serve their designated sentence. For some, this could be a few years. But for others this could be 50 or more years. A bill like House bill 4154, if passed, would help reduce prison overpopulation, reduce the number of ailing elderly prisoners, and support an attitude of reform in incarcerated men and women.

Rep. Eddie Washington (D-Waukegan) presented this bill to the Illinois General Assembly last session. The bill would allow for any person over the age of 50, who has served at least 25 years in prison, to petition for an elderly sentence adjustment. The bill ensured that the court would consider the petition in its entirety and would not allow an early release if the prisoner is a threat to public safety. Criteria required include proof of successful adjustment in prison, participation in programs specifically designed to restore a prisoner as a useful citizen, showing remorse, the gained ability to socialize, and the renunciation of gang activity. The court would also have to notify the victim's families of the petition for early release, and the Department of Corrections would develop a pilot program for prisoners called the Impact of Crime on Victims Classes, like the one used in Missouri.

What defines an elderly offender? This bill uses age 50, although researchers have considered even age 45 as elderly for offenders, because they have rates of chronic illness comparable to free people who have reached 60 years old, which is generally considered the age beyond maturity. In 2005, Gary Fields reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Right now, prisons are facing an issue with overpopulation. In 2003, prisoners 45 and over accounted for 17.8% of sentenced inmates, up from 13% in 1995." This is certainly a problem in Illinois. According to Ted Pearson, Co-Chairperson of National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression-Chicago, a survey of those in IDOC prisons on April 5, 2008 shows that 4,709 will be over 50 years old by Jan. 1, 2009.

One reason for this geriatric trend is the elimination of parole which has left so many elderly in prison. Another reason is that sentences have increased dramatically. Fields indicated, "Over the past decade, the number of sentenced inmates over the age of 45 has grown three times faster than the general prison population, according to Department of Justice figures, driven by a nationwide tough-on-crime attitude and the rise of lengthy mandatory sentences."

However, this is leaving us with more nursing homes than prisons, which prisons are not designed to be. Aging prisoners require unique care. Many have physical illnesses, mental ailments, and other physiological problems. However, adequate medicine and medical treatment is difficult to provide in prison considering state budget shortfalls. According to the American Correctional Association, health care costs nationwide have risen 42% to \$3.7 billion in 2004. Fields reported that Illinois' medical costs have risen 50% to \$101.5 million in 2005. Without a change in policy, it is unclear how the state will cover these costs. Furthermore, many elderly prisoners feel the prison system doesn't preserve them, but rather ruins them. According to a study by Gillespie and Galliher, "These incarcerated senior citizens expressed bitterness and resentment as they blamed the penitentiary, for their physical and mental deterioration." To have an ill person not receive proper treatment is not part of the prison punishment plan. People have a right to basic health care.

Right now prisons are punishment. If instead, prisons chose to offer programs and be less punitive, then perhaps prisoners would become better citizens, and would be eligible to apply for an early release if some form of indeterminate sentencing were introduced. It might even lower recidivism. According to Pearson, "An increase in the number of people incarcerated does not correlate with a reduction in crime. Prison is not a deterrent to crime. Furthermore, prison does nothing to restore the victims of crime or heal their families." Pearson also used the high recidivism rate as evidence that prison is failing to teach offenders to succeed on the outside.

Many victims and their families are against the bill, wondering how this can ever offer any closure. The Web site IllinoisVictims.org is dedicated to families of victims, and there is an entire page about the House bill 4154 debate. Many victims have submitted essays, stories and blogs on issues dealing with the bill. Although a non-victim can never understand how a victim feels, they can try and empathize with them, and listen to their perspective. However, it is also difficult to understand what a prisoner's family is going through, because victims are on both sides of the debate. Should we continue the cycle of loss and pain?

After 25 years, people should be considered and evaluated, because some may in fact have changed. Why keep someone who has remorse, and changes, in a punitive system? This bill needs to be passed in order to avoid turning prisons into nursing homes or final resting places. We should want people to learn and grow, so they can

re-enter society with a new mind set.

If a bill like House bill 4154 were to pass, it would allow about 658 people to be considered for a sentence adjustment, according to the N.A.A.R.P.R. report. Of these, 177 are sentenced to natural life. Keeping men and women in prison, even if they have fully rehabilitated is not only cruel and unjust, but also nonsensical. Overpopulated prisons, rising costs in health care, and funding for programs are all going to cost the state more money every year. Releasing people into the world and helping them recover, is a way to help the economy.

Emotionally, though, this is a hard bill to pass because it does affect both parties: the victims and the prisoners. But justice won't be lost. They will have served 25 years in prison. If rehabilitated, keeping them in prison longer only perpetuates an idea of revenge that so many are driven by. If we don't change things now, then eventually, an eye for eye will make the world blind.

Give them something better

by Addolfo Davis

You say it is gangs that have our communities in the conditions they are in and that it needs to stop, and I agree with you. Well, give them something better than what they have.

Children just don't join the gang because they think it is cool. They join the gang because 90% of them in the gang are going through something emotionally, mentally and spiritually. They come from unstable homes: fathers or mothers on drugs, or just single mothers with so much on their plate that they don't have time to share with her kids, or both parents are alcoholics or on drugs. So who better to turn to than children who are going through the same thing they are going through?

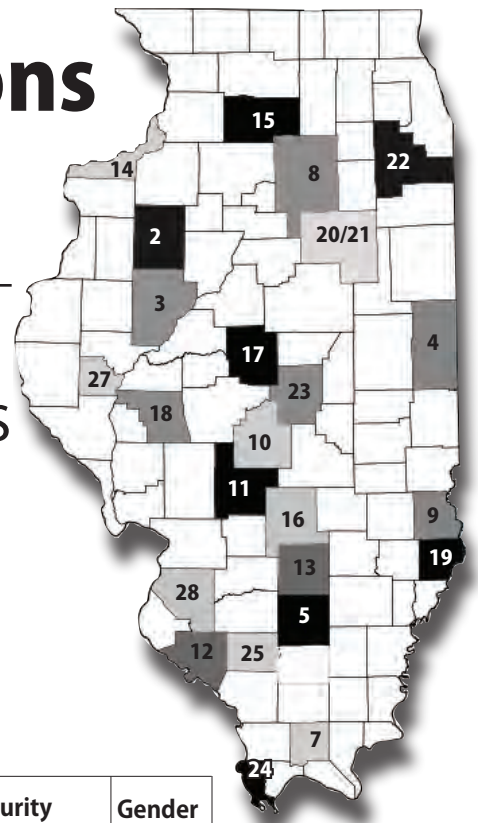
Gangs, as much as it is wrong, become their family and the streets become their home. They are getting the love and support from the gang members, something they weren't getting from home. So, they are happy now with the false reality because that is the only love they have ever known.

So how can we continue to just blame the gangs, when that is all they know? The gangs keep a roof over their head, new clothes on their back, keep their stomach full, and protect them when at home all they get is hurt emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

So when we say let's stop the gangs from killing our children, the truth is they are dead way before they joined a gang. Our children went to the gang for a reason and it is a sad truth, but we need to start pointing the finger where it belongs and that's at the parents.

We need to go in the homes of our children and teach our parents how to be parents and that is the only way that we will stop the gangs from growing. We can't continue to blame the gangs for the problems of our communities because the problem starts at home. If we want our communities to get better, we must give our children something better, something better than what they are running to.

Comparing Illinois prisons



This map represents the Illinois prisons by county.

Most expensive	Least visited	Farthest from Chicago
②④ Tamms \$ 58,994 ②③ Decatur \$ 36,164 ②② Stateville \$ 33,665	①⑨ Lawrence 3.43/year ②④ Tamms 3.60 ① Shawnee ②⑦ Western 3.64	②④ Tamms 362 miles ⑫ Menard 355 ⑦ Vienna 343

Map #	Prison	Cost per inmate	Miles from Chicago	Visits/year per inmate	Average population	Security level	Gender
1	Shawnee	\$ 14,839	343	3.64	1,998	High Med	M
2	Hill	\$ 14,880	198	5.55	1,820	Medium	M
3	Illinois River	\$ 15,687	196	7.83	2,004	High Med	M
4	Danville	\$ 16,093	161	7.28	1,845	High Med	M
5	Big Muddy	\$ 16,293	290	6.60	1,860	High Med	M
6	Logan	\$ 16,551	167	7.91	1,903	Medium	M
7	Vienna	\$ 17,370	343	3.86	1,595	Minimum	M
8	Sheridan	\$ 17,556	66	10.99	1,540	Medium	M
9	Robinson	\$ 18,035	258	6.17	1,193	High Min	M
10	Taylorville	\$ 18,285	216	14.19	1,172	High Min	M
11	Graham	\$ 18,634	257	8.48	1,906	Medium	M
12	Menard	\$ 19,190	355	5.59	3,315	Max/High Med	M
13	Centralia	\$ 19,435	271	6.36	1,528	Medium	M
14	East Moline	\$ 19,533	160	8.01	1,102	Minimum	M
15	Dixon	\$ 20,307	104	11.88	2,208	High Med	M
16	Vandalia	\$ 22,258	244	7.66	1,494	Minimum	M
17	Lincoln	\$ 22,832	167	11.66	885	Medium	F
18	Jacksonville	\$ 23,237	236	6.83	1,407	High Min	M
19	Lawrence	\$ 28,326	279	3.43	915	Maximum	M
20	Pontiac	\$ 32,121	101	6.02	1,660	Max/High Med	M
21	Dwight	\$ 32,666	79	13.67	1,039	Maximum	F
22	Stateville	\$ 33,665	96	14.72	2,773	Max/Min	M
23	Decatur	\$ 36,164	181	14.03	517	Medium	F
24	Tamms	\$ 58,994	362	3.60	454	Max/Min	M
25	Pinckneyville	unknown	323	3.86	2,052	Medium	M
27	Western	unknown	248	3.64	1,921	Medium	M
28	Southwestern	unknown	295	8.44	661	Minimum	M

Visitation rates come from the Chicago Reporter's March 2008 report "Distance Matters" and are based on average visits for 2007 per prisoner. All other information found on the IDOC Web site.

Note: Thomson prison is not included in this chart because information was not available at press time.

A Tamms investigation:

by Katie Drews

After a 370-mile trek to the southern tip of Illinois, members of the Tamms Year Ten campaign met with the Illinois Department of Corrections on Oct. 23 for a tour of Tamms, a closed maximum security prison. It was a step toward greater transparency — or so they thought.

Upon arrival at the prison, IDOC officials, members of Tamms Year Ten, a reform group dedicated to the oversight of Tamms, and Ill. Rep. Eddie Washington were escorted into a conference room. After brief introductions, IDOC executive chief Sergio Molina asked the prison staff to leave the room and then delivered the surprising news: “We will not be able to allow a tour today.”

Built in 1998 as a supermax facility, Tamms keeps prisoners in solitary confinement for 24 hours a day with no human contact. The original design of the prison was for short-term incarceration, but one-third of the inmates have been there since it opened ten years ago and 100 men have been held there since April of 1999. The Tamms Year Ten campaign is promoting a bill that calls for clear criteria to determine which men are sent to Tamms and guidelines on how inmates can leave. The bill also prohibits sending the mentally ill to the facility.

For Tamms Year Ten, the tour of the prison was a step forward in communicating with the IDOC, but after hearing Molina’s announcement in the conference room, every member was left stunned. Molina explained that he received the order from IDOC Director Roger E. Walker Jr. the day before because “this institution is in the crosshairs” with pending litigation. However, the lawsuit has been in contingency for years and other organizations have since visited inside the prison.

“People took two days off work and spent a lot of time and money to get here,” said Laurie Jo Reynolds, a leader of Tamms Year Ten. “This lawsuit has been going on for years. This visit has been planned for weeks. Why couldn’t you have told us last Thursday, last Friday, last Monday, last Tuesday, or yesterday? No phone call yesterday to tell us?”

Despite the decision, Washington and Malcolm Young, executive director



of the John Howard Association, an Illinois prison monitoring group, were permitted to take the tour.

From 11 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. without stopping for lunch, the two spoke with each of the 18 inmates on a list provided by Tamms Year Ten. Meanwhile, the excluded advocates engaged in hours of discussion about conditions at the facility and the proposed bill supported by Tamms Year Ten.

Revealing the results

Young and Washington disclosed the results of their visit during a roundtable discussion with legislators on Nov. 20 in Springfield, Ill. Others present at the meeting included the Tamms Year Ten organization, attorneys and former prisoners — all articulating the need for legislation regulating the prison. The IDOC was scheduled to join in the discussion, but it canceled the day before.

The John Howard Association released a report which disclosed the information Washington and Young learned on their visit with inmates. The report made strong recommendations to take legislative action.

“Cumulatively, you get the clear impression that [the prisoners] don’t know why they’re there and they don’t know the steps to get out,” Young said. “This is an overwhelming situation for a human to be in.”

The report drew on past investigations to show the long history of both procedural and mental health concerns at Tamms. In 2001, after two years of the prison’s operation, the John Howard Association reported concern

because no inmates had been released, even though many were noted for good behavior, and because the original sentences were not to exceed two years.

“We were very distressed at two years after Tamms opened, and now to go back eight years later and talk to prisoners who were there eight, nine, ten years — to find a substantial number, one third of the population [still there] — was shocking,” Young said. “If we were concerned after two years, what would we be after eight, nine, ten?”

Young, as well as other proponents of the bill, are so concerned about prison oversight because the conditions enforced by the supermax system are severe. The United Nations Committee Against Torture questioned the use of prolonged isolation in U.S. supermax prisons in 2000 and 2006 calling it an “extremely harsh regime” which could “constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Living in isolation

Darrell Cannon knows the effects of solitary confinement firsthand — he was held in isolation for nine years at Tamms. Cannon spent every day inside a 10 feet by 12 feet colorless cell with gray, cement floors, ceilings and walls.

“Some of your closets are probably bigger than my cell,” Cannon said. “If you’re not strong, being in that cell every single day will get to you. The color scheme will give you headaches and hurt your eyes. It’s designed to do that — to drive you crazy. It’s not for human beings.”

According to an article in Time Magazine, a few days of solitary confinement can affect a person’s brainwaves, leading to the state of “stupor and delirium.” With the addition of sensory deprivation, the research shows that a person can “descend into a hallucinatory state in as little as 48 hours.”

“I’d wake up and start shaking,” Cannon said. “[I’d tell myself], ‘No, no, no. Do not let this happen. Do not let them break you. I’m not going to let this

happen. I’m going to walk out of here sane.’ Thank God I would do that.”

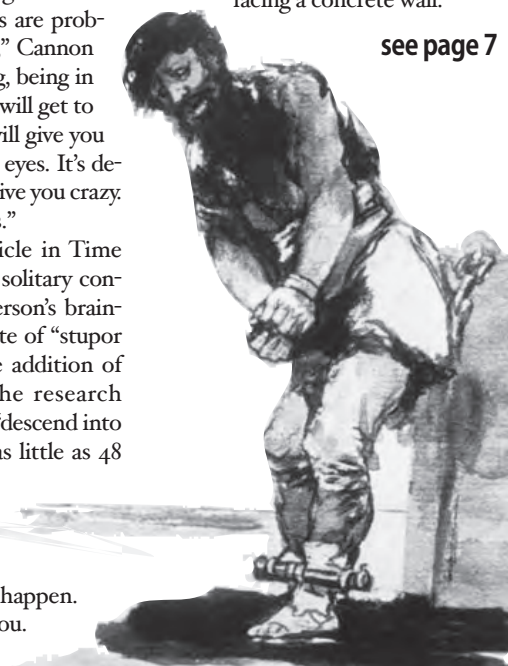
Other prisoners are not as lucky. Some resort to self-mutilation and attempt suicide. Some defecate their cells, causing the smell to infiltrate through the ventilation system. Some yell all day long, and some continuously kick on the steel doors. Cannon said the sound “drives you up the wall,” so he made his own earplugs out of toilet paper. During the night, the guards hit the master light switch every half an hour to turn on the bright fluorescent lights. Also in the night, doors slam every time the guards leave a wing. It is difficult to sleep through, according to Cannon.

Cannon would often make the time go by through exercise in his cell, trying to race with the clock during his routines. He said he was eventually able to do 500 push-ups in the span of an hour and a half. Prisoners have the option of spending an hour alone outside in the yard, which is similar to a concrete box the size of a classroom. Otherwise they remain in their cells, even for meals, which are served through a small slot in the door called the chuckhole.

“Meals were measured by spoon,” Cannon said. “Everything was generic, nothing real. Lord have mercy, it was rough.”

Since there were no communal activities, the prisoners found other ways to interact with one another while still facing a concrete wall.

see page 7



The fight for supermax criteria continues

continued from page 6

“People learn ingeniously how to play chess or cards,” Cannon said. “Or [we would] take thread from sheets to pass magazines to each other.”

But that is the extent of human contact. There is no human touch even with the guards because the guards always wear thick gloves. Keeping in touch with family members is difficult. Phone calls are not allowed, and visitation rules are strict. When family or friends do make an appointment, they are non-contact visits. The John Howard Association report says, “inmates are separated from their visitors by very solid partitions made of thick glass and steel, and communication is by way of a microphone and speakers.” Akkeem Berry, who was a prisoner at Tamms for eight years, also described a concrete stump that he leaned on, while his feet were shackled in the back.

“You are already in a fiberglass cubicle — there’s nowhere to go,” Berry said. “And they’re talking about safety?”

Although released from Tamms, Cannon says he can never forget about the years he spent in confinement.

“Every day, for every night I think about what has been done to me,” Cannon said. “That’s a kind of torture. Will the time come when I won’t think about it? I doubt it. ... I’m not a robot — you can’t put me on erase. I can never forget and I can never forgive.”

Getting in and getting out

When the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections outlined the construction of a supermax prison in 1993, the report stated: “The Super-Max institution should be used — without exception — to house only those inmates who have in their current incarceration inflicted or caused others to inflict physical harm against staff or other inmates.”

No prisoner is moved to Tamms based on the crime they committed on the outside. But over half of the men at Tamms are sent there not because of violent behavior at another prison, but because they are held in “administrative segregation status.” While this is not clearly defined, it usually relates to allegations of gang leadership and affiliation.

“Everybody was placed here for a

reason,” Sergio Molina, IDOC executive chief, said. “We have information. It’s a judgment call, by all means, but we need to know if they’ll join a gang again.”

Attorney Alan Mills says this is like sending someone to Tamms not for what they’ve done, but for what they might do in the future. Both former prisoners Cannon and Berry believe that they were wrongly sent to Tamms under this procedure.

“They said I was a gang leader and a threat to security,” Cannon said. “Because I was intelligent, if I chose to get violent [than] others would follow.”

Cannon and Berry never committed a violent act to send them to Tamms, and both did not get a chance to defend themselves against the allegation of gang leadership.

“I wouldn’t consider myself a prisoner,” Berry said. “I would consider myself a hostage because I was taken there without a hearing and without due process.”

“Essentially you are woken up in the middle of the night, put on a bus and arrive at Tamms,” Mills said. “You will never get a hearing in terms of the right to defend yourself.”

Mills said that generally prisoners are allowed a hearing if the facility they are being transferred to is “atypically and significantly worse than other places in the prison system.” The question is then whether or not Tamms is worse. According to Mills, this means the IDOC believes the answer is no, it is not worse. The IDOC could not be reached for comment.

Once prisoners are in Tamms, they often do not know when they are going to leave. But the Illinois Task Force also said that part of the supermax’s purpose is to transfer out prisoners based on outlined standards.

The IDOC’s position against the bill was detailed in a memo addressed to Rep. Washington: they oppose any limit on their ability to place inmates in any facility. At the roundtable, Rep. Hamos, the sponsor of the bill, expressed frustration at the IDOC’s refusal to cooperate with legislators, provide information to the committee or settle the pending lawsuit.

“The bottom line is [the IDOC] want[s] no legislation and ultimate discretion,” Hamos said.

Other supermax facilities in the



The two drawings and the etching on these pages are all by the Spaniard Francisco Goya all from circa. 1815: Inspired by the writings of the Italian criminologist Cesare Beccaria and other Enlightenment philosophers, Goya rejected torture and the long-term, solitary confinement of criminals and the insane. His drawings and etchings of prisoners were intended to shame those who supported the horrors. Caption by Stephen F. Eisenman

country have changed their policies to bring the system back to its original intended use. The Ohio supermax offers prisoners due process and it also has defined criteria for placement into its prison. The Mississippi supermax declared specific guidelines for transfers and excludes any reason based solely on gang membership. It also has stipulated a procedure for moving prisoners out.

Time for change

Back in the conference room in Springfield, Washington told the other legislators that we have to be able to ask the administration for accountability and standards, and then

he asked to see the hands of anyone in the room who disagreed. No one raised their hand.

“We are not asking for major changes in the prison system,” Washington said. “We’re talking about transparency and accountability. This is not really hard to do.”

With the proposed bill in legislation, Tamms would be required to create guidelines and bring the supermax back to serve its original purpose.

“I am going to work the floor today to get people on this,” Washington said. “It’s not a political issue, it’s a humane issue. I think we’re going to have some change here.”

Forum and hearings discuss "Throwing away the key"

by Ted Pearson

An overflow crowd assembled at the Ferguson Theatre of Columbia College for the forum "Throwing Away the Key" on August 6. People came to learn more about House bill 4154 on elderly sentence adjustment, the Tamms supermax reform bill HB6651, and how to get involved in the movement for change.

Stillpoint Theatre Company's "Sisters Rising" opened the program with a singing and spoken word performance about empathy, responsibility and freedom. This electrifying performance by ten formerly incarcerated women was followed by short speeches from former prisoners Madeleine Ward, Duffy Clark, Geraldine Smith, Darrell Cannon, Ra Chaka, Johnny Walton and Larry Gambrell.

The former prisoners emphasized that people can truly change in spite of the lack of positive programs in prison. Several men who had been in Tamms spoke emotionally about the impact of solitary confinement. Pointing to a display of pictures of all the men in Tamms, one said, "I am here for these guys who have no voice." Another spoke of the difficulties he still has being in crowds as a result of his experience in Tamms. Cliff Kelley, WVON radio talk-show host, moderated the program.

Respondents included attorneys

Jim Chapman and Jean Snyder, and former warden Dee Battaglia. Laurie Jo Reynolds of Tamms Year Ten, Bill Ryan of Citizens for Earned Release, and Ibi Cole of Not In Vain also spoke, as did Rev. Paul Ford, Associate Pastor, Covenant United Church of Christ.

Laurie Jo Reynolds said, "There doesn't have to be a conflict of interest between victims and offenders." Reynolds also explained the rationale for discussing Tamms and long-term sentencing together. She said, "Tamms is part of the fantasy of 'throwing

any hearings regarding changing sentencing.

On August 20, two weeks later, the hearing for HB4154 was held. There were more than 150 people in attendance, with Representatives Eddie Washington, Art Turner, Paul Froehlich, Dennis Reboletti, and Jim Sacia seated to hear the testimony.

Proponents and opponents alternated in presenting their views. Among those speaking in favor of HB4154 were Ryan, Cole, Ford, plus many members of families of prisoners. Speaking against the bill were State's Attorneys Dick Devine (Cook County), Joe Birkett (Dupage County), and Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge President Mark Donahue. Other opponents included family members of murder victims.

Speakers were given only three minutes to present their views, and not everyone on

the agenda was able to speak—over 40 people had signed up. Prof. Ronald H. Aday, Director of Aging Studies and Professor of Sociology at Middle Tennessee State University, spoke of the increasing numbers of prisoners and their growing costs, which in Illinois come to \$70,000 annually on average for elderly prisoners (over 50). Many, Aday said, could be cared for in other settings more effectively.

Elderly Sentence Adjustment

by Bill Ryan

HB4154, the Elderly Sentence Adjustment Bill, will be revised and introduced in the Illinois General Assembly in January 2009 under a new number.

The age (50) and time served (25) will remain as requirements, as will the need to demonstrate in a variety of specific ways that a person has truly reformed, is remorseful and is no longer a threat to public safety. Elderly sentence adjustment will not be for everyone, nor should it be, as this bill is not a "get out of jail free card." The petition will be sent to the Prison Review Board and victims families will receive timely notification. There will be a requirement for electronic monitoring and community service for those who have sentence adjusted.

Supporters are needed to ensure passage. Anyone wishing to advocate for elderly sentence adjustment should contact Bill Ryan, at 2237 Sunnyside, Westchester IL 60154; by email at nanatoad@comcast.net; by phone at 708-531-9923.

Bill Ryan explained that House bill 4154 is not a "get out of jail free card." Persons who have reached age 50 and served 25 consecutive years would have to demonstrate in a variety of specific ways that they are no longer a threat to public safety. Ryan also said the bill will be revised to have the petition go to the Prison Review Board, and to authorize the use of electronic monitoring and community service.

away the key,' and it is a fantasy of vengeance." Rep. Turner, Dunkin and Washington spoke in favor of both bills.

Comments from the audience included three women whose family members were murdered. They reminded the audience about the pain and suffering of victims, the negative impact of resentencing, and urged that victims' families be notified of

Light from Inside: Inmates express themselves with art

by Cynthia Kobel

"Light from Inside: Art from Illinois Prisons" turned into an exciting learning experience for at least 2,000 people who saw more than 100 pieces of prisoner art at the Chicago Cultural Center from August 11 through September 28. The John Howard Association of Illinois sponsored the project.

Most of the prisoners who presented their work were long-term prisoners from the most restrictive prisons in Illinois: Pontiac, Menard, Stateville, Lawrence, Pinkneyville, Western Hill and Tamms.

The inmates explained how their art became a part of their prison exist-

tence. "Painting to me has become an expression of my soul, that part of me only I know but I do not know how to express in words, so I do it with painting. It has become my companion for 23 years in this unnatural environment from which it takes me to places I can create on canvas," said Thomas Odle, a former death row inmate.

Kilsey Shearill explained his need to escape the tedium of incarceration by depicting his life experiences through his art. "Since we are not allowed any art supplies I create my art with a (four inch) flexible tube pen liner on manila envelopes," he wrote. "I have to create this art, not only to maintain my sanity, but to give me refuge and a source of serenity."

"Self-portrait"
Kilsey Shearill



Gallery visitors were amazed at what the inmates were able to accomplish, especially without art supplies. "The skill in here is on par and greater than what I've seen in famous galleries, awesome!!!" one woman wrote in the gallery book. Another said, "This left me speechless, these artists create with no real art supplies or encouragement." Many wanted to know what

they could do to encourage the Illinois Department of Corrections to give the prisoners supplies or if they could donate supplies. The art committee of the John Howard Board has promised to work on that project.

Look for samples of prisoner art throughout this publication!



"Elephant" (oil) by Derrick King

MRSA: More indifference to prisoners

by Joseph Dole

Recently Illinois became the first state to mandate the screening of hospital patients for MRSA. Hospitals present perfect breeding grounds for this disease. Disfiguring and often deadly, the staph infection MRSA, or Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, is highly communicable. Unfortunately this mandate doesn't include prisons or jails.

As reported numerous times in both *Prison Legal News* and the *Chicago Tribune*, MRSA also finds an ideal breeding environment in our nation's jails and prisons. In January of this year, the *Tribune* reported that, "About 80 percent of skin infections tested at the [Cook County] Jail turn out to be dangerous, antibiotic-resistant infections known as [MRSA]..." and in July, *qonline* reported that "East Moline Correctional Center was working with the Illinois Department of Public Health...to try an control an outbreak of staph infections among inmates." Thousands of inmates are contracting, and too often dying from, MRSA in jails and prisons across the nation.

Seeing as how all of this has been widely reported, I can only conclude that once again our public officials are deliberately indifferent to the health and safety of both prisoners and the poor. It is widely recognized that inmates leaving Cook County Jail in Chicago are spreading MRSA

to people in public housing and other low-income neighborhoods.

I only wish our politicians would at least realize that this affects people other than those who they so easily dismiss. Thousands of our prisons' guards, administrators, health care workers, and visitors are also at risk of contracting MRSA. We prisoners may be out of sight and forgotten, but we are far from being quarantined. If they couldn't care less about people like the couple who both died of MRSA within a month of being jailed, maybe they'll take heed of the female nurse who had to have her foot amputated in Michigan due to an MRSA-infected inmate sneezing and infecting her.

This is a nationwide emergency and will soon be a full-blown epidemic if not aggressively dealt with. The biggest threat to halting the spread of MRSA is the prejudicial and shortsighted attitudes of our elected officials. Unfortunately, we've now seen that our Illinois officials are guilty of both. They've just let an important opportunity slip through their hands by neglecting prisons and jails in both SB0233 and HB0192.

Prevention and containment are always more cost-effective than delayed treatment of any disease. We constantly see indifference when it comes to prisoners. Now we have a U.S. prison population, a third of which has Hepatitis C. How much do you think all this will cost the state when they get

Crime changes in Chicago suburbs

by Lauren Renner

When Detective Susan Ellis began working for the Cary Police Department six years ago, she was all too familiar with the town she had grown up in. In the two years since she became a detective, though, she has encountered more than the typical citizen might expect.

"Every day is different," she said. "When I was a road cop, I would spend most of my day dealing with traffic violations and processing any calls from the previous night. The night shift always gets the calls on domestic abuse or public drunkenness. But now that I'm a detective, I spend my time interviewing suspects, witnesses and victims and processing any evidence that we may have obtained."

The domestic abuse calls were initially difficult for Detective Ellis: "A lot of these calls are a spouse coming home drunk, but even more are between a parent and child. It was hard at first, but you learn to do what you need to do to help the people involved."

But even the type of crime has changed. For the first time since Cary, Ill. was founded in the late 1800s, gangs have become a problem consuming the attention of both the public and the police force. While crime does occur in smaller towns like this one, theft and domestic issues always ranked at the top of the list. Until now. Most recently taking up the officers' time is gang violence occurring at one of Cary's neighborhood parks. "It's mostly between

less prominent gangs with a few other big ones mixed in. I don't believe it's escalated to knives or firearms yet; mostly garden tools are used. They just meet and start fighting."

To a small town with little evident violence, this is a rapid change. Fifty miles northwest of Chicago, Cary is a medium-sized suburb just far enough away to avoid the types of crimes prevalent in the much larger city.

And while gangs have existed in the suburbs for decades, they have never presented any dangers for others in these towns. Why is gang life becoming more common in these smaller suburbs? According to City-Data.com, the population in Cary was estimated at 30,438 in 2007 and was expected to continue increasing. Will an increase in population and family size bring a higher rate of crime to these communities?

I asked Detective Ellis if there were any rewards for all this hard work: "When you work in this field, you catch the bug and just have to keep doing it. As a detective, I find out what happens to some of the people I bring in now. When I was on the road, that wasn't the case nearly as often."

The changes Detective Ellis has experienced have not tempted her to look for a new career. "I don't think I'll ever leave it," she said. "Unless I get to stay at home with my kids—sometimes it's hard to deal with the things I see, but my co-workers and husband are great when I need to talk about it. I love what I do."

and need treatment, compared to containing and preventing the disease in the first place? Instead we have states denying treatment for Hepatitis even against court orders, and inmates are dying from it, and MRSA. Even if politicians don't care about prisoners, they could at least be fiscally responsible for once.

How about a mandatory HIV,

Hepatitis, TB, and MRSA test with those physicals? No, we wouldn't want to do that because then we might actually have to treat people if we find out they're infected. Why, that would work to prevent other infections, contain outbreaks before they get out of control, and save lives. We don't want that! Not when it is prisoners and the poor we're talking about.

Election 2008: Citizens denied the right to vote

by Kristine Breganio

In September 2008, the Sentencing Project, an agency that researches state policies regarding felony disenfranchisement, reported that as many as five million felons could not vote in the 2008 Presidential election. Included in this number are current prisoners, probationers, parolees, and ex-prisoners. In his report "Expanding the Vote: State Felony Disenfranchisement Reform 1997-2008," Ryan King of the Sentencing Project describes the years leading up to this historic election. The efforts of nineteen states to reform their disenfranchisement policies resulted in the restoration of voting rights for 760,000 ex-felons.

Historically, the federal government has used voter disenfranchisement to lock certain populations out of the vote; groups such as women, criminals, African-Americans, other minorities and the poor. Today convicted felons are the only remaining group that remains disenfranchised by law, according to Marc Mauer, Executive Director of The Sentencing Project, and author of the essay, "Mass Imprisonment and the Disappearing Voters."

Proponents of felony disenfranchisement see denying felons the right to vote as another form of punishment. Conservatives who support it want to prevent criminals



from voting for representatives who would work in their favor. They see convicted felons as a demographic that could go to the Democratic side. King confirmed that conservatives have a legitimate reason to be apprehensive of felons securing the right to vote; if they had the opportunity in the 2008 election, they would have "overwhelmingly voted Democratic," resulting in an even wider margin of victory for Obama.

The public tends to generally agree with felony disenfranchisement as another means to punish criminals, but a July 2003 study by Brian Pinaire at Fordham University found that 66.8% of people surveyed believed that disenfranchisement should end with one's sentence. Nevertheless, most of the general public is unaware of the unintended

consequences of felony disenfranchisement, one of which includes de facto racism against black males. Although the 15th Amendment of the U.S. constitution prevents state governments from using race as a basis on which to determine voting eligibility, one out of every eight African-American adult males is disenfranchised. Nationally, around two million black males are unable to vote because of state felony disenfranchisement policies which is 36% of the disenfranchised population. Latino men also make up a majority of the prison population. According to the 2008 report from the Pew Center on the States, one in every 36 Latino adult males is disenfranchised.

Currently, the U.S. is the only democratic nation that denies ex-prisoners the right to vote. Ten states revoke the voting rights of ex-felons for life. In some such states, ex-prisoners have the opportunity to seek pardon or clemency from the governor so that they may vote, although it is a rare occurrence. Only nine states restore voting rights to ex-offenders automatically, or following waiting periods up to ten years.

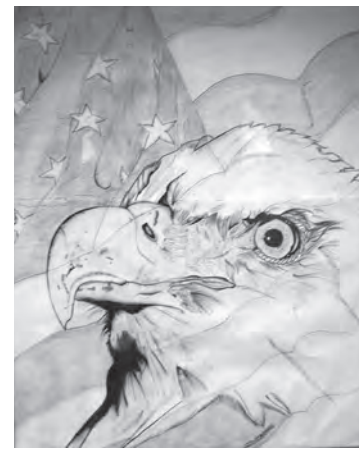
Two states, Maine and Vermont, do allow prisoners to vote. These states are a model for those who believe in full enfranchisement of all citizens, but King notes that prisoners are given absentee ballots, meaning their vote counts toward the district from which they came, not the district in which they are imprisoned. Furthermore, all prisoners are counted as citizens in the census for the purposes of district apportionment, but are not allowed to take part in electing the people who will represent them. Peter Wagner, Executive Director of the Prison Policy Initiative, indicated that the impact of this prison miscount on state and federal funding is small, "but the impact on the political process and redistricting is quite large." They

have a report about prison-based gerrymandering in Illinois scheduled for release in January.

In Illinois, voting rights are restored automatically upon release and those on parole, probation, or are in jail awaiting trial can vote. Illinois has improved the restoration process, ensuring that newly released prisoners have been informed of their right to vote and aiding in the registration process. Darrell Cannon, recently released from prison after 24 years, voted for the first time in his life last November, at a polling place across the street from his house. "What made it such a historic event for me was that I was able to vote for an Afro-American for the presi-

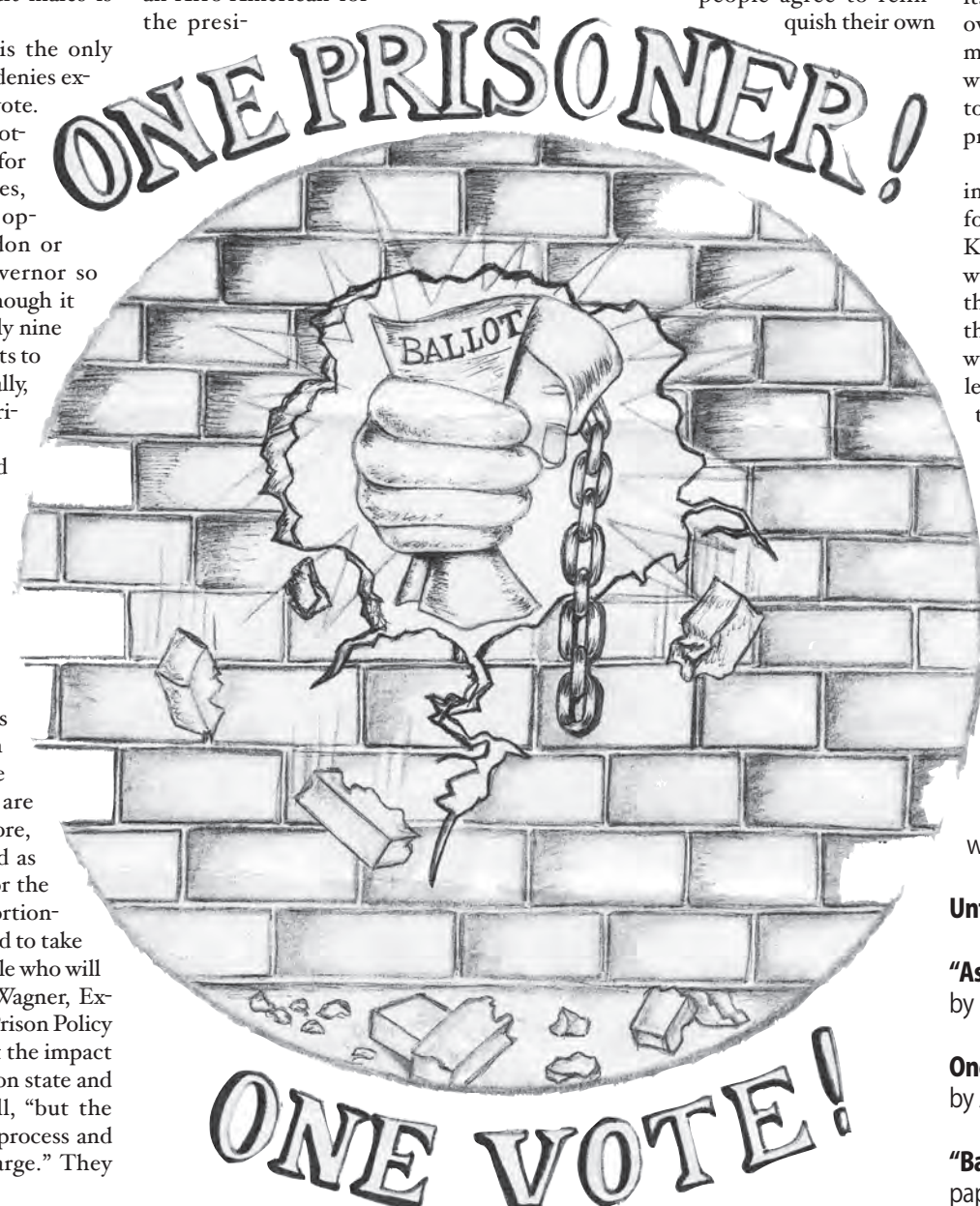
dent of the United States," Cannon stated. On election night, he was working the midnight shift as a security guard with no TV or radio, and suspected that Obama might have won when he "became aware of the sounds of celebration in the distance." It wasn't until he got home the next morning that he saw the results. In prison, Cannon said, they did their best to keep up with election coverage but it was limited.

Though current Illinois prisoners are legally unable to vote, a small movement, known as the "One Prisoner, One Vote" Initiative was started by Anaviel Rakemeyahu in support of prisoner suffrage. Free people agree to relinquish their own



vote and instead vote in a prisoner's place. The initiative is the first of its kind and has enlisted the help of over 200 so far. In the future, Rakemeyahu hopes that the movement will capture the attention of legislators and increase the involvement of prisoners in the political process.

The Sentencing Project's report indicates significant policy transformation over the last ten years. King remains optimistic that we will see more changes in time for the next election. When it comes to the rest of the states falling in line with Maine and Vermont, King is less optimistic: "changes to end lifetime disenfranchisement policies continue to gain momentum, but there's not a lot of legislative push to allow prisoners to vote. We are a long way off from that."



Clockwise starting from top left:

Untitled (ink and wash on white paper) by Joseph Dole

Untitled by Kmuell King

"As American as Apple Pie" (oil) by Renaldo Hudson

One Prisoner! One Vote! by Anaviel Rakemeyahu

"Barack and Martin" (pencil on paper) by Avshalom Chayim



Editorial: One Prisoner! One Vote!

by Anaviel Rakemeyahu

Because of an overwhelming amount of prisoners getting the word out about the August 20, 2008 hearing on HB4154 (Elderly Sentence Adjustment), which took place at Chicago's Thompson Center, there was an overflow crowd in attendance.

Bill Ryan credits this to the large amount of incarcerated men and women that filled out and returned their *One Prisoner! One Vote!* registration forms. These forms were compiled into our database located at the *Stateville Speaks* headquarters.

So far, we have received over 200 names of people that are willing to support our cause, which includes registering as proxy voters for disenfranchised prisoners. This is a great start, but we need many more. *One Prisoner! One Vote!* is the first prisoner political movement of its kind that is working to empower the many disenfranchised incarcerated men and women throughout Illinois.

Simply put, politics is power. Who gets it, when, where, why and how. Every day in prisons across Illinois decisions are made for us. What to eat, when to eat. How to walk, how to talk. Even when to use the washroom. Prisoners have virtually no control or power over their existence.

What better way to galvanize and motivate prisoners than the aspiration and promise of obtaining political power? Everyone should control their own destiny and political power is what prisoners need and it is the only power that lawmakers respect. Prisoners are often left out of the decision-making process yet must face the repercussions of these decisions daily.

The more that I understand poli-

tics, and its relationship to our plight, the more I see that a political movement for and by disenfranchised incarcerated men and women is not only necessary, but is of extreme urgency!

The core belief and mantra of *One Prisoner! One Vote!* is to educate, then organize, our proxy voters all the way to the polls. We are no different than any other political lobbyist group.

Of course, we cannot physically lobby in Springfield, but we can lobby through letters, do research on politicians, educate family and friends on the political process and solicit proxy voters.

Because of our limitations, we have focused our efforts on primarily eight areas: 1) Educating ourselves and our supporters on the political process and on Illinois candidates. 2) Identifying state Senators and Representatives in our supporters' districts. 3) Building on our existing *One Prisoner! One Vote!* registry. 4) Organizing a mailing list. 5) Writing letters to legislators. 6) Bringing attention to the many problems that exist within the Illinois prison complex. 7) Having our supporters write letters, addressing our support or opposition to potential political bills of interest. 8) Strategically organizing write-ins and phone-ins.

We understand that we have a long way to go. Also, that it is extremely unlikely that prisoners in Illinois will be restored the constitutional right to vote. However, we strongly feel that a campaign enlisting the support of proxy voters for prisoners will be highly successful.

For these reasons, we ask that you continue registering and informing your supporters on the work that is being done through *One Prisoner! One Vote!* Educate!...Organize!





"The Rake in Bedlam," from the series *A Rake's Progress* by the Englishman William Hogarth, 1733. This engraving shows the once rich Tom Rakewell, reduced to penury and madness. In the 18th century, it was common to lock up criminals, the poor and the all insane together, and to allow the rich to pay a few cents to observe the spectacle. Such treatment was ended in most nations by the early 1800s. But the practice of imprisoning the mentally ill with the regular population still continues in some penitentiaries.



Honore Daumier, *A Modern Galileo – And Still it Moves*, 1834. This lithograph depicts a man locked in prison for his political beliefs. He is being asked by the bailiff to renounce his views if he wishes to be set free. Like Galileo who knew that the earth moved around the sun and not vice versa, the man here can be made to deny what he knows to be true about the rights of men, but that truth remains. The Frenchman Daumier was the greatest political cartoonist and caricaturist who ever lived. Captions by Stephen F. Eisenman.

The price of privatized health care

by Gabriella Tzeneva

As established by the Supreme Court ruling of *Estelle v. Gamble* in 1976, states are required to provide timely and adequate medical services to people they incarcerate. A recent trend, however, towards contracting out medical care for prisoners "to managed correctional health care providers," has rested those inherently public obligations in the hands of private companies that exist to make a profit—thus, striking some controversy.

Theoretically, there would be no ethical concern regarding the use of private health care providers, like Wexford Health Incorporated, if there was unequivocal evidence that they are, indeed, fulfilling the goals they have set themselves—"to meet or exceed the standards of care established by national evidence-based guidelines." But research indicates otherwise.

Studies on the quality of prison health care speak of stark deficiencies in the delivery of services. Ted Pearson noted in his report to Prison Health Subcommittee of the Joint Legislative Committee on Long Term Prisoners of the Illinois State Legislature, that "while most health care workers within the system are dedicated to fulfilling their responsibility, [they] are severely constrained by insufficient staff and other resources." As a result there is a substantial "lack of trust between patients and staff." Pearson's study, which was initiated in 1998 upon the receipt

of a number of letters from prisoners about medical neglect, determined that the "health care delivered to prisoners within the system is uneven in quality." One finding was the "fact that the IDOC does not have statistics on the incidence of medical problems among prisoners" which "indicates a policy of indifference." Pearson and his organization, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, are collecting statistics on medical neglect and mistreatment in Illinois prisons, and hoping to file a class-action lawsuit against the IDOC.

Their findings are further confirmed by anecdotal evidence from a number of prisoner letters that paint a similar picture of the staff and services provided by prison health care. A prisoner in Stateville wrote, "There have been cases where men complained about having pains but were not seen by a doctor or when they were, they were misdiagnosed." He attributed such problems to lack of concern from the medical staff, "We need doctors who are skilled and want

to treat people." He reported that the prisoners struggle with the lack of professionalism from some staff. "It's OK if people don't like you, but it is totally wrong for them to refuse to do their job, based on their feelings. This is not only unprofessional but also unethical."

"There have been cases where men complained about having pains but were not seen by a doctor or when they were, they were misdiagnosed."

A prisoner at Stateville

But, as Wil S. Hylton, who did an investigation of prison HMOs for *Harper's* wrote, "Like so many things in prison, 'malpractice' is inscrutable. Negligence is not necessarily enough for a lawsuit." However, if negligence practices are indeed present at Illinois prisons, someone has to make a stand and ask the necessary questions: How are the "Quality Management Programs" administered? Who is responsible for monitoring the health care providers and their practices? How are grievances dealt with?

Wexford Health Incorporated was contacted via phone two times, and twice, two different people were unable to provide answers to the questions or connect the interviewer to a higher authority. Such failure points to lack of transparency and accountability of those that are responsible for one of the most important duties states have to those incarcerated in prison.

Other research by Hylton on the topic of health care, conducted through the interviews with a number of nurses, employed by the private health care providers, concluded the following: "They [the health care companies] don't want anyone to know what's going on in these facilities. Getting medical records and company documents is like going up against Fort Knox." Indeed, obtaining medical records of prisoners, even anonymously, is almost an impossible task for any group wishing to research and monitor the practices of health care providers, which begs the question: Why such secrecy, if there is nothing to hide?

But sporadic events like the indictment of former IDOC head Donald N. Snyder, Jr. in 2007, for allegedly accepting \$50,000 in kickbacks by an Illinois prison consultant representing "vendors that had multi-million-dollar contracts with the state prison agency" imply that private health care in prisons carries the risk of causing a conflict in interest between duties and profit. But scandal doesn't have to be present for privatization to pose a problem. In an article about prison privatization, *The Economist* concurs: "Cutting costs through privatization always sounds like an attractive option; but cutting exactly the right deal with private providers of such a crucial service is difficult, and the price of failure is high." Indeed, the price is too steep to pay—and health care is not worth the barter of cutting costs.

Stateville vs. Dwight: Separate but unequal

by Lydia Rowan

As a Loyola University student entering Stateville, I was hoping it would live up to its name. I knew that most of the men were serving long-term sentences so they would have very little to lose if they misbehaved. Before visiting Dwight women's facility, I assumed the prison cells would be similar to Stateville. I thought I would see lots of "catty" angry female behavior like pushing and shoving, dirty looks and criticism towards me and my female classmates. Neither of these assumptions came close to my actual findings. After an exclusive tour with my classmates at both prisons, I was shocked at the difference between them.

The Stateville prisoners had many complaints. They wanted respect from the correctional officers and the ability to move around more. They demanded the right to hold their children during visits and expressed their right to shower at least every other day. The elderly inmates we interviewed were serving life sentences and were part of the workforce program back when it got started. They were well-educated and had spent their long years in prison building furniture or manufacturing bars of soap. Pay was close to nothing, but they loved the work because it was better than staying in the cell, and the money went to their children and families. These long-timers had built up trust with correctional officers, and exhibited a genuine desire to rehabilitate themselves. But, it was clear that in the current setting at Stateville, for most men, rehabilitation would be almost impossible. The boredom alone could make someone insane. We toured the Stateville's infamous Roundhouse, for

example, where we were surrounded by hundreds of men screaming, chanting, and banging on bars. It was like being the center of attention at a zoo that houses men, instead of dangerous animals, in iron cages.

On the contrary, at Dwight Correctional Center, we found playgrounds for visitation with children, picnic tables, softball fields, basketball courts, and a puppy pound where prisoners train dogs to assist handicapped citizens. The women at Dwight had access to listen to music and socialize. They were able to shower numerous times a day, whereas typically at Stateville showers take place once a week. "At Dwight, all they do is shower. Everyday, whenever they want," a correctional officer informed me. Dwight holds all security levels, but even the maximum-security prisoners had vastly more opportunities than the men at Stateville. They could walk around the facility simply identified by a specific color on their badge. At Stateville, a prisoner, regardless of his crime, is incarcerated for 23 out of 24 hours of the day in their cell. At Dwight, all female prisoners are assigned a job upon entry and offered numerous recovery, rehabilitation and educational programs, such as GED classes and college courses. It takes months, if not years, for an inmate at Stateville to be enrolled in any kind of academic or work-related programs. Dwight admittedly has fewer inmates, but it seemed more like as a rehabilitation center, not a prison. I believe in rehabilitation, but the inequity between these two prisons was overwhelming.

I interviewed Dee L. Battaglia, who served as Warden at Stateville,



"Three Girls Praying" (watercolor) by Darryl Simms

and Assistant Warden at Dwight to see if she could explain this disparity. She said that the Dwight and Stateville programming are very different in both leadership and perspective, and that "none of the male prison programs come close to their female counterparts." This seems to be a difference in philosophy between the Women's Division, where the top administration is very supportive of programs, and the Men's Division, where they aren't. As a result, Dwight supports programs from both faith-based and community-based volunteers, for all levels of security. She noted that, "There are some male prisons currently that do not have any state chaplains which are mandated by IDOC's own rules; some prisons do not even have ANY teachers although their own rules require that ALL offenders must attend school to attain a 6th grade reading level for a minimum of 90 days."

This inequality also has to do with a failure to think of men as parents. Battaglia noted that the Women's Division, "Believes that the women removed from their children causes the children,

women and society irreparable harm when the mother is incarcerated." They try to keep women with their children. In the Men's Division, she said top administration is just the opposite, "The administration sees little benefit in programs for helping male offenders to become better fathers when they return to the community, or for long-term offenders."

For so many years there has been a struggle to achieve equal rights amongst men and women, so why is the IDOC allowing more privileges and prison rights to women and not men? How does the IDOC justify such unequal treatment? I asked this to another IDOC official, who said that the IDOC generally believes that women can be rehabilitated more easily than men. Clearly, rehabilitation cannot happen when offenders are locked up for 23 out of 24 hours each day experiencing stress and sensory deprivation. What I learned on this trip was that if a man commits a serious crime, he gets punished; if a female commits the same crime or even worse, she can be educated and rehabilitated.

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

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

Join CURE and unite for prisoner rehabilitation!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Cost is \$2 for prisoners or \$10 for individuals

Mail this coupon and payment to:

CURE, PO Box 2310
Washington, D.C. 20013

Visit www.curenational.org

A call to end the cycle of pain and recidivism

From a statement to the Prison Reform Committee, abridged for publication.

by Ibi Cole

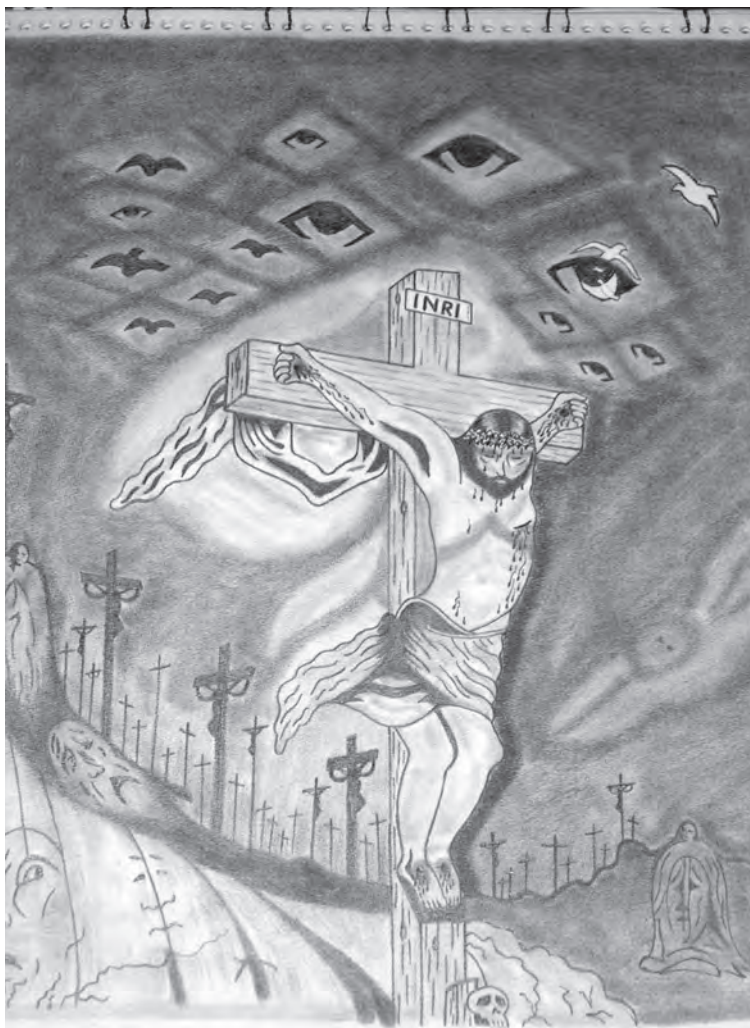
"Rapists, murderers, and gangsters; the worst of the worst. Lock 'em up; Throw Away the Key . . . How could anyone complain about how prisoners are treated, when they gave no such thought at the time they committed their crimes? Why should we care about their pain or suffering?" This outrage is fair. The outrage of victims is more than fair. No one can speak on what they have been through and I could never attempt to place the experience into words.

It is sensible, absolutely, that those who commit crimes should be face the repercussions of that crime. It is sensible, absolutely, that those who would seek to harm others should be detained and society protected. It is sensible, absolutely, that there are SOME prisoners who may never rehabilitate themselves in order to walk among society. But, it would be a grave disservice of humanity to lump everyone who has ever seen the inside of a prison under one category.

But, it is not sensible to call it "corrections" if all we do is make an individual who is bad worse; or if we mummify a person in a living tomb at high cost to tax-payers. It is not sensible to remedy death with more death . . . because a life lost for a life lost is forever a loss and we are only going in circles. I don't speak in favor of those who have committed crime, but for society. I speak for those who have not yet been victimized by rising crime. I speak for our future victims and our future children.

It has been said: What do we owe murder victims family members whose lives have been so totally and permanently devastated? If we tell them 'Life Without Parole' at the end of their trial and appeals process, then they say 'Whew, okay, at least this is behind me' and then they do their best to live their lives, each day in this horrible 'new normal' that is life without the person or persons they loved so much . . . going on at least not having to think about the killer getting out. . .

My answer is: We owe murder victim's families more than death. We owe them truth. We owe redemption. We owe them anything and everything that we can give to make the world a



"Jesus Christ's Face" (pencil on paper) by Jose Echevarria

better place. We owe them more than just forgetting and moving on. We owe them some repair. Repair at the root of the problem. Because society cannot honor victims by creating more victims. We may not be able to replace what was broken, but we can attempt to help heal. We can attempt to stop the bleeding at the source and maybe victims don't want to hear it because they are hurting and are entitled to that hurt, but we don't owe just them repair, we owe everyone.

The truth is: Life without the possibility of parole and long-term sentences are prolonged and highly expensive death sentences. It is a sentence that says, there is no hope for you, ever. You will remain forever the evil you once were. When someone says: "But you're letting killers out!" that is to say that all persons forever stay in the perpetual state of a past action no matter how much time passes or how much they learn or change. You will remain forever

the horrid choice you once made. Life without the possibility of parole says: There is no possibility that you could repay society for what you have done. But, is that fair to society?

Certainly victims MUST be at the forefront when considering violent offences, but any lawmaker who supports rehabilitation and sentence adjustments are not placing the human rights of prisoners over victims at all. They are considering what is best for ALL who must live under this nation (under God) and pay for this system, because, in fact, these crimes are crimes not only against the victim, but against the state. They are keeping in line with the underlying beauty of the constitution that was never not locked into determinacy, because it knew and WE understood that we as a people are constantly evolving and changing.

We have the power to look at ALL factors plaguing the prison system and the truth is: we need to free up the piling costs of elderly prisoners

to refocus on preventative programs. Bringing ex-prisoners back into the communities to counsel and guide youth away from making the same mistakes they have made is effective. You could label those who have hope for a better future as bleeding hearts, or prisoner advocates. But these titles are inaccurate. We are realists. We want people to GET REAL. Warehousing a growing population as a reaction to crime is a system that will eventually implode. And not only is it incapable of financially sustaining itself, it is archaic and backward thinking.

I do not consider myself an advocate of prisoners. I consider myself an advocate of humanity. I am an advocate of redemption and atonement. I am an advocate of payment. LET THEM PAY, IF WE WANT THEM TO PAY. Leaders in Community mentoring such as James Yaki Sayles, once convicted of murder, Geraldine Smith, Ra Chaka and a numerous C# prisoners have saved MY life in many a respect. They taught me lessons about life that cannot be taught in schools or by teachers. They may have taken away, but I thank God they had the opportunity to give to me and to others. They were thrown away like trash, but they were not trash. In an age of limited resources and in a time when we need to be more GREEN, they were recycled. They were given a chance to be rebuilt and renewed. They know now what is right.

I challenge that legislators are being SOFT on crime if they continue to implement the same non-working ineffective practices that have the recidivism over 50% and violent crime on the rise. I challenge that legislators are not being tough enough on crime if they cannot implement new ideas and strategies.

All the torture and confinement in the world could never bring back someone we love from the dead. Nothing can bring them back. But we torture and punish as if somehow, in the end what we lost will be resurrected to life. We continue on as if we can seal up this empty void full of pain, sorrow and loss. But when we continue to hate and hurt as we have been hurt, we only widen and deepen this gaping hole of anger calling out for more vengeance. In the end, we will find that we have become what we hated most; that bitter, lost, angry soul crying for blood, and the cycle only continues.

Prisoners trapped in technology time warp

by Michelle Pomerleau

Many holiday shoppers went to stores like Best Buy, Circuit City, and the Apple Store to buy the latest technology for their friends and family. Their purchases included iPods, laptops, BlackBerrys, and digital cameras. Would you believe that some Americans asked for typewriters and cassette players this holiday season? Would you believe that some have been saving for these items for years and still desperately want them?

For the more than one percent of Americans who are incarcerated, iPods and computers are beyond their reach. The technology available to prisoners is the technology that Americans on the "outside" last saw decades ago. Some inmates in American prisons have never used a cell phone or the internet. They are in a technological time warp and some will soon return to the outside world, a world that has rapidly progressed in its technology while they served time behind bars.

The items that prisoners in Illinois are permitted to have are determined by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The Department's main concern is safety—both of the staff and of the inmates. Computers and devices like iPods, which hold the capacity to exchange and store large amounts of information, are too complex to be regulated by the IDOC. However, even though inmates do not have access to computers, it is recognized that prisoners need to be able to produce readable documents in order to appeal their cases. At Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois, typewriters can be ordered through the prison's commissary. The commissary was founded in 1930 and it offers technology available to prisoners such as the Sintec 2410 typewriter for \$279.54. The typewriter is specifically designed for use in prisons, made with clear plastic to deter inmates from trying to conceal contraband inside the machine. Other items on the commissary product list include art supplies, beverages, clothing, shoes, towels, blankets, electronics, food, games, housewares like bowls and mugs, toiletries, vitamins, and office supplies. The most expensive item is

the typewriter; the least expensive is a legal envelope for 16 cents.

Inmates place a written order with the commissary and the commissary employees, other prisoners, fill the order. When inmates make purchases, they must pay in full. Loans from the state are no longer available unless the prisoner can prove that they have no contacts on the outside that could offer them financial assistance.

Companies are profiting on the restrictions placed on prisoners' possessions. Special typewriters, calculators, electric fans, and electric razors made of clear plastic are produced specifically for the prison population. Companies like Music by Mail and Pack Central offer current music on cassette tapes. CDs are not allowed because they can be broken and made into weapons.

One Stateville commissary worker called the purchases of commissary items a "survival tactic." He explained that inmates do all that they can to make it through their time behind bars. Depending on the prisoner, that can mean immersing oneself in case study, trying to build a strong appeal case, creating art, or enjoying a daily Pepsi. The commissary gives inmates options and though these are minor options, for some it's what they need to make it.

But what happens when inmates are released into a world of technology they've only seen on TV? One former inmate who spoke to our class shared that he had to relearn to do the simplest things, like use keys to open doors. How do we expect released inmates to succeed in today's society without pre-release training in today's most common technology? As we increasingly become dependent on computers, the Internet, and wireless connectivity, we need to consider the effects of incarceration on an individual's ability to function and contribute to society. We must provide assistance for inmates' transition between decades of technology. If you are able, do something many prisoners have never done: visit our class blog at <http://statevillespeaksloyola.wordpress.com/>. If you are reading this from behind bars, know that there are concerned citizens using new technology to advocate for you.



"Dwarf Warrior" (pencil on paper) by James Shuman

A hopeful change

by Andre Patterson

Hope can be a fleeting wind for some, varying in degrees of intensity according to the season in which it blows. It can be crafty, eluding capture like a hunted animal trying desperately to survive. Hope can also be pulled out of the sphere of the unformed and be shaped and manipulated into a universal substance that can be grasped by all; then divided into portions only to be consumed by a "chosen few" (religion). Hope can also be an anchor for the personality who is searching for an immovable steadfastness, in the midst of tumultuous waters. But, if it is immersed in a sea of illusion and not reality, then that anchor will be swallowed by a bottomless pit of self-deception and lies. What are you hoping for?

Change is a revolutionary movement, not a one-time event. It has to abide by the universal law of motion, and once it ceases to move, it is deceased. When manifested within a person, it results in a constant elevation of consciousness, and the continuous evolution of the entire being. Physiologically speaking, change must occur or death resides. But, there is a type of internal shift that must take place in order to spark an external Movement. A mental reformation of the prisoner inside,

who is held captive by the false perceptions of Self; individualistic ideals that keeps one separate from the whole, preventing one from becoming whole. So in this sense, hope and change can be treated as a mythical creature not to be taken seriously; discarded and dismissed as childish fancy; or it can become something tangible that can be apprehended and implemented, as opposed to arrested in development.

This is the change I am hoping for; a resurrection of thousands of mentally dead who carry a shovel, digging their own graves, deeper and deeper. I am hoping for an infusion of life into those of us who lie lifeless in these tombs, stinking, rotting corpses. I am hoping for the attainment of a heavenly state of mind, so that I can finally quench the flames from this Hell of my own making.

I am on an expedition to excavate and destroy every prison bar buried deep within my psyche, used to confine me instead of refine me (prison reform); every bar that leads me to believe that I can't (Yes You Can); that restricts me from I my highest potential (the sky is not the limit); that keeps society believing that I'm an animal with no redeeming qualities (I am only human); and keeps me from understanding that my true Self is masked by my personalities (Know Thyself). Now Free-Dome is mine.

Front seat with a police officer

by Alyssa Hill

Sirens go off in the car, the call comes in and the next thing you know you are flying past cars with people inside wondering, "What happened?" Every day police officers all over the world go to work with the intention of helping and protecting the public.

In order to see what it is like for an officer, I decided to do a ride along with a Northwest Suburban police officer. I rode in the squad car for eight hours to see exactly what a day in the life of a police officer was like.

It took place on a Saturday early in November during the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift with Officer Michael Spohn. The day started off slow, which gave me time to get to know the officer and why he chose the career path he did. Officer Spohn said: "I always wanted to be a cop when I was growing up, and I knew it was a secure job. There will always be a need for police officers." According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of police and detectives is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2016. Officer Spohn has been at his current job for the past seven years and before that worked in the Information Technology field.

While interviewing Officer Spohn a call came in for possible domestic violence. Within seconds he flipped on the lights and sirens and we were on our way. When we arrived at the location other officers were already inside. A neighbor had called 9-1-1 because she heard fighting across the hall. After the officers talked to the couple for approximately 15 minutes everything was resolved.

We then went back to patrolling, which allowed me some time to ask Officer Spohn some more questions. What I really wanted to know was how he felt about the people he arrested. He said: "I don't think of them any differently than anyone else, everyone makes mistakes. I treat them how I would treat anyone else, and that is with as much respect as I can." People make bad decisions that they believe are impossible to recover from, but recovery can be possible according to Officer Spohn. "Some people will always have a certain stigma with them, but can someone change? Sure they can. Everyone has made mistakes, some worse than others, but generally I think everyone can change. We all make mistakes and learn from them and become better people," Spohn said.

As we drove through the town

I couldn't help but notice all of the looks we were getting, whether they were cold, angry, confused or scared. People assume that if a police officer is by them that they are going to get pulled over or that they did something wrong. People think that police officers do whatever they want whenever they want, but that isn't necessarily true. According to Officer Spohn, he will not do anything that he would pull someone over for. He said that just because he was a police officer it doesn't give him the right to break the law. We were approaching a stop light that had turned yellow and that we could have made it through before it turned red, but Officer Spohn slammed on the brakes. I looked at him with confusion because I expected him to go through it and he said, "I can't go through the light, I would pull someone over if they did it."

If a job is surrounded by the negative aspects of everyday life, then why do people do it? Officer Spohn said: "The occasions that I can actually help somebody, whether it's giving them advice or stopping something bad from happening to them, where you can actually make a difference. That is what keeps me coming back each day."

After a long day of serious con-

versation and 9-1-1 calls coming in, I wanted to lighten up the mood a little. I wanted to know what the best excuse Officer Spohn had ever heard was. He said: "I pulled an elderly lady over for speeding one time. She was substantially over the limit, probably 20 to 25 miles over, and she told me that when she was driving she got something stuck in her eye and it made her speed up. I thought, 'Yeah that's really when I want to speed, when I'm blind in one eye.' Then I went and checked her in the system and she already had two other speeding tickets within the past month, so obviously she bought herself another one."

At the end of the day I had learned a lot from Officer Spohn. I learned that not every aspect of the job is negative, that police officers aren't all out to get you, that if an officer is following you extremely close he wants you to get into the other lane so he can pass you—and most importantly that people are human and humans make mistakes. A lot of people have the wrong impression of police officers, and the majority of people have the wrong impression of prisoners. Everyone messes up throughout their lives; some mistakes are just harder to correct.

Restorative justice: Let's make it happen in Illinois

by Anthony Spencer Sr.

We, the men of Stateville Prison, are trying to develop a rare opportunity to participate in what is referred to as "Restorative Justice." Unfortunately, the present system of criminal justice does not encourage mediation for those who are ready and would benefit from it.

It seeks to keep Victims (or in the case of murder, the victim's family) and the Offenders apart, discouraging any kind of reconciliation or restitution. Of course there are Offenders who are not willing to own their part and Victims who are too scared, wounded, and angry to want anything to do with the Offender.

Yet, when the Victim is open to some movement toward reconciliation and wants some answers, there is no way to get them. When an Offender is truly remorseful and wants to stand accountable there is most often no opportunity for the Victim

or their family to know this. The current retributive model of justice is interested in determining guilt and administering punishment. Its concern is not healing. The existing system inhibits the closure for both Victim/Offender, and in so doing, often keeps them linked forever in unhealthy ways.

The rare exception to this is a small number of Victims/Offenders programs that are being facilitated in prisons around the country. Illinois does not have one. They're supervised meetings that usually bring together a small group of selectively screened violent Offenders and Victims of violent crimes.

The purpose and hopes of these meetings is that through open communication the offended parties might get some answers and begin some closure on the anger and pain they experience, also the Offender receives a realistic sense of accountability, separate from the physical

reality of their prison sentence. In the process, each may find a new awareness, a point from which healing can occur. Studies have indicated that in addition to helping each to heal emotionally, both Victim/Offender begin to break down stereotypes of the other.

This restorative model of justice views crime as being against people and the community, not the State. It is interested in solutions that promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance.

I believe we can develop a satellite program like this for our State, and initiate this kind of opportunity to promote healing and real closure here in our communities. Let's work together to make it happen in Illinois.



"Sunshine" by Michael Sullivan

Prison libraries underfunded and lacking

"I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke in me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive." — **Malcolm X**

by Amy Galanter

A 1992 adult literacy survey by the National Center for Education Statistics revealed that the prisoners are less educated, and possess lower literacy levels than the general population. Illiteracy perpetuates crime and keeps our prisons running because uneducated people are economically and socially marginalized. Professor Isaac Ehrlich of State University of New York conducted extensive research on crime and education, and concluded that these two factors are definitely connected, "It is essentially the inequalities in the distribution of schooling and training, not their mean levels that appear to be strongly related to the incidence of many crimes." Education is a tool that improves quality of life and creates new solutions to old problems. Therefore, prison libraries present an enormous opportunity to improve education, reduce crime and recidivism rates, and decrease criminal justice spending.

In his autobiography, Malcolm X showed that education and language give people power and the ability to improve their situation. He had anger towards society and people, and he realized he must be articulate in order to get his point across. He read and copied the entire dictionary, and from then on began reading voraciously.

"I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. If I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk ... Months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life" (*Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1965).

Under law, every prison should have a library and a law library, and two Supreme Court cases directly address the issues of prison law libraries. The 1977 decision delivered by Justice Thurgood Marshall in *Bounds v. Smith* stated that the constitutional right of prisoners includes "meaningful, adequate, and effective access to the courts." Marshall detailed how law libraries and legal assistance are essential for framing

adequate legal documents.

Nineteen years later, Justice Antonin Scalia delivered a decision in *Casey v. Lewis* which effectively ignored and voided the prior *Bounds v. Smith* decision. Scalia said, "Several statements in *Bounds* went beyond the right of access recognized ... These elaborations upon the right of access to the courts have no antecedent in pre-*Bounds* cases, and we now disclaim them." Scalia also said that the prior demands of the *Bounds v. Smith* decision would require a "permanent provision of counsel," which is not stated in the constitution. No prison had ever created such a provision, and this certainly was not the intent of Marshall in the *Bounds v. Smith* decision. A well-funded, adequate library with legal assistance, including paralegals and jailhouse lawyers would definitely assist prisoners in having their claims heard. Such resources are especially helpful for prisoners with low literacy levels, as legal terminology is complex and wordy. It is still mandatory for prisons to have a law library, but support is not mandated, and it is up to each individual prison to allocate funding.

Madeline Ward, former prisoner and library worker at Dwight Correctional Center, is concerned about the accessibility of books. She found the system inefficient for workers and confusing for inmates: "The processing system is done by hand and takes at least 15 minutes per book." She said it would be very helpful to receive a donation of a barcode reader from a library to assist in processing. Ward emphasized that a library must not only have materials, but also resources in how to find and use them. This reiterates Thurgood Marshall's decision: "Meaningful, adequate, and effective access to the courts" does not simply mean a pile of books.

In Illinois, there is no standard regulation for regular prison libraries. Some prisons have librarians (full time, part-time, traveling librarians who service many prisons, or inmates) but the facility and upkeep varies by prison. At Dwight, the library (law and regular are combined) is located in Jane Addams Hall and has recently



"Tranquility" by William Jones

been closed due to roof leaks. There is a full time, union-employed librarian and two paralegals who can help prisoners use the law library, which takes up one-third of the space. Access is limited to two and a half days per week and a pass given by the librarian is needed to use it. About the regular library, Ward noted, "The books tend to be terribly religious in nature and the library lacks books written by Blacks, Hispanics, and books in other languages."

At Stateville, the law library and the regular library are also in the same room. Bill Ryan, coordinator of *Stateville Speaks*, said there are often waiting lists for books and that space is limited, "Stateville might have over 2,000 prisoners, but only about 30 at one time can fit." At Tamms, where inmates are in permanent solitary confinement, books are limited, and there is currently no librarian. Prisoners fill out specific request forms, and reading material is delivered every two to four weeks. But prisoners report that they often receive the same books. They can also visit the "satellite law library" in solitude, which one prisoner described as "just another cell with books in it." He said the materials are there "if you know what you are doing. If you don't know what you are doing, then you'd just be at a loss." Most are, he added.

Funding was cut by the IDOC in the 1990s for all libraries, excluding law libraries, so the selection is mainly limited to donations. Before 1990, an inter-library loan system allowed access to Illinois libraries, but this system was also cut. There is no Internet access for prisoner use at any Illinois prison.

Because of this lack of support, outside organizations work to provide reading material to prisoners. A nationwide group called Books To Prisoners mails books to prisoners all over the country. There is an Urbana, Ill. division, with two smaller book projects that work outside of Chicago. The Urbana group serves 24 state prisons and this volunteer coalition has mailed out more than 28,000 books to 4,444 prisoners. Volunteer Sarah Ross said, "In prison, the library is a privilege, so if you 'misbehave' the prison can take access rights away. This is one of Books To Prisoners' reasons for sending books directly to prisoners, not to the library." The group matches book donations with prisoner's requests. (Contact them at: UC Books to Prisoners, Box 515 Urbana IL 61803)

However, the argument arises, "Why fund education for inmates when our children aren't getting an adequate education?" This is a valid concern, but we must realize that prisoner and children's education are not mutually exclusive. Further, these prisoners are the children that did not receive an adequate education. These prisoner's children are those children as well. Most solutions that we come up with are temporary fixes and cover-ups. We need infrastructural changes in prison education, libraries, GED programs, and classes in order to move forward in reducing recidivism and improving the prison system. Malcolm X became one of the most articulate and motivating speakers of the 20th century. Quite literally, he says that books and language are what liberated him.

A day in the life of a prisoner

Stateville Speaks sent letters asking prisoners at various facilities to submit a description of their daily activities. The following chart was compiled using three of these letters as the basis. However, these are not typical of every prisoner, and should not be taken as representative of each facility. In fact, some are drastically different. Also, these institutions are often on “lockdown” mode, and prisoners are not allowed to leave their cells under any circumstances. *Stateville Speaks* welcomes you to send us your schedule on a regular day, and a lockdown day. We would like to report schedules from each prison.

	Tamms Supermax Level 1: Maximum-security, adult male	Pontiac C.C. Level 1: Maximum-security, adult male Level 3: High medium-security, adult male	Lawrence C.C. Level 1: Maximum-security, adult male
4-6 a.m.	Breakfast inside cell, wash eating utensils, brush teeth, prepare laundry bag ready for shower in the morning	4:36 a.m.: Awake, read the Bible, make tea, clean or exercise; “bird bath time” — washing up in cell	Sleep
7 a.m.	Daily count of inmates, make bed, wash down floor, workout — push-ups, jumping jacks, dips, lunges	7:30 a.m.: Daily count of inmates; breakfast	7:30 a.m.: Compliance Check — “which is making sure all your toys are put away like good prisoners because if something is out that is not suppose to be, that would be deemed a serious security threat.”
8-9 a.m.	8:30 a.m.: Shower 9 a.m.: Back in cell: Hang up clothes that were washed in shower, put on lotion, deodorant, clean cell door, wash down floor 9:30 a.m.: Lunch	8 a.m.: Inmates place outgoing mail on the bars of their cell 8 - noon: Assignment: “I am a worker at the Culinary Arts Cooking Center. I cook, bake and make salads.” Saturday: Anger management/substance abuse classes	8 a.m.: Work or free time: Paint, draw or listen to music; work as part of maintenance crew
10 a.m.	Brush teeth again; Go to yard, play chess or read		
11 a.m.	Watch TV or listen to walkman/radio (Note: Only men at Level 3 are allowed to buy either a TV or radio.)		
1 p.m.	Reading or studying Swahili, Spanish or writing	Inmates have the option of returning to their cell, going to the Law Library or going to the yard, where prisoners can play basketball, play cards or chess, etc.	
4:30 p.m.	Dinner: wash eating utensils, bless food, eat, brush teeth	3:30 p.m.: Second lock-up and count	4:30 p.m.: College courses
5-8 p.m.	Watch news on TV, write, finish reading, listen to radio, workout	Mealtime, shower Tuesdays: Jaycees’ meeting	Return to cell, relax 8 p.m.: Sleep
10 p.m.	Wash myself, cell, clothes, floor, door sink and toilet	Sleep	
11 p.m.	Read “Bless my night,” go over Swahili and Spanish words		
12 a.m.	Sleep		
	“Daily life at Tamms ... can best be described as a mundane and stagnant existence ... Taking time out to think beyond this place is good [meditating] and remembering who you are can all help you survive this place.”	“I want to devote my time to reading and writing with everything else secondary, but I can’t do that in prison. I have to keep my eyes open at all times or I won’t make it.”	“Most of us being locked up is dealing with the shame that put us here. ... We try, pray and find ways to keep hope alive while doing a natural life sentence.”

Prisoner art + poetry

Concrete and Iron City

by David A. Smith

Concrete and iron city
 What an awesome sight,
 From outside it looks peaceful
 Inside there's nothing but fright.

Men housed in cages
 Stacked row upon row,
 The despair, hopelessness and fear
 From outside who would know.

It's a battle from within
 Waged from dawn to dawn,
 To overcome the feelings
 Of a life gone wrong.

Segregated, Denigrated,
 Depreciated and worse,
 Time's more than your sentence
 It's been your lifelong curse.

Always struggling within yourself
 To make it day to day,
 To maintain a shred of sanity
 To help you along the way.

But the way is fraught with dangers
 Of the most fearsome kind,
 Self-destructive behavior
 Products of a diseased mind.

The world outside moves on
 Without giving any thought,
 The diseases most suffer
 Are ones society has wrought.

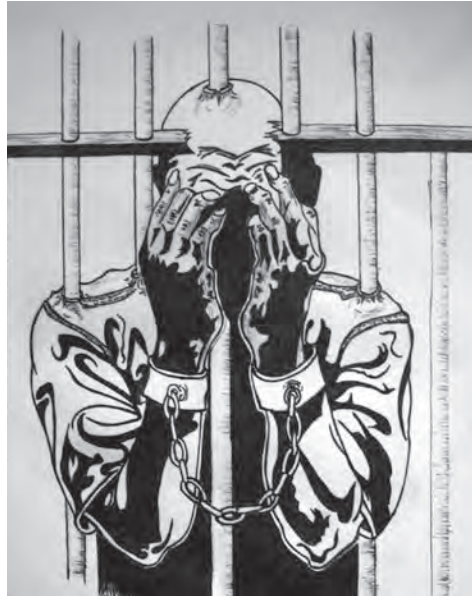
It's easier just not to care
 Than to take responsibility,
 It's easier to simply say:
 "Lock 'em up, throw away the key."

But that is not the answer
 To this problem that we face,
 A problem with no boundaries
 of religion, class or race.

Instead we need solutions
 To heal the sickness in our land.
 To help restore the dignity
 Of this fallen man.

Help him understand the man
 God intended him to be,
 Lift him up, make him realize
 His noble destiny.

Now the time is growing short
 And something must be done,
 A faithful voice must be heard
 Question is: "Will yours be one?"



For My Brothers and Sisters Who Have Suffered Isolation

Anonymous

Scribbled on the wall, pain reduces us to brothers. Here in the labyrinth there are only crusts of bread, and scraps of paper. The only tongue we know is the prisoner's scream. The oddest language gets caught in the catacombs and these vaults become our tombs. Once inside, nothing gets out. No notes, No words, only our blood recognizes that our hearts are doomed, our flesh will succumb to degradation, and the mind will numb. We get two gulps of terror for dinner and they skin us for lunch. In this gray hell even the light burns black.

Sansorenvelli

by Sandra Brown

Oh. My mercy-lacking taxpayers,
 Authors of the law,
 Every hardship is imposed on the flawless
 All for you.

Concrete Jungles keep "them" away from smiling
 houses
 Surrounded by picketed fences—
 Away from friendly Black Labradors
 Barking bouncing
 Like Mexican Jumpingbeans,
 Away from fresh cut sun-kissed emerald-green lawn;
 Greener than the sum totals
 Of your not flawed nine to fives.

Concrete Jungles keep those not named God
 From coloring your rainbows
 A thousand shades of gray.
 Hearts hardened by dry, compassionless consciences
 Erect infinite coffins above ground
 Sealing sick and tired blemishes.

Sick call calls the sick, but no collect.
 Walking blemishes,
 Squeezed, scratched and scabbed;
 Ointment no longer works.

Walking blemished fade bust,
 Oozing onto the emerald lawns;
 By the picketed fences;
 Next to the smiling houses,
 Saturating subsidized sums,
 Denied your own nine to fives,
 Taxing your taxes

All for you.



Top:
"The Reality"
 (ink on file folder)
 by Milton Smith

Left:
"Becky"
 (pen on pillowcase)
 by Fernando
 Hernandez



"The Devil Made Me Do It"

by William Jones

Special Edition

Stateville Speaks — Loyola University Chicago

Students worked together to edit, design and publish this special issue of Stateville Speaks. Stateville Speaks is written in collaboration with current Illinois prisoners about topics in criminal justice and prison life.

Stateville Speaks — Loyola University Chicago

Special Edition

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