

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



By Nora Callahan, Executive Director

It's Not Your Fault

I skimmed Al Gore's book on Global Warming, the bestseller (now a movie) that blames us all for the mess we're in, but doesn't blame the rush of global consumption via capitalism, nor the gigantic, powerful corporations that grind on, having their way with our lawmakers.

I've read some critiques on the doomsday message of Gore's book, and one of the best was by Catherine Austin Fitts wherein she quotes Utah Phillips, a singing story teller and radical voice of the 1930's Depression Era,

"Utah Phillips once said, 'The earth is not dying. It is being killed, and the people killing it have names and addresses.' In one sentence, Utah Phillips told us more about global warming than Al Gore has told us in a lifetime of writing and speaking, let alone in *An Inconvenient Truth*."

Disregarded or minimized is a 20-year-old movement behind the recently found consensus that global warming is scientific fact, a warning that if we stay on our present course, we may condemn our children to choosing various doomsday alternatives. Al Gore's book is *his* way of leading the way to a new future, without telling people what has *really* caused the planet's warming.

Some might read this and think I'm making a lame attempt to 'link issues' — not that I couldn't go that route, and won't before it's over. No, this route opens first a discussion about how to solve a problem demanding a fix.

We start by identifying the problem correctly, and blame those responsible in the first place. Secondly, a united and empowered people have to take real action to begin solving our complex problems, willfully defying the common belief that hopeless people can't muster what it takes to be responsible.

The people building new prisons, and helping pass laws to fill them, have names and addresses, too. While voters went along with tough, new drug laws — in fairness to 'we the people' back in the weird 1980's — looking back over past 20 years we've learned we were hoodwinked by a lot of government and media propaganda. It turned out those crack babies had souls, and similarly, today's meth addicts now bear the brunt of contrived stigmatizing of one drug.

Doing business globally at present are numerous for-profit corporations whose

livelihoods depend on continued prison expansion, and who help orchestrate explosions of drug hysteria. One group is able to boast, "Foth & Van Dyke was retained by the State of Wisconsin to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Super Maximum Security Prison in Boscobel, Wisconsin".

Foth & Van Dyke say they can turn public opposition into public support. They promise 'minimal adverse impact to the physical and biological environment'. Is it sound reasoning that tax dollars should support Foth & Van Dyke's profits that undermine public will and public laws?

First Families Reagan and Bush promoted abolition of parole, creation of drug mandatory minimums, and harsh guideline sentencing. They were early and leading stalwarts in the moral campaign to 'get tough on some drug users', pushed forward by other parents like them with kids who use illegal drugs.

They could *relate* because the Reagan and Bush families were full of drug users and abuse. George Herbert champagne-toasted new drug war legislation in the 80s while Barbara and Laura were tough-lovin' George Walker through recovery. Brother Jeb has had his hands full, and drug addiction problems continue into the next generation, it is apparent.

This isn't *their* fault, these first families insist, "It's *all OUR* fault."

So, we *all* got tough laws, more than 20 years ago.

But neither the Reagans, nor Bushes, nor their children go to prison, partly because — in order to take blame and spread it around — working poor and middle class people must get the bigger dose since there are more of us.

The cash-short poor are left holding the big bag and the daunting political task of solving systemic problems while knowing that, to influence lawmakers, you mostly need a lot of money. By the way, that isn't your fault either.

Comes Al Gore to tell us that global warming is our entire fault: so change out your light bulbs, drive less, and pressure opportunistic lawmakers who listen mostly to professional lobbyists. He doesn't tell us that large corporations are exempt from accountability laws and destroying the environment.

Wealthy people who use drugs also push for harsh laws while exempting their drug using

WE CAN STOP BLAMING OURSELVES FOR PROBLEMS WE DIDN'T CREATE, AND CHALLENGE THE IMPOSED SYSTEM THAT GIVES POWER TO MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR CORPORATIONS, A SYSTEM THAT DISMISSES ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO ASK FOR IMMEDIATE CHANGES OF COURSE AND, IF NOT FOR US NOW, OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

children, or themselves for that matter. Blame everyone, but who has to pay with time served in prison? Rarely them.

Do they face their harsh "justice?" Do they have to conserve? No. They buy their kids out of drug trouble, and they can afford to pay \$4 a gallon for gasoline.

We can stop blaming ourselves for problems we didn't create, and challenge the imposed system that gives power to multi-billion-dollar corporations, a system that dismisses ordinary people who ask for immediate changes of course and, if not for us now, our children's future.

Blaming ourselves, as Catherine Austin Fitts reminds us — leads to feelings of hopelessness, despair and inaction.

Do I blame addicted people and drug dealers for filling our prisons? No. Mostly because I can't turn on a television set without getting the message. I get it. The message? *Want what you don't have, and buy what you don't need!*

Now I will link some issues.

Surely Congress realizes that refusal to increase the \$5.15 minimum wage will help ensure thriving illegal enterprises of every imaginable sort? Drug dealing looms large in rural and urban communities' economic viability. In hard economic times illegal business thrives.

To continue responding to poverty by jailing ill, addicted or unemployed people, to keep calling a street dealer a kingpin, and to mindlessly give someone 5 years, 10, 20, even life for 'drug conspiracies' based on the words of 'wet snitches' — is inhumane and absurd. Not justice.

Imprisoned or free, this mess really isn't your fault at all. If you are working on the solution — even though you didn't create the problem of mass imprisonment — thank you.

In this issue you'll read about the people you can blame for mass incarceration through drug war injustice, and get names and contact information of individuals and organizations who aren't part of the problem because they're working on real solutions.

It's not our fault, but it *is* our future. Join us in creating meaningful, systemic change.

In struggle,

Other Grassroots Groups You Should Know About

All of Us Or None — a national organizing initiative of prisoners, former prisoners and felons, to combat the many forms of discrimination that we face as the result of felony convictions. Address and phone: All of Us Or None, c/o Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 1540 Market St. Ste. 490, San Francisco, CA 94310, Ph: 415-255-7036, Website: www.allofusornone.org/about.html

Critical Resistance — seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex, challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. Our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. Critical Resistance, 1904 Franklin St., Ste 504, Oakland, CA 94612. Ph: 510-444-0484 Email: crnational@criticalresistance.org. Website: www.criticalresistance.org

The Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter — published monthly by the Prison Project of Santa Fe, Inc., PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911. Free newsletter to prisoners, their family members, and ex-prisoners.

Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition — founded in 1999, CCJRC is a network of organizations, faith communities and individuals working to reverse the trend of mass incarceration in Colorado. Threatened by prison construction plans of Cornell Corrections, Inc., Concerned Citizens of Lamar (CO) in November 2005 united in majority approval at the ballot box after a two-year effort to "require voter approval before the City can negotiate a contract to provide utility services to any private prison company," effectively ending Cornell's planning. Contact: CCJRC, 1212 Mariposa St., #4, Denver, CO 80204, Ph: 303-825-0122, Website: www.CCJRC.org

Prisoner's Reform Organizational Partnership — Editor Marc T. Ching is a Korean/Japanese prisoner who has constructed a website that offers incarcerated people a place to be heard. PROP accepts all contributions: poetry, personal stories, essays, poems, letters from family, short stories and artwork. Write or send contributions to: PROP, PO Box 283047, Honolulu, HI 96828, Website: www.prisonersreform.org

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants, New York Chapter — CURE-NY's newsletter for Spring 2006 includes articles on 'merit time,' interstate calls from prisons, does prison increase crime, dismantling parole and "23 steps of a NYS Reentry Plan." Write for information or to join: CURE-NY, PO Box 102, Katonah, NY 10536, Website: www.bestweb.net/~cureny

Access Press — Minnesota's disability community newspaper featured a page-one story of Richard Paey, nationally known pain patient & prisoner, and subject for a 2006 *60 Minutes* story. Subscribe or contact: Access Press, 1821 University Ave West, Suite 104S, St. Paul, MN 55104, Ph: 651-644-2133, Website: www.accesspress.org

Post-Conviction Services for Federal pro se Litigants — Barry Ward is a formerly incarcerated person and Certified Paralegal with more than 10 years experience in research and drafting motions, petitions and appeals for federal prisoners. "I spent more than 15 years in federal prison as a first time, non-violent drug offender, and I spent my time in the law library, where I learned my craft and co-authored and instructed the paralegal apprenticeship program currently offered at FCI Seagoville, Texas". Email: bdward@twentytwofiftyfive.com Website: www.twentytwofiftyfive.com

California Coalition for Women Prisoners — publishes quarterly newsletter *The Fire Inside*. CCWP is a grassroots racial justice organization that challenges the institutional violence imposed on women and communities of color by prisons and the criminal justice system. CCWP shares the same address as All Of Us Or None, above.

Lifers Union Advocacy Group — publishes a 36-page bulletin whose goal is to "provide updates on laws and case-law regarding the death penalty; civil commitment; life or indefinite sentencing schemes; recidivist schemes, and; studies, reviews and other information." To subscribe, write: Lifers Union Advocacy Group, PO Box 88537, Steilacoom, WA 98388, Website: www.lifersunion.com, Email: deniseashley@lifersunion.com

Grapevine — a newsletter of the Pennsylvania Lifers Support Group, recognized as a public supported and charitable organization enrolled by tax codes of IRS. Advocating for a second chance for lifers, *Grapevine* is a "publication for prisoners, specifically lifers, and their families, volunteers and people who care." For information on subscription rates and other matters, write: *Grapevine*, Pennsylvania Lifers Support Group, PO Box 256, Wellsboro, PA 16901, Phone: (570) 376-2489 or (570) 376-2517. Email: bbh5049@msn.com, Website: www.prisoners.com/dallashome.html

National HIRE Network — Its mission is to increase the number and quality of job opportunities available to people with criminal records by improving public policies, practices, and opinion. With a large and growing national membership, HIRE publishes practical information related to workforce development and criminal justice policy. Resources/ Assistance feature of website includes state by

state list of government and community based groups that help provide job related and legal services. Currently, membership is FREE. Contact: National HIRE Network, Legal Action Center, 225 Varick Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10014. Phone (212) 243-1313, Website: www.hirenetwork.org

FREE Spanish Law Book

Thanks to a generous publisher, we can distribute — for no charge — a limited number of David Zapp's "Manual De Pautas de la Comision Federal De Sentencias par las *Sentencias Federales*." Sentencias Y Leyes, Federales De Narcotrafico Y Lavado De Dinero. Edicion en espanol compilada por el licenciado en Derecho Penal.

Made available by *Legal Publications in Spanish*, PO Box 623, Palisades Park, NJ 07650. Tel: (800) 432-0004, Website: www.publeg.com — David Zapp's website is www.davidzapp.com.

Send requests for a FREE copy of Zapp's book to:

Zapp Manual, c/o November Coalition, 282 West Astor, Colville, WA 99114 or call (509) 684-1550.



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The Razor Wire is a supplemental communication to imprisoned members of the November Coalition. Published semi-yearly, we notify members of special projects and progress, maintaining a daily updated website at www.november.org. Join thousands that visit us online for up-to-the-minute drug war reports and instructions on how they can help end the failed war on drugs. Support people working to end drug war injustice with a donation and membership in November Coalition today.

To join The November Coalition and receive this newspaper, see membership form on page 30.

IF YOU OWN OR OPERATE A RETAIL STORE, OR DO COMMUNITY ACTIVISM, CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR INFO ABOUT BULK DISTRIBUTION.

Let's Miss This Golden Opportunity

By CHUCK ARMSBURY, SENIOR EDITOR

Prisoner of the drug war Richard Garin's letter smoked with righteous rage on a subject we've been covering — social and economic consequences of the criminal justice informant system. One consequence Garin deploras is the growth of consulting/service businesses that take advantage of laws allowing defendants to obtain sentence reductions.

Richard sent along some copies of services provided by Bill Golden, Virginia's Businessman of the Year for 2003-04. Though not an attorney, Mr. Golden is in the legal business of facilitating "sentence reductions and third party cooperation on a client's behalf." Quotes referring to Golden can be found at his website: www.goldenlegalassistants.com.

Golden is paid money for helping arrange for a third party (other persons) to "cooperate in the criminal defendant's behalf while the defendant receives the credit for a sentence reduction." And money he does charge, and apparently receives.

If you're an attorney with a client who can afford Golden, then for \$25,000 to \$150,000 "Golden's Complete Cooperation and Network Service may assist you in providing third parties to cooperate in your client's behalf." "Creative payment arrangements" may be available.

This is an up front business enterprise intimately dependent on the continued operation of conspiracy laws, standard law enforcement policies, and lots of snitching. No bones about it, Mr. Bill Golden is a success at what he does. Golden Services points to downward departures for 6023 drug traffickers who provided substantial assistance to the government in fiscal year 2001, about two-thirds of all 5K1.1 cases that year.

It's a swamp of ambiguity reading through Golden's disclaimers, but he insists that "Getting Started is Easy." Better hurry, though, because he only accepts "a limited number of clients per year in order to greatly enhance the probability of success for each client."

Another Golden, Kevin, writes "if you don't retain GOLDEN now, then someone else will, and they may get the cooperation and sentence reduction instead of you." So there.

Drug war prisoner Susan Spry also fumed in a letter to our office about people who charge money for locating willing third-party snitches. "What I find so horrific is that it is the government which is the proponent of this systematic procedure, and the officials continue to propagate this mercenary opportunity by skirting our due process safeguards in their legislative and court rulings. I realize that, in addition to being immoral and unlawful, this stratagem, The Federal Sentencing Guidelines, breeds golden opportunities for financial reward by promoting and rewarding betrayal."

Spry took her mailed solicitation from Golden Cooperation Services, LLC, to investigators in a federal prison who eventually reported (she asks, "Can you snitch on a snitch?") the communication to "the Virginia Bar Association." Susan said she "was informed that a copy of the material was forwarded to the Bar, and that they were very interested."

Wealthy individuals have historically found ways to buy their way out of required military service, paying poor people to fight in their place. Similarly, "With enough money, and no conscience, one can buy their very own 'get out of jail free' card," concluded Spry.

Florida DOC Chief Resigns In Disgrace, Headed To Prison

Tallahassee, FL — In the twilight of Jeb Bush's tenure as Florida governor, DOC head James Crosby's admission that he accepted kickbacks from a vendor who ran cash prison canteen services adds a stigma of scandal to the administration. Bush demanded Crosby's resignation Feb. 10, a decision he coordinated with state and federal authorities.

By then Crosby had been splitting kickbacks for more than a year with his friend and protege, regional prison boss Allen "A.C." Clark. The payments grew from \$1,000 to \$12,000 a month, according to court documents, and reached \$130,000 before the illicit cash flow to Crosby ended in August of last year. The governor remained publicly loyal to Crosby throughout 2005, even as revelations of steroid abuse, theft of property, no-show employees and a drunken brawl at an employee softball tournament rocked the nation's third-largest prison system.

Bush appointed Crosby to run the prison system on the eve of the governor's second inauguration in 2003, highlighting Crosby's "experience and knowledge of the system."

Crosby got the job despite having been warden of Florida State Prison in 1999 when inmate Frank Valdes died in his death row cell after a beating. Several guards were acquitted of criminal charges in that case.

"He never should have appointed the guy in the first place," said Ron McAndrew, who preceded Crosby as warden of Florida State Prison.

McAndrew, a prison consultant who lives in Dunnellon, said he e-mailed Bush "seven pages of shortcomings" about Crosby in 2003, but all he got was a phone conversation with a member of Bush's transition team, Mike Hanna, who later became Crosby's chief of staff.

Source: St. Petersburg Times, FL

Prison Commission Releases Final Report: *Confronting Confinement*

The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons has released "*Confronting Confinement*", a report on violence and abuse in U.S. jails and prisons, the broad impact of those problems on public safety and public health, and how correctional facilities nationwide can become safer and more effective.



The report addresses dangerous conditions of confinement — violence, poor health care, and inappropriate segregation — that can also endanger corrections officers and the public; lack of political support for labor and management; weak oversight of correctional facilities; and serious flaws in the available data about violence and abuse.

"For the vast majority of inmates prison is a temporary, not a final, destination. The experiences inmates have in prison — whether violent or redemptive — do not stay within prison walls, but spill over into the rest of society. Federal, state, and local governments must address the problems faced by their respective institutions and develop tangible and attainable solutions," said Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK), Chair of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The Commission is staffed by and funded through the Vera Institute of Justice. To read a summary of the commission's findings and recommendations, and a brief Q&A about the report, or to access the complete report, go to www.prisoncommission.org/report.

Prison Commission Report Makes News, Gains Endorsements

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to let you know about the extraordinary degree of interest in and support for the Commission's report, *Confronting Confinement*. Since the release of the report on June 8th, there have been more than a hundred national, regional and local news stories, editorials, and opinion pieces focused on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

The report has captured the attention of members of Congress — in particular Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) who chaired a hearing on the results of the Commission. The report has received endorsements from organizations ranging from the National Association of Evangelicals to the ACLU's National Prison Project.

The Association of State Correctional Administrators has said that the Commission's report "presents an opportunity for public discussion of issues that corrections professionals have been working on for years. Leaders of large and small correctional systems are requesting copies of the report to help guide reform."

Healthcare advocates are seizing on the Commission's message that the well being of neighborhoods and communities depends on decent correctional health care. There's even interest in the report outside the United States, particularly in Latin America, and we've just published a summary of the report in Spanish and Portuguese. You can download those documents at www.prisoncommission.org/report.

This broad-based and positive response to the report is very encouraging. We'll keep you informed as the staff and Commissioners assist corrections leaders, lawmakers, and others who are working to advance reforms at the federal, state, and local levels — and we'll be sure to let you know how you can get involved.

Sincerely, Alex Busansky, Executive Director

Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons - July 25, 2006

Remembering Lynn Zimmer: 1947-2006

By ETHAN A. NADELMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE

I am very sad to tell you that Lynn Zimmer has died at the age of 59.

Professor Zimmer, a sociologist at Queens College in New York, was widely regarded by drug policy scholars and activists alike as the most original thinker on drug issues in the United States. She co-authored (with her dear friend and colleague, Dr. John P. Morgan) the book, "*Marijuana Myths, Marijuana Facts*," the leading, best selling scholarly book on marijuana; it has been translated and published in seven languages to date.

She also published extensively on other drug issues, including drug testing, drug education, and drugs and the media, and appeared often on radio and TV programs.

Professor Lynn Zimmer received both The Lindesmith Award for Achievement in the Field of Scholarship from the Drug Policy Foundation (now the Drug Policy Alliance) and the Lester Grinspoon Award for Achievement in the Field of Marijuana Law Reform from the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) in 2000. She was looked to as an intellectual leader in the growing drug policy reform movement.

Lynn was simultaneously a fierce critic of drug prohibition and the nation's harsh drug war policies but also a keen skeptic of arguments for full legalization. Her insights into drug use and addiction, as well as the various roles of drugs in society, were unparalleled.

Before working on drug issues, Zimmer authored "*Women Guarding Men*," a path-breaking study of women hired as guards in men's prisons that examined the painful process of transition from a segregated to an integrated prison environment.

Lynn Zimmer was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the late 1990s. This disease took away much of her eyesight, sense of taste, and mobility but never diminished her remarkable mind. She was a beloved teacher, friend and mentor to many. Two sons, Joseph and Mark Phillips, survive her.

Lynn was my dear friend and a friend to many, many others who committed their lives to ending the war on drugs.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES THE RAZOR WIRE NEWSPAPER AND OTHER SPECIAL NOTICES

Count Me In!

Working to end drug war injustice

My Contact Information (non-prisoner):
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip +4 _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Annual Dues: \$30 • Students: \$15 • Prisoners: \$6

I don't know a prisoner, but I will sponsor one. I have enclosed an additional \$6.00

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Do you have a loved one in prison?
 I want to sponsor my imprisoned loved one's membership and have enclosed an additional \$6.00.
 I am a prisoner. I have enclosed at least \$6.00 (money order or stamps), or made arrangements for payment.

Name _____
 Registration Number _____
 Prison _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip +4 _____

The November Coalition
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TNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your gift or donation is tax deductible.

June 1, 2006 - In These Times (US)
Convict Nation

By SILJA J. A. TALVI

*Let me tell you what hurts the most
I'm a convicted felon and I can't work
No matter where I go to try to get paid
That's the everyday life of a convict
Trying to make it while they're saying to me:
The judge said, "Don't trouble nobody,"
Probation said, "Don't trouble nobody,"
"Stay out of trouble, don't trouble nobody,"
And I'm a tryin' not to trouble nobody
Picture lookin' at your babies in the face
When they hungry and they need to eat
Trying not to do wrong, But they won't let me
do right.
Even though I done change my life
Criminal record's what they're judging me by.
Akon, "Trouble Nobody."*

In May, I traveled to McNeil Island Corrections Center, a medium-custody men's prison in Washington state. I made the journey out there because I had been invited to experience the Native American prisoners' annual Pow Wow, which brings together spiritual elders, prisoners and their families, for a powerfully intense four-hour ceremony.

The biggest challenge, as I quickly discovered, wasn't taking in all of the emotion surrounding the event, but having even the briefest moment of privacy for thinking, taking notes, or taking to prisoners. Increasingly, American prison life doesn't allow for privacy — not even for outsiders like myself. I could discern no possible security risk from a small-statured woman with a pen and a notepad at an island prison, surrounded by barbed wire and frigid waters. Regardless, for four hours, my every move and word was followed, intercepted and occasionally interjected upon. I could barely endure it for the half a day I was there. Millions of Americans don't have that choice.

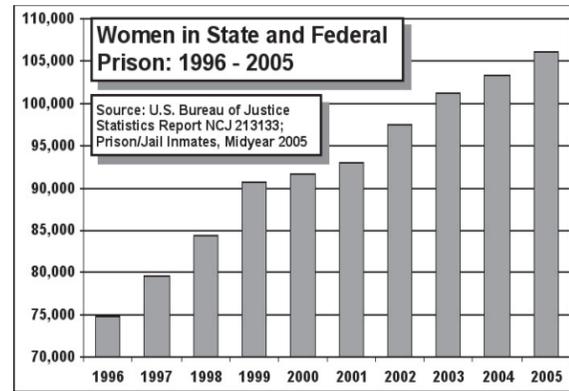
Of course, many prisoners are indeed guilty of precisely the crimes they've been charged with — or some version of the crime for which they've been sentenced. And some are absolutely innocent, doing time on trumped up charges, or because a snitch got out of prison time by "rolling" on some of his friends. But assessing the consequences of our country's soaring imprisonment rates has less to do with the question of guilt versus innocence than it does with the question of who, among us, truly deserves to go to prison and face the restrictive — and sometimes brutally repressive — conditions found there.

**Mass Incarceration:
Who Is It Good For?**

The latest statistics on the U.S. prison and jail population from the Bureau of Justice

Statistics (BJS) barely seemed to register on the news radar when they were released in late May.

Between glimpses of the Enron trial and the President's surreal projections of "progress" in Iraq, Americans were informed on CNN's electronic ticker tape that, by mid-year 2005, the official U.S. incarceration count stood at 2,186,230 inmates. Over the course of one year, our nation saw an increase of 56,428 prison and jail inmates, amounting to an average of 1,085 new adult prisoners each week. In just one decade, the number of prisoners in the United States has risen by more than 600,000 men and women, so that 738 out of every 100,000 Americans are sitting in some kind of a prison or jail. Our rates already far exceed those of Russia's, a politically and economically unstable country which throws 594 out of 100,000 citizens in the slammer. In contrast, the U.K. does so at a rate of 144 per 100,000, and France's incarceration rate stands at just 88 out of 100,000.



Women are the fastest growing demographic segment of the United States prison population

As was the case last year, six of 10 of prisoners in our state facilities are people of color. That number is likely to be higher, as BJS doesn't keep comprehensive, national statistics on Native American or Latino prisoners. (This is a result of individual states that choose not to report those demographics separately.) Both groups are heavily, disproportionately represented in states such as New Mexico, Montana, South Dakota and Washington.

People are understandably a bit more familiar with the impact of mass incarceration on Black men. At least one in eight African



American men ages 25-29 are doing time. Over the years, I've gotten to know many of these folks as they've cycled in and out of the system, trying to make ends meet just as Senegalese-born Akon describes in the song excerpted above. Many organizations, including the Drug Policy Alliance, have rightfully characterized this overincarceration of African Americans one of our greatest present-day civil rights issues.

Women now account for nearly 7 percent of state and federal prisoners, and 13 percent of the nation's jail population (compared with 10 percent in 1995). Black women are four times more likely to be incarcerated than white women.

"The number of women in prisons and jails has reached a sad new milestone," says Kara Gotsch, Director of Advocacy for The Sentencing Project in Washington, D.C.

"Over 200,000 women are now incarcerated," Gotsch explains. "Since 1980, [especially] as women became entangled in the 'war on drugs,' the number in prison increased at nearly double the rate of incarceration for men. The impact of their incarceration devastates thousands of children who lose their primary caregiver when mom goes to prison."

The "War on Drugs," indeed. I've personally started likening this war to our short-sighted, grossly miscalculated War on Terror — only the War on Drugs has gotten a serious head start on the body count. Like terrorism, drugs are still everywhere — they're even more pervasive, in point of fact. The people best at "the game" are hiding out, strategizing, doing damage and raking it in — this is a multi-billion dollar industry, after all — while the regular ol' users, addicts, street-level hustlers, and even unwitting bystanders and girlfriends charged with "conspiracy" end up locked down by the thousands.

This is in spite of the findings of a recent poll conducted by Zogby International for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (see page 22). American voters insisted by almost a 9-to-1 margin that they favored rehabilitative services for nonviolent prisoners over a punishment-only system.

Right now, at least 530,000 are incarcerated on drug-related sentences. I'm still trying to figure out how any of that is making a dent in

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Editorial:
Government Informers

By RICHARD GEFFKEN, PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

As a government becomes increasingly oppressive, its dependence upon informers also increases. Citizens turning in their neighbors became so rampant during the French Revolution that in desperation people elected an Emperor. Nazi Germany used paid informers so extensively and ruthlessly that post-war states of Europe developed a rule establishing that if any reward is given for testimony, the words spoken are inadmissible in court.

A similar rule is needed today in the USA. The drug war made the manipulation of informers so commonplace that when a federal court ruled the practice violated bribery statutes, prosecutors across the country wailed that they couldn't get convictions without extensive ratting. If that is a sad confession, it is even sadder that the courts yielded to their whining.

THE DRUG WAR MADE THE MANIPULATION OF INFORMERS SO COMMONPLACE THAT WHEN A FEDERAL COURT RULED THE PRACTICE VIOLATED BRIBERY STATUTES, PROSECUTORS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WAILED THAT THEY COULDN'T GET CONVICTIONS WITHOUT EXTENSIVE RATTING.

Using totally illogical reasoning, the US Eleventh Circuit reversed itself. It suddenly claimed those government grants of money and benefits were not bribes after all. Interested students of law should compare US v Singleton, 144 F2nd 1343 (11th Circ.1998) with 165 F3d 1297 (11th Circ.1999).

Now comes the war on terrorism — a war on ideas. This strange war advocates widespread use of informers and the use of prison gulags, such as Guantanamo Bay, to isolate and torture opponents of the current US ruling regime. Is this not a pattern familiar to factions in ancient Rome dealing with the buildup and aftermath of its Empire years?

Once upon a rosier time, the US Supreme Court ruled, "The use of informers, accessories, accomplices, false friends, or any of the other

betrayals which are 'dirty business' may raise questions of credibility." On Lee v. US, 72 S.Ct 967, 973 (1952). Years later in 1993 a federal court in California was still concerned with credibility of testimony, "By definition, criminal informants are cut from untrustworthy cloth, and must be watched to prevent them from falsely accusing the innocent, from manufacturing evidence against those under suspicion of crime, and from lying under oath in the courtroom." US v Bernal-Obeso, 989 F2d 331, 333 (9th Circ.1993).

In Bernal-Obeso the government paid a rat \$3 million for 100 convictions, not one of which was later found to have any factual basis. Each convicted defendant served an average of three years. This well-rewarded informant received complete immunity for lying on behalf of government prosecutors.

The Singleton debacle opened a store of evil futures, and since betrayal has happened to someone else already, what are the odds it won't be happening to you and your friends when you least expect it?

A Message From Leonard Peltier

(Now serving his 30th continuous year in maximum-security federal custody, and approaching his September 12th birthday, Indigenous American political prisoner Leonard Peltier wrote the following greetings to friends and supporters who gathered in New York City on March 6, 2006 to remember and honor this remarkable man. Wrongfully convicted of murdering two FBI agents on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975, US Attorneys familiar with the case admitted years ago that they don't know who killed the agents. Edited for length — Editor)



Greetings My Relatives:
I say 'relatives' for we are all related in some way. Sometimes sitting here in my cell, looking through my glasses, they no longer take the blur away like they once did. I think about the lifetimes I've spent behind these walls. Sometimes for a prisoner, it's like you've died to your friends and family, except you can talk with them on occasion.

I have spent my life trying to make a difference in the world, for the better. Sometimes someone notices in some way and says thank you for something I was involved with. However, my greatest joy comes from

someone saying that something I said or was involved with inspired them to be better than they were or seek for themselves to make the world a better place.

I remember in my youth that I had a hard time expressing deep feelings, but after years of losing friends and relatives who were very close to me, I have come to

cherish the opportunity to speak to you even though it be by letter or some other way.

When you're 30, you can hardly imagine dying. When you're 61, you know it's entirely possible and could come anytime. Having said that, I want to say a few things from my heart to your heart.

Seek the Creator in all the things you do. Cherish your time with one another. Develop your personal self-discipline, which is the key to all success. Develop a sense of happiness within you that none can take away. Develop who you are and remain true to your higher self, and your integrity will be an inspiration to others.

Show your strength when necessary, even if it is in being gentle or humble. Speak of others in private the same way you would in their presence. Do your best to find the good in all

people, and stand and speak up against wrongdoing.

Respect the earth where you stand. Many parts of Mother Earth are also held captive behind concrete and steel. Do your best to recognize inspiration from the Creator and avoid listening to your own, especially when you are tempted in contradiction of your higher values.

We must each, in our own way, in our own time, be part of the cure against the sicknesses of greed, wealth mongering and nature destruction that faces all mankind.

Never be too proud to say you were wrong or too fearful to stand up for what you know is right. Don't expect to not get hurt by life, just because you've done your best to do what's right. Especially, don't lose your sense of humor, even when the laughter is at your own expense.

I want to thank all of you for remembering me. Most of all I want to thank all of you who have chosen to make a difference for the betterment of this world."

For more online information on Leonard and the continuing campaign to win his freedom, email requests to the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee at info@leonardpeltier.org.

You can write Leonard at:
**Leonard Peltier 89637-132
USP Lewisburg • PO Box 1000
Lewisburg, PA 17837**

EDITOR'S NOTES



By **Chuck Armsbury, Senior Editor**

Kudos to writer Brooks Egerton of the *Dallas Morning News* for his feature story, "Scales Of Justice Can Swing Wildly," Sunday, April 23, 2006. Egerton read the unbelievable story of Tyrone Brown from The WALL and turned it into an expose' of judicial race-and-social-class bias.



Photo: *Dallas Morning News*
Tyrone Brown (Inset: John Alexander Wood)

Brown, 17 years of age and black, took part in a \$2 stickup in which no one got hurt. He pleaded guilty to aggravated robbery and was put on 10 years of probation. When Brown broke probation by smoking marijuana, the Dallas judge resented him to life behind bars. Tyrone is suffering through his 16th year of confinement in a maximum-security Texas prison.

From the same Judge Keith Dean's courtroom, wrote Egerton, a well-connected white man "pleaded guilty to murder — for shooting an unarmed prostitute in the back — and also got 10 years of probation.

The killer proceeded to break the rules by, among other things, smoking crack cocaine. He repeatedly failed drug tests. He was arrested for cocaine possession in Waco while driving a congressman's car, but prosecutors there didn't press charges.

Judge Dean has let this man stay free and, last year, exempted him from most of the usual conditions of probation. John Alexander 'Alex' Wood no longer must submit to drug tests or refrain from owning a gun or even meet with a probation officer. He's simply supposed to obey the law and mail the court a postcard once a year that gives his current address."

One man well-connected and white, the other broke and black — mercy and a free pass for the coker incorrigible who raises show dogs, hell to pay forever for the youth who smoked a joint.

Talk to me, O valiant members of the bar. I'll be checking my mail every day (chuck@november.org) hoping to hear from a volunteer attorney who can't abide this putrid judicial hypocrisy and will work to free Tyrone Brown from a terribly unjust drug-war sentence.

I had a long phone conversation recently with Elbert "Big Man" Howard, 1966 founding member and first newspaper editor of the Black Panther Party in Oakland (CA). We're making plans to co-host a workshop at the BPP's 40th Reunion in Oakland this coming October 13-15, something we did together for the 35th Reunion in Washington DC. The workshop highlights experience building solidarity across ethnic and social class lines, with emphasis on the importance of rank and file in the Party.



Noted teacher and activist Angela Davis with Elbert "Big Man" Howard — 2006

A Giant in BPP History, Big Man, though slowed by age and health concerns, continues to make Panther theory and practice relevant to today, including how war on drugs politics contributed to the demise of the Party by mid-1970s.

In May, Nora and I shared lunch and spoke to Kootenai County (ID) Democratic Party loyalists about the drug war. The 40 or so people at this regular meeting in Coeur d'Alene (30 miles east of Spokane) included members of a jail commission, a parent of a local police officer, a reformed heroin addict and a mining executive who thought our government should execute drug traffickers, following the practices in southeast Asian countries he's visited. No choir preaching here, and tense after angry parent of cop cussed and walked out.

Within 45 minutes after lunch we showed a

ten-minute drug-war video, stirred up a dust devil of dialogue and gave out much free literature. Following the meeting, small clusters of Dems continued to debate and sort out the dissonance aroused by one, brief discussion of this divisive war on drugs.

There's definitely more talk and activity going around about drug-war informant practices. In last winter 2005 *Razor Wire* we printed a public lecture about snitching by Nora Callahan and portions of law professor Alexandra Natapoff's research on the social impacts of widespread informing. Is there renewed critical awareness of difference between witnessing a crime — and getting off after participating in one?

Looks like November Coalition member Euka Wadlington is getting closer to a US Supreme Court hearing. Euka got two concurrent life sentences from words alone, the testimony of others seeking leniency. His attorney, Leonard Goodman of Chicago, is preparing Euka's appeal and using Natapoff's research to emphasize communal damages caused by US government's unbridled reliance on coercion and paid informants.

Links:

The WALL story Egerton could hardly believe: www.november.org/thewall/cases/brown-ty/brown-ty.html

Here's Egerton with others in follow-up talk about Tyrone Brown's case: www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/discusslive/news/stories/042606dnjusticechat.732e86d7.html

To read more about Euka and his case: www.november.org/thewall/cases/wadlington-e/wadlington-e.html

To access Big Man's writing online: www.itsabouttimebpp.com/Big_Man/Big_Man_index.html

To read a summary of Natapoff's research: www.november.org/razorwire/2005-02/Natapoff.html

And to read or hear Nora Callahan's talk on snitching: www.november.org/razorwire/2005-02/Snitch.html

NATION ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

the struggle and strife I see on urban street corners.

Statistics like these give us a sense of how out-of-control the situation is. They give journalists something to hang stories on; they also give prison activists and correctional employees alike a perspective of how their immediate realities fit into a far larger picture.

But prison statistics have become their own version of a double-edged sword. When we're talking about numbers as big as these, statistics easily obscure the individual stories and struggles of those caught in the sticky, far-reaching net of American mass incarceration.

The Girls Of Today;

The Prisoners Of Tomorrow?

A few weeks ago, I was talking with a group of girls in a drab, concrete juvenile detention pod in King County. I was there as a volunteer, to facilitate a writing workshop under the auspices of a Seattle-based-group, Powerful Voices. In doing so, I also hoped to gain more insight into the lives of these girls, who are increasingly locked for crimes ranging from truancy to drug dealing. I told the girls what I wanted to know about them and their lives, and most of them opened up to me, a complete stranger, with the kind of searing, brutal honesty that still surprises me.

One of the 15-year-olds was pregnant, although most of the other girls didn't know that yet. She held her stomach tenderly from time to time. Some of the girls were loud and boisterous, competing for attention and trying to show precisely how "fierce" they were. (Coming from 13 and 14-year-old girls, that's an easy enough bluff to see through.) One girl, just a few months shy of turning 18, admitted to the group that this was her twelfth time being locked up in some kind of an institution. Her first had been in another state, where she had been thrown into a mixed juvenile/adult psychiatric facility as a 12-year-old — with understandably traumatic consequences.

I asked all of the girls to participate in a few writing exercises with me about their fears and dreams. One of those writing exercises had to do with the first night that they were incarcerated in juvenile detention. This caused a fair amount of consternation. "Do you mean this time or the first time," one girl bellowed. As it turned out, most of the girls had been in juvie more than once. The cycle of incarceration and re-incarceration, for them, had already begun.

When we finally settled that they were to write about their first time ever, everyone got to work, munching on microwave popcorn and drinking Tang as they went along.

"It was scary, dirty, and just not a place for me," wrote one 14-year-old. "I felt sad and lonely."

I asked her, later, where she saw herself five years from now.

She laughed. I got her to talk a bit about

why she found this question so ridiculous, and this is what she finally said: "I don't even know me five minutes from now."

Eventually, this is what she wrote on a piece of paper: "How am I supposed to know that tomorrow is even promised? If I make it to five years from now, I hope that I'll have a job, a boyfriend, and [that] I'm doing good. But that's never promised."

I told her, as she walked out, that she was right. Nothing's promised to us in this world. But I, for one, believed in her ability to make it to the next day. And then next. And that day,

five years from now, when she could actually defy her odds, to live a fulfilling life in what prisoners commonly refer to as the "free world."

I'm still hoping, writing, and looking toward living in the kind of country that actually gives her that chance.

Silja J.A. Talvi is a senior editor at In These Times, an investigative journalist and essayist with credits in many dozens of newspapers and magazines nationwide, including The Nation, Salon, Santa Fe Reporter, Utne, and the Christian Science Monitor. She is at work on a book about women in prison from Seal Press/Avalon (see sidebar, below).



Over 227 Combined Years In Federal Prison

A Message from Silja Talvi

Dear *Razor Wire* readers:

I am particularly, but not exclusively, seeking women to interview at the following prisons and facilities: Tutwiler, Alabama; Grants, New Mexico; any women incarcerated in Arizona, Oklahoma, or Michigan; any women being detained in an immigration/ICE facility; women in CCWF and VSPW in California; Gig Harbor/Purdy, WA; women who have been or are currently incarcerated in the King County or Los Angeles County jails.

Drug-related cases, and cases involving women 18-30 and 50+, as well as cases involving Native women and/or women of color are particularly encouraged. Please also consider writing if you are experiencing chronic problems/abuses at your current place of incarceration: coercion and overt sexual abuse; unfairly long placement in SHU/isolation; racial or sexual orientation harassment; problems with the mental and physical health care; and separation from family and children.

All women writing to me must be willing to have their words quoted in this book. If you need your words to be "off the record," please note that in the letter that you send me. Sending along supporting documentation for the situations you describe, including official complaint forms, is also encouraged.

I have been writing about girls and women in prison, the drug war, and battered women behind bars—among other topics—for over 10 years, and treat every inquiry and letter with due consideration. If you happen to have online access from your facility, feel free to visit: www.well.com/user/sisus for more about my background, or email sisu@well.com.

Otherwise, please send postal mail to:
Silja J.A. Talvi, Senior Editor of *In These Times*
2424 E Madison #203, Seattle, WA 98112

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I look forward to the possibility of hearing from you.



Democratic Senators Urge Restoring Funds for Drug Task Forces

In an attempt at using tough-on-crime rhetoric to win partisan political advantage, a number of Democratic senators are criticizing the Bush administration for seeking further cuts in drug war spending programs beloved by law enforcement. In its 2007 budget proposal, the administration proposed cutting more than \$1.2 billion in federal funding for state and local law enforcement, including the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, which goes to fund the multi-jurisdictional anti-drug task forces that have run amok around the country for years.

The JAG program has pumped about \$500 million a year into the drug task forces, which have made a reputation for themselves as the focus of abuse, corruption and bad policing. Texas narc Tom Coleman, the man whose perjury sent dozens of black residents of Tulia to prison on bogus charges, was working under the auspices of a JAG-funded drug task force. Other Texas task forces have managed to arrest dozens of blacks — and no whites or Hispanics — in another Texas town, Hearne. Undercover police have taken to buying \$5 crack rocks from addicts, charging them as drug dealers, sending them off to prison for years, then claiming victories in the drug war for doing so.

Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA), Mark Dayton (D-MN), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) have all loudly called for restored funding for the program, even though the Office of Management and Budget has found it is a failure and taxpayer watchdog groups such as Citizens Against Government Waste and the National Taxpayers Union have described it as little more than "pork barrel

spending." All three senators called the grants essential "for a rural state" and cited the much-hyped methamphetamine "epidemic" as the reason the program must continue.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) was the latest to jump on the JAG bandwagon. In an early-February press release, Reid joined his Democratic colleagues in criticizing the proposed cuts, and he hit the same talking points. "Once again, President Bush's budget will inhibit the ability of first responders to prepare for new threats and law enforcement to combat the growing methamphetamine problem," he said, adding that the programs are "specifically designed to assist rural communities."

Reid attacked the Bush budget not only on the JAG program, but also for proposing deep cuts in the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, which, Reid noted, helps "combat methamphetamine use and distribution," among other things. And while the Bush budget proposes \$40 million for a Methamphetamine Cleanup Program, that isn't enough, Reid said.

The Bush budget, with its cuts in just about everything except military spending, provides Democrats with countless opportunities for opposition based on their own principles. Too bad some this time are instead siding with Republican drug warriors like Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN) and self-interested law enforcement lobbyists to argue for more funding for a failed program indicative of a failed, general drug policy.

Source: *The Drug War Chronicle*, 2/16/06

Slow Progress for Medical Marijuana in Congress

FROM DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE —
WWW.DRUGPOLICY.ORG

In June, the US House of Representatives again thumbed its nose at compassion and common sense by rejecting the Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment, which would have prohibited the federal government from undermining state medical marijuana laws. The final vote was 163 for / 259 against. This is two more "yes" votes than last year and a sign that support is slowly growing. (Since three Representatives who voted for the amendment last year couldn't make the vote this year, the base of support is actually up five over last year).

Though there is a lot to say about this, Congressman David Obey (D-WI) summed it up best when speaking in support of the amendment:

"If I am terminally ill, it is not anybody's business on this floor how I handle the pain or the illness or the sickness associated with that illness. With all due respect to all of you, butt out. I did not enter this world with the permission of the Justice Department, and I am certainly not going to depart it by seeking their permission or that of any other authority. The Congress has no business telling people that they cannot manage their illness or their pain any way they need to. I would trust any doctor in the country before I trust some of the daffy ducks in this institution to decide what I am supposed to do if I am terminally ill... When is this Congress going to recognize that individuals in their private lives have a right to manage their problems as they see fit without the permission of the big guy in the White House or the big guy in the Justice Department or any of the Lilliputians on this Congressional floor? Wake up!" — Zing!

Legislation Update: HR 3072 — To Revive The System Of Parole For Federal Prisoners

This bill is slowly gaining ground, having garnered 12 co-sponsors as of this writing. If you wish to build grassroots support for HR 3072, you can sign and collect signatures for November Coalition's *Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice*, available on our web site at www.november.org/parole. We have collected over 120,000 signatures supporting earned, early release to date.

For more on federal parole and other federal legislation, including an easy-to-use online form to contact your US Representative in support of HR 3072, visit www.FedCURE.org/actionalert.shtml

Dear Novemberistas -
The number of letters that we have sent to families and friends to pass on to their US Representatives is approaching 4000. I am confident that the 109th Congress will run out of time before we will. In fact, we have had a new guy recently join our local network of parole pushers.

Tyson is a 21-year old former "Gangster Disciple" from Atlanta who started time as a juvenile — 17 years old. He has all the former gang members sending out letters and contributing stamps. He has also sent letters to EVERY member of the Senate who hasn't co-sponsored The Second Chance Act, and is now working on those un-supportive members of The House.

In struggle, Glenn

The WALL

Penny Spence Facing 25 Years In Prison

By CHRYSAL WEAVER



Chrystal Weaver (left) and her sister Penny Spence

I became aware of the issues surrounding the drug laws in this country when my sister, Penny Spence, was arrested for having 48 pain pills without a prescription. We were astonished to find out that since 48 pills weigh more than 28 grams, under Florida Law, she is charged with felony drug trafficking and is facing a Mandatory Minimum sentence of 25 years in prison. At first we thought it was a joke or some sort of mistake ... that this could not be true! Sadly, it is not a joke or mistake.

She goes to court soon, on a "Motion to Suppress" the evidence based on illegal search and seizure. This Motion is her only real shot at avoiding a 25 Year prison sentence. She is 33 years old and has never even had a traffic ticket in her life before this arrest.

Since her arrest on January 18, 2005, I have made it my mission to do all I can to change these laws here in Florida. I joined FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums) and was trying to get lawmakers to reform the Mandatory Minimums. I have not had much luck. I have met with several lawmakers here in Florida and was told "not this year, maybe

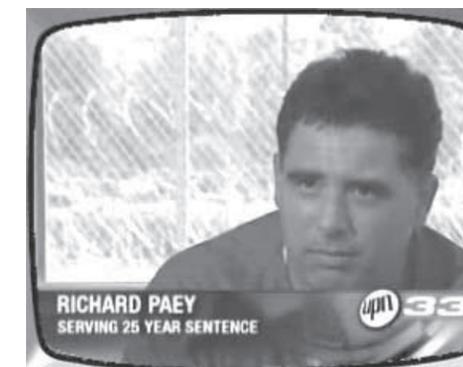
next year." Not many lawmakers want to propose getting rid of Mandatory Minimums because they do not want to be viewed as being "soft on crime." I have been a guest on the local NPR station talking about my sister's case and the need to reform the drug laws. I was successful in getting a reporter to write a story about my sister's case, and the local CBS



A Painful Sentence: The Problem With Pain Medications

Pain prisoners Penny Spence (left) and Richard Paey (right) were featured in a July 6 story by Miami TV News UPN 33 reporter Jennifer Santiago.

For more on Richard Paey, see our back cover.



Ritalin And Meth Close Cousins

Your restless ten-year-old is dosed with a pharmaceutical stimulant, trade name *Ritalin*, to help him focus on repetitive schoolwork. Your neighbor in the trailer house gets his door kicked in at 3 AM by heavily armed chemical police looking for a home-brewed meth lab. One stimulant is legally prescribed, the other proscribed.

Ritalin (methylphenidate) is a close chemical cousin to methamphetamine, both powerful stimulants with similar effects to another cousin: cocaine. While law enforcement lobbies Congress and state legislatures for punitive

laws against cocaine and meth users and addicts, special education teachers across the US are training thousands of grade school and middle school students, boys mostly, to become stimulant-addicts.

Despite FDA reports replicating previous findings that *Ritalin* has been abused for decades, that its use increases risk for heart attacks and strokes, and even though banned in some European countries, drug companies now sell 90 percent of manufactured *Ritalin* in the US.

If demonized meth and prescribed *Ritalin*

affect similar regions of the brain, how come the one cousin is *good* for some people, but a *bad* cousin for others? If the drugs act similarly on human brains, why is any lawmaker in a rush to pass more punitive meth legislation? Where's common sense's role in this drug war irony?

For more discussion and studies of meth and similar stimulants, visit our online archive: www.november.org/drugs/meth/index.html

Internet users can also download and print a prepared flyer about meth — hype or fact — at www.csdp.org/publicservice/meth_hype.pdf.

Working as an attorney and community activist, Zeese has accumulated years of experience exposing and challenging drug war injustice in public forums and courtrooms. Reflecting his campaign stance on alternative drug laws is a link to Justice Maryland, "the only statewide coalition advocating for racially just, cost-efficient and truly effective reforms to Maryland's criminal justice system."

Justice Maryland insists government will not reap the benefit of public safety reforms until "it provides a targeted and ever-increasing influx of funds aimed at obliterating the treatment gap and removes barriers to the democratic participation for ex-offenders attempting to take responsibility for their families and their communities."

Called the "Midnight" candidate, Zeese has been showing up to talk with "graveyard" shift workers at convenience stores and bars. A goal of his campaign has been to reach voters who are ignored by most candidates. A 55-year-old clerk told Zeese, "We need somebody that's going to stand here and listen to you and not blow you off when he walks through the door," one clerk said.

(Sources: www.treatnotjail.com and www.kevinzeese.com. Zeese's extensive record battling punitive drug laws is available online at *Common Sense for Drug Policy* www.csdp.org.)

NALL ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

Referring to the minor pot bust that started her down the path to activism. "I work it into all my speeches; it's the first thing I talk about in candidate forums. Because the drug war is so pervasive, I can connect it with all sorts of issues."

"Drug policy is an area where sin has been confused with crime, and moral imposition by force has given rise to the persecution of millions of non-violent Americans who choose to smoke a joint as opposed to drink a beer after a long day's work," Nall says on her website. "Marijuana should be legal, period."

Alabama punishes her citizens more harshly for simply possessing some plant material for personal use than do most other states. "If I am elected governor, one of the first things I'll do is fight to stop the police state from taking the private behavior of otherwise law-abiding citizens and turning it into a statewide disaster," Nall argues.

"I will do that by proposing we set up a system similar to alcohol and tobacco to regulate the sale of marijuana to adults' age 21 and older. Marijuana is Alabama's largest cash crop, and our state could benefit from this huge untapped financial resource in many ways," insists candidate Nall.

Loretta's biography, campaign platform, and her other ideas for Alabama: www.nallforgovernor.com

influential professional and civic coalition working to reduce crime, improve health and save public money through better drug laws.

"I have a record of bridging differences and finding practical solutions and I'll rise above the partisan bickering to get that done," wrote Goodman at his Internet site. A Harvard-trained policy analyst, he brings impressive credentials to the race, including significant stints as a Congressional chief of staff and legislative director in Washington, D.C.

As a legislator, Goodman will focus on his record of exposing and reforming drug war policies. He has helped publish major reports on prison capacity and sentencing policy. In the last several years Roger has worked for the King County Bar Association on a groundbreaking initiative to take a critical look at our failed drug laws and to promote cheaper, more effective and more humane alternatives.

"It is time we took a serious look at how our criminal justice dollars are spent so we focus primarily on crimes against persons and property instead of squandering huge sums on a punitive approach toward the mentally ill and the addicted, an approach that research has clearly shown to be counterproductive," writes Goodman.

For more information on King County Bar Association's Drug Policy Project online: www.kcba.org/ScriptContent/KCBA/druglaw/index.cfm. To learn more about Goodman's campaign for public office: www.voterogergoodman.com

THORNTON ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

is meant to be waged, not won." He insists the Federal government should not arrest any patient who uses medical marijuana for a serious illness, especially those living in the eleven states now allowing such use.

Thornton said that there is no evidence that the billions spent on prisons and other facets of the drug war have yielded success. "That's money that could have been spent on education, transportation, infrastructure, housing, economic development, and myriad other programs," he said.

"Do you know what the definition of insanity is? It's doing the same thing over and over again, and each time expecting to get a different result," Thornton said. "The war on drugs isn't working, but we keep fighting it. That's insanity."

There's also a racial component to the drug war that must be addressed, he said. "Seventy percent of the people in jail on drug charges are minorities. And 70 percent of the drug overdoses are white people," Thornton said. "The drug problem is in the headlines every day. And where are we seeing the problem? In the poor, mostly minority, inner-city areas."

More on Thornton's drug war views and founding of the Efficacy organization: www.efficacy-online.org, plus his campaign website at www.votethornton.com

Party (BPP). He served breakfasts to hungry children, advocated for high school students' rights, and helped open a free medical clinic still treating sick and needy people today.

After the BPP, Dixon developed nonprofit programs for preventing drug and gang violence in the Seattle area. In 2002 he helped open Central House, transitional housing for youth on the streets.

"International drug prohibition laws fail to halt a half a trillion a year global trade. From 19th century Chinese opium wars, into the opium fields in the 1960s Burmese Golden Triangle, to the farms of poppy growers in Afghanistan, to the farms of poppy growers in Afghanistan. Striking down drug prohibition laws in Mexico, along with Western Hemispheric support for Mexican self-determination, will in the long run reduce profit motive to smuggle illegal drugs into our country," Dixon writes.

For more information on Green Party alternatives to current drug laws and policy: www.aarondixon.org • www.wagreens.us • www.gp.org

POPS In Action

BY RICHARD GEFFKEN, PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

Founded in 1989 by Jonathan Turley of the George Washington University Law School, the Project for Older Prisoners (POPS) is beginning to achieve significant results. By advocating for the release of aging prisoners who pose no threat to society in Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina and Virginia — they have secured the release of one hundred people so far.

None of the 100 released prisoners has committed new crimes, and with such complete lack of recidivism, other states are examining the benefits of POPS. California is expected to become the next state to grant aging prisoners a chance at freedom. Their Department of Corrections has a \$7 billion budget, with \$1.1 billion per year spent on the medical needs of its 165,000 incarcerated people. Currently, 6,000 of these are over 55, which is the conventional age where a person is considered elderly.

Due to longer sentences generally and the three-strike law particularly, the CDOC expects to house 30,000 elderly prisoners by 2022. If you think POPS could be helpful for you or your loved one, write:

National Law Center, 2000 H Street, Washington, DC 20052. Other work of the GW Law School is featured online at www.gwu.edu/~ccommit/law.htm

Legislation Update:

HR 1704 — The Second Chance Act

FROM FEDCURE

This bill (and its' companion bill in the Senate, S 1934) reauthorizes the grant program of the Department of Justice for reentry of offenders into the community, and establishes a task force on Federal programs and activities relating to the reentry of offenders into the community. 112 Representatives have signed on so far, while 25 Senators have signed on to its' companion bill in the US Senate, S 1934.

On July 26, 2006 members of the House Judiciary Committee passed HR 1704 by voice vote, sending the bill to the House floor for consideration. During the mark-up of the bill, the Committee accepted a substitute amendment offered by the Crime Subcommittee Chairman Howard Coble (R-NC) that provides additional drug treatment programs, family-based treatment resources, and an elderly non-violent offender pilot program. Also accepted were amendments from Ranking Member John Conyers (D-MI), Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), and Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), which added, respectively, re-entry courts, resources for electronic monitoring of parolees, and continuity of medical care for mentally ill and chronically ill offenders. Committee members voted down several amendments proposed by Rep. Gohmert to add faith-based language into the bill.

Many committee members voiced concerns over any amendment or action that would jeopardize bipartisan support around the bill.

"The language in the bill is the result of compromise and hard work from Republicans, Democrats, and faith-based organizations to make sure our prisons are not just revolving doors and to improve prisoners' chances of becoming productive, contributing citizens when they re-enter the community," said Rep. Chris Cannon (R-UT), member of the Judiciary Committee. Rep. Cannon introduced the Second Chance Act with Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-IL), and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (R-OH).

"I commend my colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee for working together in a bipartisan manner to pass the Second Chance Act," said Rep. Tubbs-Jones. "Today's action by the Judiciary Committee means that the Second Chance Act is one step closer to becoming law and assisting the ex-offender community in changing their lives for the better."

The SCA, with the new amendments, allocates \$176 million to fund a variety of re-entry programs, including faith-based programs. One of the main components of the bill is the funding of demonstration projects that would provide ex-offenders with a coordinated continuum of housing, education, health, employment, and mentoring services. For more information on the bill including a list of its 112 cosponsors, please click here.

For more on HR 1704, and other legislative news, see www.FedCURE.org

Five Grams of Coke
Racism, Moralism And White
Public Opinion Influence
Sanctions For First Time
Possession

Three out of four white Americans believe drug users should get treatment, not prison time, a nationally representative survey has found. The minority of whites who support sending people possessing illegal drugs to prison are more likely to make moral judgments about drug users, more likely to blame addicts for their addiction, more likely to deny that racism is a problem in the US, and more likely to believe — incorrectly — that blacks are more likely to use cocaine than whites.

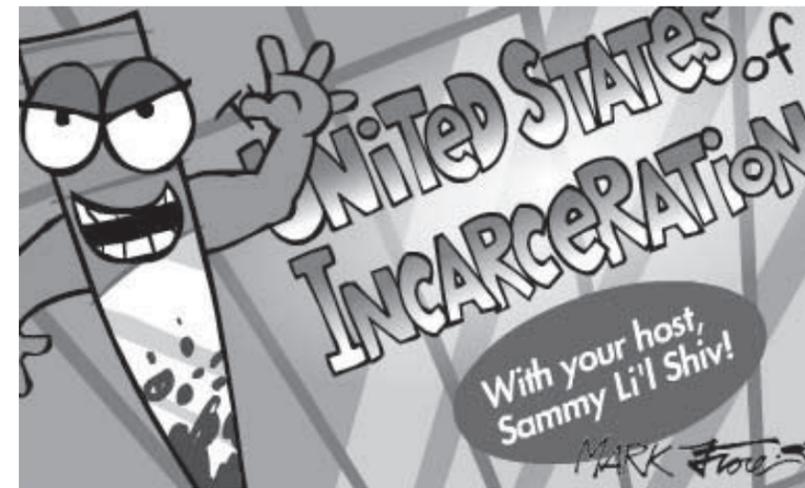
The researchers measured moral values by asking respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with two statements: Drug users are evil; and if people took their religion more seriously they would not become addicted to drugs. The researchers measured racial beliefs about drugs by asking respondents whether they thought blacks or whites were more likely to use cocaine. Racial attitudes were tested by asking respondents to agree or disagree with two statements: Discrimination against African-Americans is no longer a problem in the United States; and over the past few years, African-Americans have gotten more economically than they deserve. Respondents were also asked if they were conservative or liberal, if they felt that law enforcement was effective in reducing the demand for and supply of drugs in America; and whether or not they believed that drug addicts have only themselves to blame for their addiction.

Conducted by Drs. Rosalyn Lee and Kenneth Rasinski at the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, *Five Grams of Coke* was published in the June issue of the *International Journal of Drug Policy*. The study is part of a larger survey of public attitudes toward substance abuse whose results will be published later.

The survey asked what should be the appropriate sanction for a first-time offender charged with possession of five grams of cocaine. The study found that an absolute majority of whites — 51% — favored drug treatment, 26% favored probation, and only 23% favored sending him to prison.

Regarding imprisonment, the survey gave respondents two choices: one year or five years. The survey found that only 5.5% were so punitive as to support a five-year sentence for first-time drug possession, while 17.6% supported a one-year sentence.

Source: *Drug War Chronicle* — www.stophedrugwar.org/chronicle



Award-winning cartoonist Mark Fiore has built a legacy of social activism with his whimsical-yet-serious series of cartoons and animation. His most recent work, *Sammy L'il Shiv* (above), attacks the U.S. Prison Industrial Complex. Mark's work is available online and in DVD format at his web site at: www.markfiore.com.

**CONCRETE & STEEL
DON'T CARE WHETHER THEY MAKE A
SCHOOL or a PRISON but...
SHOULDN'T YOU?**

**BOYCOTT
PRISON
DESIGN**

THE STATS

There are **2 million people** locked up in federal, state, and county facilities. More than **6 million people** are in parole or probation.

The United States **incarcerates more people** than any other country in the world.

Every day in the United States **200 new jail cells** are constructed.

Black people are **7.8 times more likely to be imprisoned** than whites when convicted of the same crime.

AN EXPENSIVE PRICE TO PAY

Prisons cost taxpayers over **\$32 billion** a year.

Every year that an inmate spends in prison costs **\$22,000**; The cost of a full life term averages **\$1.5 million**.

Over the course of the last 20 years, the amount of money spent on **prisons increased by 570%** while that spent on elementary and secondary **education increased by only 33%**.

GET INVOLVED! Check out www.adpsr.org for information about how you can join the prison boycott campaign and contribute to social justice in the U.S.



Green Party's Kevin Zeese Seeks Maryland US Senate Seat

"I'm running for U.S. Senate because the two major parties no longer represent the interests of most Americans. A recent poll described in the July 16th *Economist* asked voters if they thought elected officials represented their priorities. Only 17 percent said yes. And, if we look at the policies being put in place by those in office, we repeatedly see that the American people are correct — their views are unrepresented," says Kevin Zeese on his Internet site's home page.

ZEESSE ... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Libertarian Party's Loretta Nall Wants To Be Alabama's Governor

Loretta Nall learned about the war on drugs the hard way — by being warred upon. "Drug policy is a huge part of my campaign, and I don't back away from it. After all, I got my start from the cops kicking down my door," Loretta Nall says repeatedly in her Libertarian Party campaign to become Alabama's Governor.

NALL ... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Friends Of November Coalition Seeking Public Office

Since 1997 you've read in the *Razor Wire* about these grassroots organizers.

Cliff Thornton Running Green For Governor

Green Party candidate Cliff Thornton is making the reform of drug war laws a major issue in the upcoming Connecticut gubernatorial campaign. The Green Party of the United States has a plank in its platform favoring the use of medical marijuana. The *Norwich Bulletin* (CT) reported June 26 that Clifford Thornton, 61, is the first African-American to run for governor of Connecticut.

"All great truths start as blasphemy," said Thornton. "The war on drugs

THORNTON ... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Democrat Roger Goodman Runs For Washington State House Seat In 45th District

Attorney and criminal justice policy expert Roger Goodman is running for the State House seat vacated by Rep. Toby Nixon in the 45th Legislative District.

He currently directs the King County Bar Association's Drug Policy Project, which has assembled a large and

GOODMAN ... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



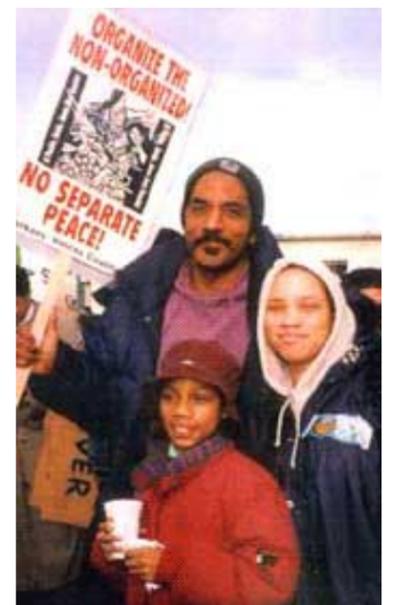
Green Party Candidate Aaron Dixon Denounces War On Drugs In Bid For US Senate From Washington State

Washington State voters in November will decide if Democratic incumbent Senator Maria Cantwell has earned another term in DC. A retired Safeco Insurance executive, Mike McGavick, is the Republican Party's hopeful replacement for Cantwell. Both individuals are millionaires, support current drug war laws, and approve of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Green Party candidate Aaron Dixon has little campaign money and condemns US military adventurism along with drug war laws. "Like US foreign policy, the war on drugs is failed public policy. Years of prohibitionist laws have only served the interests of organized crime, police organizations and politicians who appeal to public fears about drugs," Dixon has written in campaign materials.

As a young adult in the late 1960s, Dixon was Captain of the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther

DIXON ... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Aaron Dixon with daughters Aziza (left) and Venishia (right) at the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle

Soap and Sentencing Drug War Prisoners Advocacy Group Launches Line Of Pure Natural Soap



weren't looking for a hobby, but a profitable, local business that would grow a significant grassroots foundation," says Nora Callahan, a co-founder and executive director of the group, founded and based out of rural Stevens County, Washington. "As a hobby I made soap when I was young, and last holiday season I made soap for friends and family. By New Years we'd stumbled upon a local market."

Opening the bars of prison — one bar of great, natural soap at a time — is how Chuck Armsbury, editor of the group's newspaper, *The Razor Wire*, explains the notion of soap and sentencing. "Prisoners are in a vacuum, isolated, and the families suffer terrible effects, but are some of the best people to advocate for reform. It's urgent we find ways to support eager public speakers and organizers, building the circulation of our newspaper, and awareness about our group. Do you buy soap? Buy November's Natural Soap."

November's Natural Soap blends fine, plant-based oils for a hard, long-lasting bar of soap made with pure, botanical essential oils, natural herbs

and flowers. For gift-giving, the company offers affordable gift baskets that include a line of basic, bathing accessories.

"Everyone buys soap, but not great soap," says the Coalition's Tom Murlowski, who acts as the soap company's production manager. "We produce a great, natural soap, so we can do the work of social justice."

Most people wash their body with products that aren't soap at all, but chemical detergents made with petroleum products, chemical dyes and fragrances.

The skin is your body's largest organ; use November's pure, natural soap on it, Remember, clean and pure, cleans best.

For more information about November's Natural Soap, visit www.novembersoap.com, or contact us at:

November's Natural Soap, 282 West Astor, Colville, WA, 99114, Ph: (509) 684-1550, Email: soap@november.org.



Colville, WA — There's a new and unique natural soap on the market, produced by the team at November's Natural Soap, promising customers a satisfying bathing experience.

The November Coalition has launched an online storefront at www.novembersoap.com to offer a superior product that everyone needs. The group urges friends and supporters across the country to use November's Natural Soap because, "clean and pure cleans best," and a purchase supports important work.

Supporting prisoners and their loved ones' mission to educate the public and urge sentencing reform, is work accomplished under the burden of devastating, long-term incarceration. Sales of November's Natural Soap supplement the tireless support of single-parent households, elderly retired couples, and those who are in prison.

"As we explored business prospects, we

Order Form: November's Natural Soap

	Price	Qty.	Extended
Honey Babe	\$4.75		
Rosie & Herb	\$4.75		
Hemp Hemp Hooray	\$4.75		
Sisters Sunshine	\$4.75		
Patchouli Passion	\$4.75		
Lusty Lavender	\$4.75		
Mocha Motion	\$4.75		
Simply Soap (Unscented)	\$4.75		
Introductory Offer: Free Shipping!			
WA State: 7.6% sales tax			
Total:			

YOUR CONTACT INFO:

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____
 ZIP + 4 _____
 PH _____

SHIP TO:
 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____
 ZIP + 4 _____

Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility

Established in 1981, ADPSR works for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice and the development of healthy communities.

ADPSR has organized a Prison Design Boycott Campaign, featuring a poster design competition to explain the problems with the current U.S. prison system, and why the refusal to contribute to it is an important and effective response. Featured in this issue are the winning entry and the two runners-up.

It Is Time To Stop Building Prisons

Our prison system is both a devastating moral blight on our society and an overwhelming economic burden on our tax dollars, taking away much needed resources from schools, health care and affordable housing. The prison system is corrupting our society and making us more threatened, rather than protecting us as its proponents claim. It is a system built on fear, racism, and the exploitation of poverty. Our current prison system has no place in a society that aspires to liberty, justice, and equality for all.

As architects, we are responsible for one of the most expensive parts of the prison system, the construction of new prison buildings. Almost all of us would rather be using our professional skills to design positive social institutions such as universities or playgrounds, but these institutions lack funding because of spending on prisons. If we would rather design schools and community centers, we must stop building prisons.

Please join members of Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) in pledging to not participate in the design, construction, or renovation of prisons. We also invite you to learn more about the prison system, to join us in envisioning more just and productive alternatives to incarceration, and to work towards a society that treats all its members with dignity, equality, and justice.

As of July 26, 2006, 614 professionals have signed the ADPSR pledge. If you work in these industries, and would like to pledge your support, see: www.adpsr.org/prisons/form_individual.htm

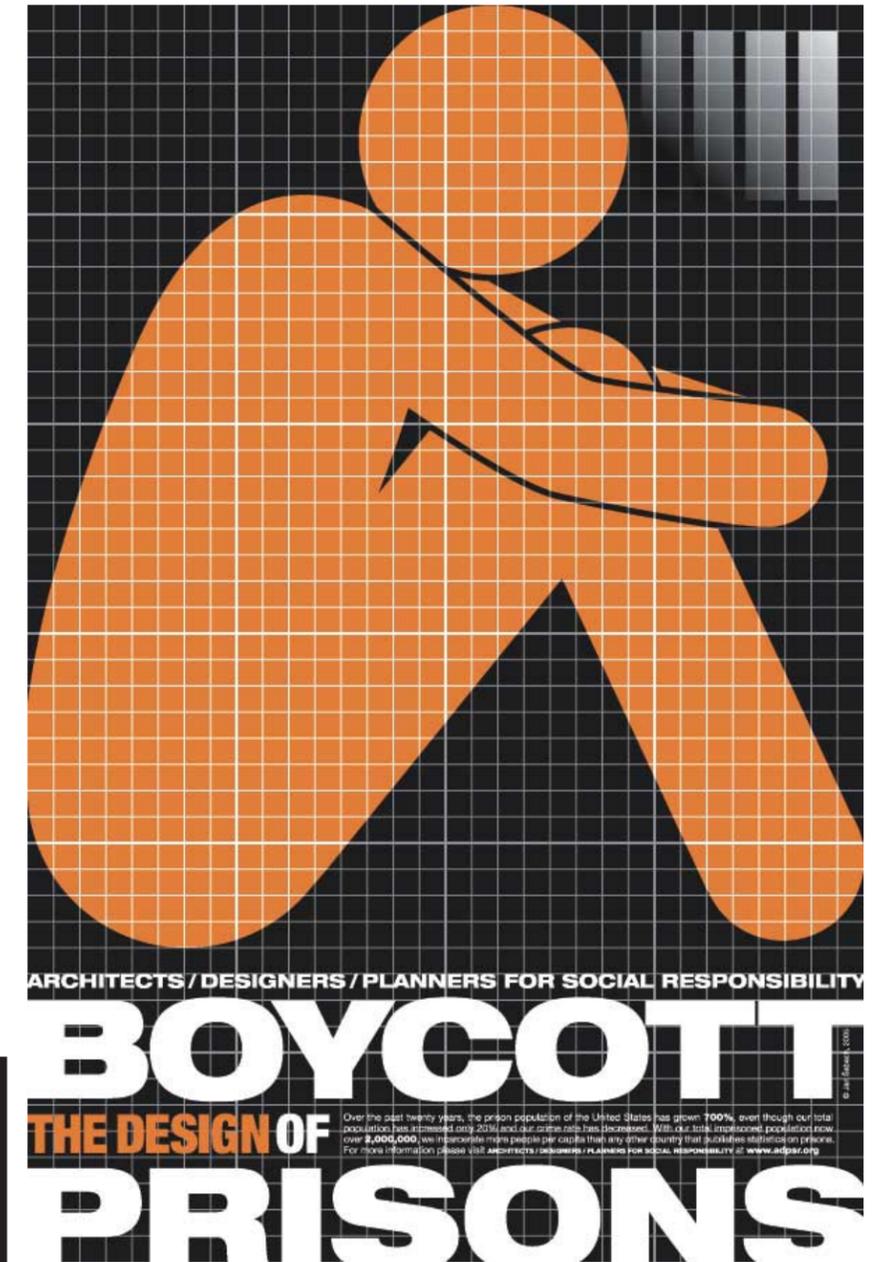
PRISON DESIGN BOYCOTT PLEDGE FOR INDIVIDUAL SIGNERS

I BELIEVE THAT TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE BEING INCARCERATED AND THAT OUR SOCIETY MUST IMMEDIATELY DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION. I BELIEVE IN CREATING DESIGN FOR A SOCIETY WITH REAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL, AND I WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE MY DESIGN TO THE PERPETUATION OF WRONGFUL INSTITUTIONS THAT ABUSE OTHERS. IN RECOGNITION OF THE DEEP INJUSTICE OF THE PRESENT PRISON SYSTEM, I PLEDGE NOT TO DO ANY WORK THAT FURTHERS THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRISONS OR JAILS.

Featured on front cover:
 "Escaping Identity"
 Contest Winner: Miguel Bermudez, Ann Arbor, MI

Featured at left:
 "Shouldn't You... Boycott Prison Design?"
 Runner-up: William Arbizu & Kerstin Vogdes, Brooklyn, NY

Featured below:
 "Boycott Of Prisons"
 Runner-up: Jan Sabach, Brooklyn, NY



For more information on ADPSR, visit www.adpsr.org/prisons

NFL Legend Carl Banks Supports Children Of Incarcerated Parents



Former New York Giants football star, Carl Banks, will lend his support to children of incarcerated parents by becoming the new board chair of In Arms Reach, Inc. Parents behind Bars: Children in Crisis. In Arms Reach (IAR) is a non-profit community-based art, counseling, prison visitation and academic mentoring organization exclusively serving children and youth in urban communities of New York City whose parent(s) are, or once were, incarcerated.

Banks, a former All-Pro linebacker who won two Super Bowl rings during nine seasons with the New York Giants, is eager to use his fame as a vehicle to expose IAR to a larger audience.

"We have to increase awareness and bring the plight of these children of incarcerated parents to a wider audience. I recently joined as board chairman, and I am actively reaching

out to others in the athletic community to help this organization keep its programs and services going," said Banks in an August press release. "I am participating in a charity dinner fund-raising drive, and helping organize a campaign over the next 12 months to fuel new energy and concern for the dangers facing children of incarcerated parents."

Terrence Stevens, who also serves as the program's executive director, founded IAR.

Stevens, a native of Harlem, is confined to a wheelchair and virtually paralyzed from the neck down due to Muscular Dystrophy. Stevens was granted executive clemency in 2001 by Gov. George Pataki after serving close to 10 years of a 15 year sentence for a low level non violent drug offense under the harsh Rockefeller Drug Laws.

Since its inception, IAR has offered youth an alternative to the lures of the street. Staff have provided over 3,450 hours of tutoring services, 368 after-school mentoring sessions, and 27 free trips to prison facilities for children to reunite with their incarcerated parents. All IAR volunteers and mentors are required to undergo a fingerprint and national background investigation check prior to working with children. On-site social work interns, supervised by an MSW, support IAR. The social work interns conduct monthly social assessments. Their assessments provide IAR with a case management system to regularly track the child's social, emotional and academic needs.

"Children of incarcerated people face some of life's harshest challenges, including poverty, violence, limited opportunities for a good education, and a future that seems to hold little promise. These children present a range of emotions, including fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, loneliness, and guilt. Often, their academic performance deteriorates, and they develop other school-related difficulties. The incarceration of a parent often places children at an increased risk of substance abuse, truancy, and other anti-social behaviors," said Stevens.

Banks' involvement with IAR began after meeting Stevens at an event to benefit children at Giant Stadium. "I was amazed; this guy does more for children though being virtually paralyzed from the neck down than most people do with all their faculties," Banks said

The first-annual charity dinner/ fundraiser for In Arms Reach (IAR): Parent Behind Bars: Children in Crisis will be held on December 1, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of City College. All ticket purchases are tax deductible.

To purchase tickets, make a donation or to RVSP, please write: In Arms Reach, The City College of NY, 138 St. Convent Ave. Harris Hall Building, New York, NY 10031, or telephone 212.650.5894. Contact Terrence Stevens at 917-939-5349. IAR Web site: www.inarmsreach.org

TONIGHT, IN THE UNITED STATES, 2.5 MILLION CHILDREN WILL GO TO BED DENIED ACCESS TO THEIR PARENT BECAUSE THAT PARENT IS BEHIND BARS.

NASCAR Team To Promote Bill To Reinstate Federal Parole

FedCURE has teamed up with Carter 2 Motorsports of Statesville, North Carolina, a New Limited Late Model and NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Team. The owner/driver, Roger Carter II, has agreed to feature HR 3072 prominently on his vehicle. FedCURE is pioneering the use of NASCAR racing cars to promote federal legislation now pending in the U.S. Congress, HR 3072 in particular - A Bill to Revive the System of Parole for Federal Prisoners.

HR 3072, it seems, is the first promotion of federal legislation to be featured on a NASCAR vehicle. Along with HR 3072, FedCURE monitors several other bills currently pending in the U.S. Congress whose numbers will also adorn vehicles in the NASCAR circuit.

HR 3072's first race will be the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race in Bristol, TN, on 23 August 2006. This is the 17th race out of 25 on the 2006 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Schedule. We are looking at doing New Hampshire on 16 September, Martinsville on 21 October, and Homestead-Miami on 17 November 2006. The series has over 30 million fans in the United States.

FedCURE's lifetime member and PBS film producer, Allan Mason, is helping to sponsor the

promotion of this venture through his company, BNN (Broadcast News Network) and a show he produces called "96 Seconds." BNN is going up with a crew to do a 6-7 hour shoot with NASCAR driver Roger Carter II and his folks at Carter 2 Motorsports. The first segment will air on cable to approximately 10-14 million viewers.

Roger Carter II has offered hospitality to FedCURE at the 23 August race in Bristol, Tenn. If anyone can make it for a day or two of racing and to man HR 3072's kiosk, please let us know soon by sending an e-mail to: FedCURE@FedCURE.org. Bring your laptops with Wi-Fi.

More information online: www.FedCURE.org



November Coalition History: 1998 — 2000

(CONTINUED FROM WINTER 2005 RAZOR WIRE)

National Presence Established Through Strong Network Of Volunteers

Tom Murlowski, an early volunteer in San Diego, California, joined the staff after relocating to Washington State at the end of 1998.

With public interest established, November Coalition launched its National Vigil Project in early 1999. The National Vigil Project was developed to express the Coalition's determination to encourage regular, visible and nonviolent actions in opposition to the injustice of the drug war.

Regional Coalition volunteers began holding peaceful vigils in their local communities, often in front of courthouses, jails, and prisons. Signs and banners held by participants show the



Tom Murlowski San Francisco, 1998

faces of drug war victims and call for "no more drug war."

Public interest in holding drug war vigils flowered immediately across the country, and media interest began to follow. By late 1999 there were a dozen regular vigils in cities and towns across the U.S. featuring citizens holding up the Coalition's well-known banner, There is no justice in the war on drugs.

On February 15, 2000 the Vigil Project was able to coordinate simultaneous vigils marking and denouncing the infamous day when the U.S. prison population reached the milestone of two million incarcerated — Two Million Too Many — thus giving our country the dubious distinction of world's leading jailer.

Forty-three cities held vigils that mixed thousands of reform activists with drug war families in a show of popular unity. Press coverage included national and international reports. Joined by new allies from prison reform and other social justice groups, Coalition participants magnified their voices.

National interest in prisoners of the drug war accelerated as corporate media contacted the Colville office looking for stories they'd found on The WALL that could be shared with their readers. In particular, the acclaimed PBS documentary, "SNITCH," which aired first in the spring of 1999, was produced in consultation with staff and members of the November Coalition and other groups that quickly formed an emerging social movement.

The Coalition's Voice of the Prisoner CD, a project initiated and managed by John Humphrey, a musician and activist in Los Angeles, was produced autumn of 1998. Outreach promotion by volunteers



National magazines featuring the November Coalition



Patty Nielson was our first Vigil Leader. Above: Patty (2nd from right) and others at first San Francisco Vigil.

pushed the CD, a collection of prisoner narratives of prison experiences, to one of the top 20 requests in the diverse rap music culture. The Voice of the Prisoner made some micro-broadcaster's hip-hop charts!

Despite such success, the Coalition remains challenged to unite prisoners and outside activists in a concerted social justice movement. Prisoners have limited political and civil rights; organizing on the inside is not encouraged, allowed, or protected by law. They cannot hold vigils or otherwise protest without endangering themselves.



However, the presidential election for November 2000 allowed a small opportunity to do widespread petitioning, inside and outside prisons, especially around pleas for clemency and pardon to outgoing President Clinton.

Sensing a strategic moment, and in harmony with similar national campaigns, November Coalition called for release of drug war and other nonviolent prisoners in the Jubilee Year (every 50 years, traditionally). Regional chapter organizers began to circulate the Jubilee Justice Petition, offering volunteers a project with a specific public demand, a task one could do alone, or within a group's activity.

Named Jubilee Justice 2000, the popular campaign produced over 41,000 signatures of support throughout the country and overseas, by asking President Clinton to extend "clemency to all nonviolent federal prisoners who have served at least five years in prison, commuting their sentences to 'time served'." Coordinating the gathering and handling of Jubilee petitions was the Coalition's major networking project at the grassroots level throughout the summer and fall of 2000.

Local volunteers developed savvy public experience, and through vigils and other public appearances, secured signatures from passersby who agreed with the Jubilee request and spirit of forgiveness within it. In many institutions, prisoners were able to collect signatures, and assist their loved ones' activity without problems of compliance with prison rules which govern every kind of organizing.

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT RAZOR WIRE)

Upcoming Events

August 13-18, 2006, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. XVI International AIDS Conference, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC), Toronto, Canada. For more info, contact 416-840-3334 or torontohost@aids2006.org. or see www.aids2006.org.



August 19, 2006, Aurora, CO. Dallas St. Community Block Party, sponsored by Friends and Family of the Imprisoned in North Aurora. 10:00 am to 4:00pm at 9591 E. 22nd Ave., Aurora, CO. \$25 per person. For more info, contact Emily at (303) 364-6032.

August 19-20, 2006, Seattle, WA. Seattle Hempfest, Myrtle Edwards Park, Downtown Seattle, WA. Free admission. Visit www.hempfest.org for further information.

August 26, 2006, Huntington Beach, CA. Rally Against The Failing War on Drugs, cosponsored by the November Coalition and Orange County NORML. 1:00 to 4:20, Huntington Beach Pier entrance. For more info, contact stantatt@pacbell.net. For past events, see <http://ocnorml.org/events.htm>

August 27, 2006, Olympia, WA. Olympia Hempfest, 11:00am - 9:00pm, Heritage Park, Downtown Olympia, WA. Free Admission. For more info, see www.olyhempfest.org

September 9, 2006, Missoula, MT. 11th Annual Missoula HempFest, Noon - 10:30 PM at Caras Park, Missoula. For more info, contact 406-542-8696 or visit the website at: www.missoulahempfest.com

September 16, 2006, Boston, MA. 17th Annual Boston Freedom Rally. Noon-6:00pm, on Boston Common, sponsored by MASS CANN/NORML, featuring bands, speakers and vendors. Visit www.MassCann.org for further information.

September 23, 2006, San Clemente, CA. Rally Against The Failing War on Drugs, cosponsored by the November Coalition and Orange County NORML. 1:00 to 4:20, San Clemente Pier entrance. For more info, contact stantatt@pacbell.net. For past events, see <http://ocnorml.org/events.htm>

October 7-8, 2006, Madison, WI. 36th Annual Great Midwest Marijuana Harvest Festival, sponsored by Madison NORML. At the Library Mall, downtown, visit www.madisonnorml.org for further information.

October 13-15, 2006, Oakland, CA. Black Panther Party 40th Year Reunion. at the Malonga Center For The Arts. For more info, see: www.itsabouttimebpb.com.

October 14, 2006, Montgomery, AL & Nationwide. Families Against Criminalization, Exploitation And Slavery (FACES) Rally. Details

pending; see www.journeyforjustice.org or www.nabsio.org

November 9-2, 2006, Oakland, CA. Drug User Health: The Politics and the Personal, 6th National Harm Reduction Conference. At Marriott Oakland City Center Hotel, 1001 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94607. For more info contact Paula Santiago at santiago@harmreduction.org or 212-213-6376, x15, or see www.harmreduction.org/6national.

November 17-19, 2006, Washington, DC. Students for Sensible Drug Policy International Conference and Training Workshop. At the Georgetown University School of Law, including speakers, training sessions, a lobby day and more. Further information will be posted soon at www.ssdp.org online.

December 1, 2006, New York, NY. First Annual Charity Dinner/Fundraiser for In Arms Reach: Parent Behind Bars: Children in Crisis, with former New York Giants linebacker Carl Banks (see page 10). 6:30 pm, at the Great Hall of City College, contact (212) 650-5894 or info@inarmsreach.org for further information, or see www.inarmsreach.org.

February 1-3, 2007, Salt Lake City, UT. Science & Response: 2007, The Second National Conference on Methamphetamine, HIV, and Hepatitis, sponsored by the Harm Reduction Project. At the Hilton City Center, visit www.methconference.org for info.

US Voters Support Prisoner Rehabilitation

From every age, gender, economic, political, cultural and ethnic group and every geographic area, Americans overwhelmingly support the rehabilitation of non-violent criminals both before and after prison, a new poll by Zogby International shows.

Three out of four Americans expressed either fear or concern about the 700,000 prisoners who leave U.S. prisons each year, and the 60% of them likely to commit crimes that send them back to prison, Zogby's national survey showed. The February 2006 poll explored what people think ought to be done about the situation.

The survey sponsored by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) reveals that by almost a 9 to 1 margin (87% to 11%), the U.S. voting public favors rehabilitative services for prisoners as opposed to a punishment only system. Of those polled, 70% favored these services during incarceration and after release.

Likely voters appear to recognize that our current "correctional system" does not help correct the problem of crime, the survey indicates. By strong majorities, Americans said they feel that a lack of life skills, the experience of being in prison, and many obstacles faced

upon community reentry are major factors in crimes that prisoners commit following their release.

By an overwhelming majority (82%), people feel that the lack of job training and job opportunities were significant barriers to those released prisoners who wanted to avoid committing subsequent crimes. Similar large majorities saw the lack of housing, medical and mental health services, drug treatment, family support and mentoring as additional barriers — and believe that all of these services should be available to returning prisoners. Most of the respondents felt that reentry services must be introduced to prisoners long before they're released.

When asked about pending legislation making federal funds available to communities for services in support of successful reentry (The Second Chance Act, esp.), 78% were in support — and 40% of those strongly supported such assistance.

Dr. Barry Krisberg, President of NCCD, said "these survey results tell us that Americans have looked at the 30-year experiment on getting tough with offenders and decided it is



no longer working. We have built up an unprecedented prison population of over 2 million, but most of these offenders are returning home each year with few skills or support to keep them from going back to lives of crime."

The survey was conducted Feb. 15-18, 2006, and included 1,039 respondents. The poll carries a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

Source: www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1101

(Editor: For more reading online about reentry, see our "Reentry Reform Now" section at www.november.org/ReEntry.)

The WALL

Cynthia Clark

30 Years: Crack Cocaine Conspiracy

Cynthia grew up in Havana, Florida in a large, poor family. Most of the kids where she lived didn't finish high school; she did. In preparation for a career in law enforcement, Cynthia attended Lively Law Enforcement Academy, and received a certificate of completion. It was early 1991, she was a single working woman, raising a young daughter, and hadn't had so much as a traffic ticket.

There have been years to reflect, and today Cynthia isn't sure if it was love, or if she was lured by the new boyfriend, flashing cash, sharing when hers was short. It hadn't been easy growing up poor, but it was easy to be a wealthy man's girlfriend. She reminds her friends on the outside, "the guys don't tell us they are crack dealers."

Dreams of police work vanished when she found out she was in love with a drug dealer. She participated in a delivery, wired money as directed by Stanley, and Stanley was generous. She struggled with her values, but got busted before she could come to her senses, and dump the drug dealing boyfriend, and be a cop, instead.

In March of 1991, Stanley and Cynthia were arrested after Stanley sold \$5,700 worth of crack cocaine to undercover agents. Cynthia was in Stanley's car, which made her part of the drugs sold, and in his possession. She'd participated a few times, which made her just as guilty as they'd find Stanley to be. Enough people talked in the broad conspiracy by the time talk got to Stanley, that he would face 5 Kilos worth of charges. Cynthia, his new girlfriend would face the same amount of prison time, even though she didn't control the business, but simply did as her boyfriend told her to do.

If the way the sentencing system works in drug cases is a surprise to you, it was a surprise to her public defender, too. In a letter presented to President Clinton in support of a Christmas pardon in 2000 she wrote, "The case was my first federal trial. The guidelines were new at that time. Not every lawyer knew of the harsh application of the Pinkerton liability."

Cynthia's daughter grew from 7 years old into womanhood with children of her own. If Cynthia were tried today, the Pinkerton sentencing enhancements would not apply, and the judge would not be restrained by mandates, but by a broader range of sentencing guides. Cynthia would be home long before year 2017, and not imprisoned today.

Her friends write in support of her, "Cynthia



Cynthia (left) with her daughter and grandchild during a prison visit

Clark is a loving, kind-hearted woman whose life today revolves around what she can do to express the love the Lord gives to her each day. She's not a drug kingpin and did not deserve the 30 year sentence she received, and if sentenced today would have received decades less time! Cynthia went to trial because she wanted to defend herself against the charges of being a drug kingpin in possession of a gun."

Today from prison she urges young women to drop drug dealing boyfriends and choose values that matter — family, honest work, and taking pleasure in things that won't destroy lives. She also urges citizens to become involved in re-examining drug and sentencing laws that do more harms than good.

The police knew Cynthia didn't have information beyond a few of Stanley's customers they already knew about, and there wasn't information to trade. She was never offered a 'plea deal,' to exchange information about others for less time in prison.

"I didn't need 30 years to bring me to regret not leaving Stanley the moment I found out he wasn't working an honest job," Cindy insists and explains, "Just Say No needs to be more than about drugs. Just say no to having more than what we need, is a message that would help keep people away from drugs."

To correspond with Cynthia, write:

**Cynthia D. Clark 09257-017
Federal Prison Camp
PO Box 7006
Marianna, Florida 32446**

Medical Marijuana: Five Arrested, 13 Dispensaries Raided By DEA In San Diego

Just a week after the US House of Representatives voted to continue funding Justice Department raids on medical marijuana patients and providers in states where it is legal, the feds struck again. Five people have been arrested in a series of DEA and local police raids on July 6, hitting 13 medical marijuana dispensaries in San Diego County. Some people are being charged under state marijuana distribution laws in the cooperative federal-local effort. More arrests are expected, local law enforcement officials said.

The raids and arrests came as federal officials unsealed two indictments, one charging the Purple Bud Room and Tender Holistics Care dispensaries with illegally distributing marijuana, the other laying similar charges against five people who owned and operated Co-op San Diego.

The feds also went after four doctors on suspicion of providing medical marijuana recommendations for people the officials claimed did not legitimately need marijuana. State and federal officials have filed complaints with the state Medical Board against the doctors.

The San Diego District Attorney's Office announced it was filing marijuana distribution charges against five dispensaries: Ocean Beach Dispensary and Utopia, both on Voltaire Street in Ocean Beach; Native Sun Dispensary on Rosecrans Street, in the Midway District; THC Dispensary, no longer in business, in Pacific Beach; and the California Medical Center, on La Jolla Boulevard in La Jolla.

In a statement announcing the busts, the DA's Office said it was not aiming at medical marijuana patients, but at retail pot outlets disguised as dispensaries. "Our office has no intention of stopping those who are chronically ill with AIDS, glaucoma and cancer from obtaining any legally prescribed drug, including medical marijuana, to help them ease their pain," said DA Bonnie Dumanis said. But the state's medical marijuana law is "being severely abused and it has led to the neighborhood pot dealer opening up storefronts from La Jolla to Ocean Beach to North Park," she said.

Americans for Safe Access (ASA — www.safeaccessnow.org), the medical marijuana defense group, announced in an e-mail on the day of the busts that it was holding an emergency meeting in San Diego that evening to craft a response.

Source: Drug War Chronicle, 7/7/06 — www.stopthedrugwar.org/chronicle



Prison Legal News Victorious In FOIA Lawsuit

WASHINGTON, DC — On June 26, 2006, U.S. District Court Judge Reggie B. Walton ruled in favor of *Prison Legal News* in a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit filed against the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Prison Legal News (PLN), founded in 1990, is a Seattle-based non-profit organization dedicated to protecting human rights in U.S. prisons. *PLN* publishes a monthly newsletter that includes articles, reports, reviews and analysis of court rulings and news related to prisoners' rights and criminal justice issues.

PLN has over 4,500 subscribers in all 50 states, including prisoners, lawyers, journalists, judges, courts, public libraries and universities. *PLN* also operates a website that contains a comprehensive national database of prison-related court rulings, verdicts and settlements.

PLN filed suit against the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) on Sept. 13, 2005 after the agency refused to grant *PLN* a fee waiver for a FOIA document request, claiming in part that *PLN* did not have the "intent and ability" to disseminate the requested documents to the public. *PLN* had requested documents related to public funds the BOP had paid out as a result of lawsuits and claims between January 1, 1996 and July 31, 2003.

PLN argued that release of the requested documents was in the public interest since the

BOP operates the nation's largest prison system (with over 190,000 prisoners in 106 prisons) — and because the expenditure of taxpayer dollars for lawsuits and claims filed against the agency, often due to constitutional violations, was a matter of important public concern.

The BOP delayed ruling on the fee waiver request for almost two years and then denied the request, effectively barring *PLN's* access to the information. Absent a fee waiver, smaller public-interest media organizations such as *PLN* are unable to obtain government documents that are supposed to be available to the public. In this case the BOP had attempted to impose a \$7,000 fee for the requested documents for search and copying costs.

In ruling for *PLN* on a summary judgment motion, Judge Walton found that the disclosure of the requested information was "likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government." The Court further held that *PLN* had the ability to "widely disseminate" the information to the public, and the BOP was ordered to produce the requested documents without payment of fees.

On February 4, 2006, the *New York Times* noted in an editorial, *The High Cost of Public Information*, that the Bush administration had adopted a de facto policy of using high search

fees to deprive non profit and public interest media organizations access to information that is and should be public. *Prison Legal News'*

"THIS RULING IS AN IMPORTANT VINDICATION FOR THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND, ONCE THE INFORMATION IS RELEASED, WILL BRING AN IMPORTANT MEASURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT TO OUR NATION'S FEDERAL PRISONS."

case is the first to strike a blow against this administration policy.

PLN Editor Paul Wright stated, "This ruling is an important vindication for the independent media and, once the information is released, will bring an important measure of accountability and oversight to our nation's federal prisons."

The case is *Prison Legal News v. Lappin*, U.S. District Court D.C., Civil Action No. 05-1812 (RBW). For Further Information Contact: **Paul Wright, Editor, Prison Legal News 2400 NW 80th St., Box 148 Seattle, WA 98117, Ph: (802) 275-8594, pwright@prisonlegalnews.org www.prisonlegalnews.org**

Prisoners Challenge Lack Of Access And Retroactivity Post-Booker

A group of federal prisoners has filed a class action lawsuit claiming federal courts are denying access to thousands like them who are eligible for reduced sentences after the United States Supreme Court's January 2005 ruling in *U.S. v. Booker*. Plaintiffs Rodney Doggett, Russell Kaemmerling, Gary Callahan, and Brian Culwell allege, individually and together, that Defendants Alberto Gonzales, Rep. James Sensenbrenner, et. al., routinely deny access to court on the basis of technical rules and thereby refusing to consider arguments that would vacate illegal portions of their sentences.

The lawsuit was filed in early April 2006 in the District of Columbia Federal Court. Each Plaintiff is serving a significant sentence, and each is classified a non-violent offender. They are "currently serving the illegal portion of their sentences and have been denied access to the courts for the redress of their grievances and correction of each man's illegal sentence. Some sentences of those named in the lawsuit are as much as 15 times the maximum allowed by law based on the Supreme Court ruling," according to Plaintiff's *Press Release* dated April 4, 2006.

Plaintiffs insist that while each rightfully seeks redress for personal grievances dismissed and denied by Defendants, they also insist that "the issue is much bigger than our own individual situations. We are confident that federal courts will ultimately acknowledge that 'individual errors' are not an excuse, or rationale, for the clearly systemic failure and abuse."

Plaintiff Kaemmerling concludes the *Press Release* with a startling irony, "State courts have recognized the significance of this U.S. Supreme Court *Booker* ruling and have moved aggressively to grant those inmates currently and illegally confined in state prisons redress. Yet, there are approximately 100,000 individuals with illegal sentences incarcerated in the Federal system that have been given no avenue to bring those issues to court and receive relief."

For updates and more information about this prisoner-initiated action, contact Barry Ward, certified paralegal, at bdward@cox-internet.com or 1-903-363-4460.



I'm a currently incarcerated member. I was reading your last *Razor Wire* newsletter in the 'day room' while waiting to take a shower. After my turn getting wet, I returned to where I left my stuff, and your newsletter was gone. If you could find it in your heart to send me another copy, I would be most grateful. Also, please let know if I need to renew my membership. I don't have much, but I do love your newsletter.

Michael Buffington

I am excited and encouraged by the fabulous content and color pictures in the *Razor Wire*. Even though the "Mission" hasn't been accomplished, I am still inspired by just knowing that so many people, even some cops like the LEAP group, care about me enough to sacrifice time and money in the struggle for justice.

I love the new magazine format; it's so much easier to read. With 82 months down on the 10 years they gave me, I'm now a short-timer with just 9 months left. May you continue to be blessed and be a blessing in all you think, say and do!

Aaron Camacho

My name is Jerome Allen, and I'm 27 years old. The federal prosecutors and court are about to hand me a life sentence because I have two prior drug convictions.

After being pulled over for a vehicle violation, police claimed to smell marijuana smoke and searched the car, and then claiming to find a scale and a gram of crack cocaine. My friend was driving the car registered to her, and she confessed and said the drugs were hers.

The arresting officers tell two totally different stories, not matching at all. Doesn't this destroy their credibility? The prosecutor had no paper work and didn't know who had taken the evidence to the lab. Even though prosecutors had no evidence to convict me, the judge gave them another day to get it together. How easy it is for the government to make paperwork and coerce witnesses.

I hope someone reading this letter can help me.

I have now sent you three letters giving notice of change of address. The Department of Corrections at Stafford Creek will not deliver mail if it does not have the right cell number on it.

They only moved me from H-2-B-35 to H-2-B-36. Yet, because of that move, they will not deliver to me any mail that's sent to the old 35, only to cell 36. I hope you can look into this for me and learn what happened to my *Razor Wire*. Thank you for your time and help.

Jerry M. Jury

I recently read a reprinted January 8, 2005 news article from the *Ledger-Enquirer (GA)*, "Community Protests Meth Prosecution Of Indian Store Owners," given to me by an Asian Indian inmate who said the story is available online at www.november.org/stayinfo/breaking06/GAMethProsecution.html.

My friend is from a different country, but it seems we have the same situation. I honestly thank the November Coalition Foundation and its news editors for bringing up drug war injustice to the media.

My name is Chinh Nguyen, and I am from Vietnam and married for eight years. I got caught up in the federal government's war on meth and now face 12 and one half years in prison followed by deportation for selling cold medicine containing pseudoephedrine.

I have lived in the US since 1997. My wife and I had worked as manicurists in Michigan from 1998 till 2003. We recently started up a convenience-store business because we developed health problems caused by working long hours with chemicals in the salon.

I moved to Oklahoma on purpose to learn how to open a business, and with help from a friend, I leased a small store in Oklahoma City, and there began my new career. I was happy with the new work and had a lot of hope for the future to provide for my family. But my dream turned into a nightmare.

Just a month after opening up the store, the federal government sent an undercover informer into my store, asking to buy ephedrine. Nothing in my training taught that I should not serve him. And shortly after this I got arrested.

They accused me of selling a medicine used to make methamphetamine based on the undercover informer claiming he told me he is going to "cook something." It was hard for me to comprehend that drug slang. I did not pay attention to what he was saying, and I have never associated with people who use illegal drugs.

In my whole life I had never heard of any kind of drug called methamphetamine. I have worked very hard to support my family, and within a few months I got my life destroyed. I lost everything.

I ask myself, "Was I targeted by the US government, and am I a victim of racial discrimination?" Since my arrest, I have learned there are many Vietnamese and Indian hardworking immigrants in Oklahoma who have been similarly targeted and now face many years in prison.

I feel relief and grateful to tell you my story. I would join in support with the work of November Coalition. My English is improved but still not that great. I gave my best effort with the help of a friend to write this letter. I hope you will hear the truth. Thank you.

My name is Richard A. Thomas. I was convicted by jury trial of delivery of cocaine in the amount of 253 grams, or 9 ounces. However, there was no evidence presented at all: no cocaine, no cocaine residue, no wire recording, no phone recording, no marked money, and no 'controlled buy' from police.

I was convicted on the mere words of the state's witnesses, both having received inducements to testify against me at trial. One of the witnesses testified that he was sure it was me who sold him the alleged cocaine because he had previously met me during the 1999 Thanksgiving holiday season.

Prosecutors knew all along that I had been incarcerated from October 1996 through July 2002. I have no 'drug priors,' was gainfully employed and on low-risk parole.

I searched every case on record in the State of Wisconsin, and there has never been, until mine I believe, a criminal case in Wisconsin that tried and convicted someone without any evidence whatsoever. The court sentenced me to 13 years in prison in 2004, and with no chance of parole.

I was an accountant for a local construction company prior to this ordeal. I seek any and all help from anyone or referrals to legal professionals who may become interested in helping me.

Richard A. Thomas

Dear Coalition:

I thank you for continuing to feature my story on *The WALL* section of your web site. I began to get discouraged by the lack of change within our judicial system, until I received a letter from a student in Milwaukee doing a class project. This student had used your web site to obtain information about writing a prisoner (me) and discussing the problems with our current system of justice. This prompted me to get some stamps together and get them in the mail to you for my annual membership.

Organizations like yours are instrumental in bringing about change. This happens first by bringing

about awareness, which I feel your organization does effectively. It's a shame that out of over 2 million incarcerated people, more don't support your efforts. I don't understand why they don't become active in the struggle.

I don't care what they think; I know my support matters, and I do and always will support you until reform comes about. Thanks again for your efforts.

Sincerely, Craig Hartman

My husband is imprisoned at La Tuna, Anthony, NM-TX. I have been denied to see him for the third time because I tested positive for an illegal substance.

This computer they use must be wrong. I have been tested in the past and tested positive the first time, negative the second. Tested in the same place as the first time. They stopped testing for a while and started again. The way they are doing it now is wrong. I call it the 'dirt devil machine.' They rub it against shoes, money, clothing, jewelry and hands. First off, no one has control over money; it has been everywhere. Shoes we walk in — other things we can't control either.

After I saw my husband for the first time and tested positive, I have, since then, cleaned everything. People think I exaggerate, but they have no idea about the pointless stress that the 'dirt devil' causes.

After the second time I tested positive, I cleaned everything but my money. They just started rubbing on the money. This third time, I can't explain why I tested positive. I washed my quarters in hot, hot water. I had an extra key made for my car to have it clean and separate from the rest and also washed it. I also washed my driver's license. Everything was washed — and yet I tested positive.

At La Tuna, they said I had a right to appeal and write a letter to the Warden telling my story, or even calling. But I've called in the past for my husband's family and myself. All I have gotten is his answering machine voice with no follow-up. What rights do they talk about? We have no rights.

All I ask is for prison authorities to figure out another way to test for drugs. I'm supposed to understand that because some people might smuggle drugs, we all have to pay. But that doesn't seem right. My mother-in-law tested positive for the third time, and she won't see her son for three months.

She has been in and out of the hospital, depressed because of her son's situation. I don't understand why the loved ones of prisoners must be punished. Everyone who visits inmates at La Tuna complains about the 'dirt devil machine.'

I don't know if I'm emailing the right place; I just want to be heard.

Veronica

I had read about these ION Machines and their false positives. I'm terrified to try going through one because I take pharmaceutical medications for serious medical conditions. However I take NO illegal narcotics.

At www.PrisonTalkOnline.com is where I read about the BoP's ion machines and all the false positives it produces. To increase their odds of passing the test, some folks are using liquid sanitizer all over their hands, arms, etc. because of contact with money. All PTOers have said to shower immediately prior to going in for a visit.

Do NOT wear perfume, and keep makeup to a minimum. Keep fresh clothing washed without softener sealed in a bag and put on just prior to visiting. I learned that visitors must leave their purses and wallets in the hotel and carry clear plastic bags inside. Still, the darn machine goes off every once in a while.

Burdened by personal disabilities it's gonna be next to impossible to travel from west central Wisconsin down to Terre Haute, Indiana.

I won't see my sweet man for heaven knows how long. I wish they'd put a projected release date up for me, something to pin my hopes and dreams on.

Donna

I Got Published!

July 24, 2006

Time For Congress To Give Felons A Second Chance

All women are not alike, all teenagers are not alike, all African-Americans are not alike, all grandfathers are not alike, all prisoners are not alike.

Our nation's prisons are populated with far more first-time, non-violent drug offenders than with murders and child molesters.

Because there are more than 2 million incarcerated Americans, chances are great that you know someone in prison. Chances are you are related to that someone. Chances are it's the young man who stocked the supermarket shelves, someone who was in your high school class or the guy who worked on your car. Chances are none of those people committed heinous crimes, but they made poor decisions when drugs were first offered them.

We demand that those men and women pay their "debt to society," but that debt is never paid in full. For the rest of their lives they will be labeled felons. They will have an invisible "F" branded on their foreheads. They may not be able to vote in some states, will not be able to own a gun, will not be able to practice law or medicine or teach or be a barber/beautician or a police officer, will not be able to move to another state, will have difficulty finding a job for which he or she is qualified, will have trouble opening a charge account, will have to be extra careful with whom they speak (it might be another felon), will not be able to live in public housing, may not be able to secure a student loan, may not be able to pass a security check. Lots of "will not be able to ..."

It is time for us to take a good, hard look at who those people are behind bars. We are spending \$28,000 a year per prisoner to lock up men and women who instead should be receiving treatment, who should be paying taxes, who should be contributing to our world, who should be home with their families — not in prison. Chances are they are learning how to be better lawbreakers rather than how to be better citizens. We need to demand that our representatives in Washington D.C. reconsider the sentences that are being meted out to offenders. It is time for Congress to pass HR 1704, the Second Chance (or the Re-entry) Act. Now is the time.

Larry Schulenberg, Council Bluff, IA

April 11, 2006 - Tampa Tribune (FL)

Gooden A Drug War Victim

Regarding "Broken Promise" about Dwight Gooden (front page, April 6): Americans are frustrated because we've been unable to stamp out cocaine. Gooden's case is a high-profile example of how hard we try. He didn't stop using, so we threatened him with jail. He still didn't stop, so we branded him a lifelong felon. We can't stamp out cocaine, so we poison the coca farms. We can't poison all the coca, so we seduce Andes politicians with billions for them to do it for us. They fail, so we send in mercenaries to help. When they fail, the U.S. Army will go in.

By that time, our drug-testing equipment will have been perfected to measure nanograms, even picograms, of urine-borne drugs. Then the cycle will amp up as more Dwight Goodens are discovered.

We Americans are on the wrong track.
John Chase, Palm Harbor, FL

April 26, 2006 - Arizona Republic (AZ)

We're Blowing It Again With Hype

Researchers and physicians from across the world warned the media about putting on the hype years ago when crack cocaine was the latest tactic to gain more funding for law enforcement and prisons. The damage to children was largely due to the media, not the drug.

Once again, the media are repeating the same with meth, and the children will suffer far greater consequences. By repeating past hype, the drug of the year becomes the latest ploy in gaining more money to pay for programs that do nothing to help those addicted to the drugs, much less provide services that will ensure their children are able to succeed in life.

Robin Scoins, Peoria, AZ

Get The Facts!

Send us a copy of your published editorial or letter — if we print yours in *The Razor Wire*, you'll receive a free copy of the 5th Edition of *Drug War Facts!* (Published by Common Sense for Drug Policy — www.drugwarfacts.org)



June 2, 2006 - Muskogee Phoenix (OK)

The People Speak: Government Coerces Drug Convictions

In regards to the story "Three Convicted Of Drug Conspiracy," which involved Randon and Brandon Sallis:

With a conspiracy charge the government doesn't need evidence to convict you. They just need their informants, aka "snitches," to take the stand and tell all.

Nobody knows if their testimony is truthful since they aren't given a polygraph test. Informants are trying to get out of jail so they say what the government wants them to say, regardless if it's all lies.

Might I add that it's very common that these informants don't even know the defendants. It's not fair at all. Randon has never been convicted for any crime. He was previously enrolled in college for computer networking and was CEO of his own record company.

He is not violent, but none of this was brought up in trial, and he will face 20 years to life, but we let violent offenders and child molesters have another chance. It makes no sense.

About 60 percent of federal prisoners are drug offenders. They are required to serve 85 percent of their time whereas violent offenders serve an average of 54 percent. African Americans make up the majority of drug war prisoners.

Why? Because blacks and Hispanics are going to be harassed and arrested for drugs more often than whites; and this is also a reason why the sentencing guidelines are so high, because racism is still alive and at its strongest, and other races want to see blacks locked up for life.

Innocent people are being harassed every day, and innocent kids are left without mothers and fathers. Blacks need to wake up and stick together and see how their race is being locked up for life, and other races convicted of more serious crimes get less time.

I can't see how ATF agents, jurors and the district attorney can sleep at night knowing you put somebody's child, father and friend away for life.

Go to www.november.org and read stories of people incarcerated for life over drugs. This could be your child, parents or friend one day.

Let's stop this injustice.

Shayla Mackey (Princess Black), Stillwater, OK

Editorial: We Were Hijacked

BY MUJADDID R. MUHAMMAD, PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

While considering how the judicial system is robbing us of the windfall brought about by Blakely, I've been doing creative research into other avenues now open because of this constitutional recognition. I was reading over "Basics of Blakely v. Washington" in the winter 2004/2005 edition of *Razor Wire*, a piece so on point as to the impact and effect of Blakely. But the bottom line is, we were simply highjacked. Luckily, though, there are more ways than one to skin a cat.

"Every defendant has the right to insist that the prosecutor prove to a jury all facts legally essential to the punishment. The Framers would not have thought it too much to demand that, before depriving a man of three or more years of his liberty, the state should suffer the modest inconvenience of submitting its accusation to the unanimous suffrage of twelve of his equals and neighbors." (Blakely 124 S. Ct. at 2543).

Almost all federal and state courts in the country continue to hold that the Sixth Amendment right reinforced in Blakely/Booker principles is not retroactively applicable to persons whose cases became final prior to each of these decision's announcement. It's now obvious that those individuals who have already served well beyond the constitutional sentence they should have received will still find no logic or relief in the Supreme Court's proclaimed recognition that we were, pre-Booker and to this day, entitled to Sixth Amendment protections at sentencing.

In my own case, I was given a 32-year sentence on conviction in a low-level drug conspiracy for which I've already served 15 years. However, based upon the findings and rulings in the Blakely/Booker series, my sentence is nearly 24 years greater than what I should have received.

The crux of the issue is that hundreds of thousands of prisoners held captive in US state and federal prisons just like me, men and women, are serving unconstitutionally imposed sentences, and can't find relief through the judiciary solely because of when their sentences became final. Conversely, there are others who faced the same dilemma, except their sentences were not final and some are going back to court and getting reduced sentences in increments of 5, 10, 15, 20 years and, for a few, immediate release! There is definitely something wrong with this picture, which brings me to my creative argument.

Fortunately, in this country when it comes to upholding the Constitution of the United States, this responsibility belongs not only to the judiciary, but the legislative and executive branch, too. For example, in the American Convention on Human Rights, signed by the U.S. on June 1, 1977, it provides in Article 9:

"A heavier penalty shall not be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal offense was committed. If subsequent to the commission of the offense the law provides for the imposition of a lighter punishment, the guilty person shall benefit therefrom."

Here we have the United States government as a signatory of a Covenant that speaks explicitly to the meaning and applicability of Blakely/Booker to individuals whose constitutional rights were violated at sentencing. What's more, a 1994 report of the United States to the UN on the implementation of the Covenant in U.S. domestic law states that "the United States will implement its obligations under the Covenant by appropriate legislative, executive and judicial means, federal or state."

I think it's plainly obvious that the Blakely/Booker ruling is one that "provides for the



Mujaddid with his family

imposition of a lighter punishment." If, because of retroactivity doctrines or what have you, this obligation cannot be fulfilled through the judicial branch, it seems reasonable that it should automatically fall to the legislative and/or executive branch. Yet, this must not be a discretionary act guided by whim and caprice, but as a mandatory duty and obligation, impelled by the oath of office for one, but also the mandatory language, i.e., "shall", that the Covenant uses.

In "Justice For All: Analyzing Blakely Retroactivity and Ensuring Just Sentences in Pre-Blakely Convictions, 66 OHIO St. L.J. — (2005)," David E. Johnson points out that because the president and members of Congress swear to defend and uphold the Constitution, they should be troubled and poised to act when it is known that the Constitution has not been upheld for hundreds of thousands of prisoners now serving unconstitutional sentences. This is a must read!

I think what I have outlined regarding the 1977 Covenant that the U.S. government signed should serve as guide for what Johnson has suggested in his proposals. What I'm asking is how can these legal remedies become incorporated into what's already being done?

It would be an absolute travesty to allow the impact of Blakely/Booker to just fade into oblivion, while hundreds of thousands still suffer under the brunt of overkill sentences that have been subsequently declared unconstitutional.

A Critical Race Examination Of Post-Booker Developments

BY DOUGLAS A. BERMAN, OHIO LAW PROFESSOR

During the recent Miami Federal Sentencing Guidelines conference, one troubling idea kept coming to mind: white defendants seem to be doing better than minority defendants in the post-Booker world.

Notably, the Sentencing Commission's March Booker report asserts that, after Booker, "black offenders are associated with sentences that are 4.9% higher than white offenders." And here are other notable data from post-Booker statistics:

According to Table 25 in the USSC Booker report, roughly 1 in 5 first offenders who are white are getting a below-guideline sentence

after Booker. For black first offenders, the number is roughly 1 in 6; for Hispanic first offenders the number is about 1 in 9.

The theft/fraud category of crimes — crimes which have a statistically higher percentage of white defendants — have the highest rate of Booker variances according to the most recent post-Booker data.

In addition to these data points from the post-Booker world, consider also these qualitative realities:

Though the crack-cocaine debate has an obvious racial dimension, circuit rulings rejecting efforts to impose lower crack

sentences have not fully grappled with the racial impact of the 100-1 crack/powder ratio.

As evidenced by this recent (record?) variance, it seems some of the larger Booker breaks have gone to white-collar defendants.

With these comments, I do not mean to make a blanket assertion that racial bias infects the post-Booker world. But I do hope to encourage everyone to examine closely post-Booker developments through the lens of race and to explore critically whether there may be skews in how increased discretion is being applied in the federal sentencing system after Booker. Source: www.sentencing.typepad.com



Bipartisan Group of US Senators Introduce Bill to Reduce Cocaine Sentencing Disparities

Four US senators — two Democrats and two Republicans — introduced legislation on July 25, 2006 that would reduce the disparity in sentencing for those caught with powder cocaine and those caught with crack. Currently, it takes 100 times as much powder cocaine to earn the same sentence as a crack offender. Under the bill, the Drug Sentencing Reform Act of 2006 (S. 3725), that disparity would be reduced to 20-to-1.

The harsh laws against crack were passed in a rush in the summer of 1986, as part of the enactment of federal mandatory minimum sentences, after the death of basketball player Len Bias galvanized then House Speaker Tip O'Neill to act. Ironically, Bias died after using powder cocaine.

Federal prisons are filled with people, the vast majority of them black, doing lengthy mandatory minimum sentences for federal crack convictions. In 2000, for example, 84% of those sentenced under federal crack laws were black, 9% Hispanic, and 5% white. With powder cocaine, 30% of offenders were black, 50% Hispanic, and 15% white. Again ironically, powder cocaine appears to currently be much more popular with young people than crack.

While it takes 500 grams — more than a pound — of powder cocaine to merit the five-year mandatory minimum, it takes only five grams of crack. Under the bill, the senators would slightly lower the quantity for powder cocaine and increase the quantity for crack cocaine. The senators propose 400 grams of powder to trigger the mandatory minimum and 20 grams of crack.

The four senators introducing the bill are Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Mark Pryor (D-AR), John Cornyn (R-TX) and Ken Salazar (D-CO). All are former state attorneys general, and they cited that experience in arguing for the reform. Sen. Cornyn told reporters at a press conference Tuesday that his experience as Texas attorney general led him to believe "laws should be firm but fair. We not only need just laws, but they need the appearance and reality of fairness."

"This bill would bring measured and balanced improvements in the current

sentencing system to ensure a more just outcome — tougher sentences on the worst and most violent drug offenders and less severe sentences on lower-level, nonviolent offenders," said Sen. Sessions in a statement. "The 100-

to-1 disparity in sentencing between crack cocaine and powder cocaine is not justifiable. Our experience with the guidelines has convinced me that these changes will make the criminal justice system more effective and fair. It's time to act."

WHAT IS 'CRACK' COCAINE?

CRACK COCAINE IS SIMPLY POWDER COCAINE THAT IS DISSOLVED IN A MIXTURE OF WATER AND SODIUM BICARBONATE (BAKING SODA). THE MIXTURE IS BOILED AND SOLIDS FORM THAT, WHEN DRIED, CAN BE CUT INTO SMALL PIECES ('ROCKS'). THIS FORM OF COCAINE IS SMOKED.

"Cocaine poses a significant threat because it is readily available, highly addictive and directly associated with violent crime in both rural and urban communities," said Sen. Pryor. "We need to send a strong message to those who buy and sell this drug, and that includes fixing the disparities that exist in our sentencing guidelines and keeping the most dangerous offenders off the streets."

The bill would also decrease penalties for people peripherally involved in federal drug offenses and increase penalties for those dealers who engaged in violence or used children as part of their drug operations.

"The 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine can no longer be justified," said Sen. Salazar. "This bill would begin the process of ensuring that the punishment for crack and cocaine is severe, but just. As a former attorney general, I am sensitive to the balance that must be struck to ensure that the punishment fits the crime. The Drug Sentencing Reform Act is an important step toward achieving this balance and I am hopeful the rest of the Senate will support this common-sense bill."

For Sen. Cornyn, the concern was that the laws are not keeping up with current trends in drug use. "Though we have made great strides

in the war on drugs in recent years, Congress must remain vigilant in addressing this problem where and when it is required," he said. "Today, more high school students use powder than crack. In 2005, the rate of powder cocaine use among 12th Graders was almost three times as high as the rate of crack cocaine use. It is important that our drug laws reflect those troubling statistics which is what this legislation seeks to do."

Sentencing reform advocates are taking a measured view toward the legislation. For example, a bulletin from the group Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) called the bill "half right."

What the senators are proposing is only a tiny first step toward justice, said Nora Callahan, executive director of The November Coalition, a drug reform group that concentrates on winning freedom for drug war prisoners. "If a fight over the bill is brewing, I'd like to duke it out and get retroactivity provisions," she told DRCNet. "That would be a first. We need a breakthrough in this regard; when laws are

changed, people already sentenced see no relief. That's wrong."

There should be no difference in sentencing for crack and powder cocaine, said Callahan. "No disparity would be justice, but sadly, is not the 'American Way.' We restore justice incrementally in this country. People that struggle for notions of fairness in law and sentencing have to make tactical decisions. We are waiting for input from those imprisoned on these laws, and they'll be asking what's in the bill for them. Will they give sentencing relief to those sentenced at the 100-to-1 ratio?"

Drug and sentencing reformers and civil rights organizations have long called for greater equity in cocaine sentencing, but previous attempts to redress the disparities have gone nowhere. With bipartisan support from some "tough on crime" senators this time around, pressure could be starting to mount that would result in actual positive changes.

Source: *The Drug War Chronicle* (www.stoppedrugwar.org/chronicle)



Basketball star Len Bias died in 1986 after using powder cocaine, not 'crack' as many people believe.

NEWS ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

outraged parents were joined by national drug reform groups in holding demonstrations, stoking media interest, and demanding that justice be done. In response, principal George McCrackin resigned and the Goose Creek Police modified their drug raid policies.

But that didn't satisfy the demand for justice, which crystallized in lawsuits filed by 59 students and their families against the Goose Creek police and the Berkeley County School District. In April, a federal judge gave his approval to a preliminary settlement of the case in which the police and the school district agree to pay \$1.2 million for violating the rights of the students subjected to the drug raid. Now, it appears that the Goose Creek Police, the Berkeley County School Board, and the good taxpayers of Berkeley County will pay out the nose for ignoring the constitution.

Source: *Drug War Chronicle*

Cadets Riot After Drug Search

The *Times Herald-Record* of New York reports that hundreds of cadets at West Point Military Academy, angry over a drug search, rioted for more than an hour in April, throwing fireworks and garbage from their barracks in an uproar one officer described as "shameful." The frustration apparently stemmed from an unannounced drug and weapons search of cadets' quarters earlier in the day. Around 6:00 AM, cadets awoke to a fire drill in the barracks complex. While outside, teams of local and campus police with drug-sniffing canine units entered their dormitories. The academy's 4,000 students waited while military and local police combed through their rooms. The cadets were reportedly angry at the dishonest way they were 'shaken down'.

An Orange County sheriff's deputy who participated in the search said no narcotics were found. "About 2,000 cadets were involved and witness to this travesty," according to the official incident report.

La Tuna Inmates Say Prison Doesn't Follow Procedures

Inmates held at the various La Tuna federal prison facilities are convinced they have been denied visits, thrown in "the hole" for minor infractions and denied access to the prison law library because they went public with a lawsuit claiming the federal Bureau of Prisons isn't following its own procedures.

The inmates' lawsuit claims that the Bureau of Prisons is ignoring its own policies when it houses prisoners in facilities with more severe security measures than are required by the inmates' classifications — and when it houses inmates outside a 500-mile radius from the areas where they expect to be released.

However, a convict needs "rock-solid proof"

to make a case against the BoP, said Jay Hurst, an attorney and chief of legislative affairs for FedCURE, an inmates' rights group. Hurst had a client in La Tuna who was recently transferred to another facility as an act of official retaliation.

"The Constitution doesn't apply in the federal system any more than it does in the state systems," Hurst said. "It's hard to make a case because you can't get records and you are relying on the testimony of a bunch of 'cons.' It's a system-wide culture. As long as the good order and security is preserved, that's all that matters to prison officials."

(Source: *El Paso Times online*: www.elpasotimes.com/ci_4006061)

Hundreds Turn In Marijuana Users In Boulder

During the annual '4/20' Hemp Event at the University of Colorado in Boulder, local police secretly snapped hundreds of pictures with high resolution digital cameras. They then posted those pictures on their web site, and offered \$50 rewards for every face positively identified. A person must be charged and cited for tipsters to be rewarded.

"The phones have been ringing off the hook," said CU police Lt. Tim McGraw. "One person called in and ID'd five people."

A Boulder-based group that advocates marijuana as a safer alternative to alcohol said that CU's attempt to punish the 4/20 revelers is "cowardly." Mason Tvert, campaign director for Safer Alternative For Enjoyable Recreation (SAFER), said CU is treating pot-smoking students like "child molesters" by "sticking their photos online."

"I think this is unbelievable," he said. "They're using money to turn this campus into a culture of informants. If they asked students to call in every time they saw a student drinking, it would be an incredible mess."

Source: *Summit Daily News (CO)*

US Conference Of Mayors Condemns Mandatory Minimums

The US Conference of Mayors, meeting at its annual convention in Las Vegas in early June 2006, passed a resolution opposing mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes and called for "fair and effective" sentencing policies. The group represents the 1,183 mayors of cities in the US with populations over 300,000 and is a key voice in setting the urban policy agenda.

Sponsored by Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, the resolution notes that this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Sentencing

Reform Act of 1986, which established federal mandatory minimums for drug sentences. Since then, the US prison population has increased dramatically even while mandatory minimum sentencing "has been ineffective at achieving its purported goals: reducing the level of substance abuse and crime, and increasing penalties for the most serious offenders," as the resolution's preamble stated.

Source: www.stoppedrugwar.org/chronicle

'Frank' Talk About Hiring Ex-Felons

Chicago businessman Jim Andrews hopes the country will one day be full of hot dog stands that hire only one kind of employee: ex-offenders.

Felony Franks. That's what Andrews wants to call the hot dog stands.

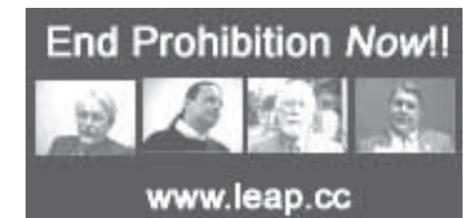
"We would have a Pardon Burger. We would have a Misdemeanor Wiener," Andrews told Chicago's *WBBM Newsradio 780*.

Andrews says he knows from experience that ex-offenders are good workers. That's all he's hired in the past five years at his paper company in Chicago.

"It's the best crew I've ever had in my life," he says.

Andrews imagines Felony Franks as a place with a black and white striped-awning and windows with bars on them.

Jim Andrews' organization is the Rescue Foundation, 845 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL. 60607, 312-421-2500, on the Web at www.therescuefoundation.org.



LEAP Video Available On DVD.

"Anyone concerned about the failure of our \$69 billion-a-year War on Drugs should watch this 12-minute program. You will meet front line, ranking police officers who give us a devastating report on why it cannot work. It is a must-see for any journalist or public official dealing with this issue." — Walter Cronkite, former CBS-TV news anchor.

See www.leap.cc/audiovideo for more information.



Families shouldn't have to choose between food on the table and staying connected with their incarcerated loved ones.

For more info, see: www.telephonejustice.org



Meth Sting Targeted Asians, ACLU Says

Prosecutors and police zeroed in on Atlanta area convenience stores owned by South Asians while ignoring white-owned stores during a 'crackdown' on methamphetamine precursor chemicals, according to a motion filed by the ACLU in April.

The ACLU hopes the filing will prompt a judge to toss out the case against dozens of South Asian merchants indicted last year in Operation Meth Merchant, a sting designed to send a message to retailers knowingly selling meth-related products to drug makers.

"People should be concerned that the government is continuing to blatantly scapegoat certain segments of society," Christina Alvarez, an ACLU attorney, told the *Associated Press*.

Feds Try To Seize Gold Teeth

The *Associated Press* reports that US Government lawyers in Tacoma, WA tried to confiscate the gold tooth caps from the mouths of two men facing drug charges, saying the dental work qualified as seizable assets. They had them in a vehicle headed to a dental clinic by the time defense attorneys found out and persuaded a judge to halt the procedure.

"I've been doing this for over 30 years and I have never heard of anything like this," Richard J. Troberman, a past president of the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, told the AP. "It sounds like Nazi Germany, when they were removing the gold teeth from the bodies, but at least then they waited until they were dead."

"It's shocking that this kind of action by the federal government could be sought and accomplished in secret, without anyone being notified," said Zenon Peter Olbertz, who represents one of the suspects. "It reminds me of the secret detentions in terrorist cases."

Cute Cop Nabs 9 Students

Armed with a sob story of a dead mother and absent father, a fresh-faced undercover female officer convinced students to sell her marijuana and ecstasy, resulting in nine teenage boys being led out of their homes in handcuffs. The sting took place at Falmouth High School in Massachusetts.

The tactic enraged parents, who said the teens had been lured in by a dishonest and manipulative police sting inappropriate for a public high school.

"My kid was impressed by this pretty undercover drug officer," said the mother of a

16-year-old Falmouth student arraigned in April. "He has issues with low self-esteem, and this pretty girl gave him attention. He wanted to impress her by providing her with what she needed."

Even some law-enforcement officials questioned the tactics used by Falmouth police. Matthew Machera, former Suffolk, MA assistant district attorney, said he had never heard of police doing such undercover work in high schools and called the tactic used in the Falmouth bust "outrageous."

"What strikes me as odd is if [drug use] was so prevalent, why did an undercover police officer have to dig so deep?" he told *The Boston Globe*. "As a prosecutor I wouldn't be comfortable with this. Why should she have to make up a sob story? That's something you'll have to explain to a jury."

Bizarre Plea Bargain In Spokane, WA

A convicted child rapist and suspected robber pleaded guilty in April to making at least 1,000 illegal recordings of music without the owner's consent. But it never happened — not even close. In a legally sanctioned game of courtroom make-believe, Jewell C. Walker avoided a potentially hefty jail term for robbery by instead accepting responsibility for a separate crime that never occurred. And everyone connected to the case knew it.

"We are basically telling the court the alleged facts don't match the allegations or the new charge," assistant public defender Tom Krzyminski said. "There were no allegations of sound recordings or videos. We were just being creative to get to the point we needed to get in sentencing." So at the deputy prosecutor's suggestion, and with the judge's approval, Walker confessed, in writing, to illegally recording music without the owner's consent — a crime that everyone in the courtroom knew he didn't commit.

Source: Spokesman-Review (WA)

Some Scottish Cops Say Regulate It All

Scotland's Strathclyde (Glasgow area) Police Federation, the county's largest police union representing some 7,700 Scottish police officers, is calling for the legalization of all drugs, the *Daily Mail Scotland* reported in April. Even hard drugs like cocaine and heroin should be legal and available to be licensed for use by addicts, the federation said.

Current prohibitionist approaches simply are not working and waste millions of dollars in a futile effort, said Inspector Jim Duffy, chairman of the federation. The laws must be transformed to cut the death toll, he said.

"We should legalize all drugs currently covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act — everything from class A to C, including heroin, cocaine and speed. We are not winning the war

against drugs and we need to think about different ways to tackle it. Tell me a village where they are drug-free," he said. "Despite the amount of resources and the fantastic work our girls and guys do, we are not making a difference. We don't have any control at the moment."

The startling announcement was music to the ears of Danny Kushlick, director of the drug reform group Transform (www.tdpf.org.uk). "For a policy that aims to eliminate drug supply and use, it has failed in spectacular style," he said in a statement greeting the call.

"In addition, prohibition criminalizes millions of (otherwise law abiding) drug using adults, making it unparalleled in its contribution to prison overcrowding and the wider crisis in the criminal justice system. This is not a debate that invites fence sitters, and the Strathclyde police federation has courageously climbed down."

Source: Drug War Chronicle

Two Dead In Shootout At Federal Prison

In the early morning hours of June 21, federal agents with the FBI and the Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General arrived at FCI Tallahassee, FL to arrest six correctional officers on multiple charges of giving contraband to female inmates in exchange for sex, and intimidating inmates in an effort to cover up the scandal. Five of the guards were arrested and taken into custody, but a sixth used his personal handgun and shot at the agents. More gunfire ensued, and the prison guard was killed.

Also dead is William "Buddy" Sentner, an agent with the Office of the Inspector General. A lieutenant with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, uninvolved in the indictment, was injured in the shootout, and is listed in stable condition.

No inmates or civilians were involved in the shooting, and the prison complex was placed on lockdown and quickly declared secure.

Source: Tallahassee Democrat

\$1.2 Million in Goose Creek Drug Raid Settlement

Goose Creek, SC became instantly infamous on November 5, 2003, when 14 members of the Goose Creek Police were caught on videotape terrorizing a hallway full of predominantly black students at Stratford High School in a search for drugs at the behest of the school principal. The video, captured by school surveillance cameras, showed police yelling and ordering stunned students to the floor at gunpoint and subjecting them to a drug dog search. Police came up with no guns and no drugs.

As reported in the Winter 2003 *Razor Wire*, reaction to the raid was fast and furious, as

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Battle Over California's Proposition 36 Heads to Court

In early July, the California legislature voted to approve changes to Proposition 36, the state's "treatment not jail" law, that would alter the law's basic philosophy. Now Prop. 36 supporters are waiting for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign the bill into law. Then they will immediately file suit to have the new law overturned.

Under Prop. 36, the state has saved \$1.3 billion dollars, according to a study carried out by researchers at UCLA. But that study also found that nearly a third of Prop. 36 clients failed to complete drug treatment. Another study in 2004 found that nearly a third of people receiving drug treatment under Prop. 36 were arrested on drug charges within a year of entering treatment.

The bill passed, SB 1137, toughens Prop. 36 by allowing judges to sentence people who relapse into drug use to periods up to five days of "flash incarceration." Originally drafted by law enforcement and California drug court professionals — the groups who opposed Prop. 36 from the beginning — the bill ultimately introduced by Sen. Denise Ducheny (D-San Diego) managed to win bipartisan support at the statehouse in spite of warnings from the legislative counsel's office that it was unconstitutional.

"Legislation that would authorize a sentence of incarceration for a first, second, or third drug-related probation violation, if enacted, would constitute an amendment of Proposition 36 that would both not further that initiative statute and be consistent with its purposes," the office wrote last year. "Therefore, the legislation could not take effect without voter approval," the office concluded.

While Prop. 36 supporters argue that jailing people who relapse is counterproductive, Ducheny and her law enforcement allies disagree. "Fundamentally, this is not giving them jail time for the drug offense but to say, 'Look, we gave you that opportunity and you decided, for whatever reason, not to take advantage of it... You didn't meet your responsibility to us, so we need some accountability,'" Ducheny said as the bill was being debated.

But Assemblyman Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), chairman of the Assembly Public Safety Committee, disagreed. "I have long been opposed to this concept of flash incarceration," he said before voting against the bill. "There's no evidence at all that it works."

Another strong legislative friend of Prop. 36, Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles) criticized the legislature for backing changes that "fly in the face of the 61.5% of the people who voted for" the initiative.

The Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), which has fought to see that Prop. 36 is properly implemented and adequately funded and which bitterly fought the Ducheny bill, is prepared to go to court to stop what it sees as the legislature's unconstitutional attack on the ballot measure.

"In passing SB 1137, the legislature made changes to Prop. 36 that go against the intent of the initiative as passed by voters, and the legislature cannot do that. Under state law, the only changes the legislature can make to an initiative are changes that further its original intent, and this does the opposite," said Margaret Dooley of the Drug Policy Alliance's Southern California office. "They changed a treatment initiative into an incarceration program where people in treatment can be thrown in jail. That violates the initiative's intent, and we will be asking the courts to decide that constitutional issue."

SB 1137 also includes another constitutionally questionable provision. In an effort to block court challenges, the new law says that if any part of the legislation is found to be unconstitutional, the entire law will go to the popular ballot.

That clause should arouse the ire of

supporters of the initiative process, which is widely used in California, said DPA head of legal affairs Dan Abrahamson. "Once the public begins to understand the radical and unprecedented nature of that clause, you're going to see a variety of organizations who've used the initiative process in the past come out of the woodwork and join the challenge of this clause," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. "It's not just DPA, but all sorts of organizations across the political spectrum who have used

the initiative process over the last umpteen years coming out of the woodwork to challenge this ridiculous provision," Abrahamson said.

"If this provision is allowed to stand, we

can kiss the initiative process goodbye," added Dooley. "Any politician who doesn't like an initiative could write a bill to change it, then if it goes to court and is found unconstitutional, he could take it to a public vote. Then another politician could repeat the process," she argued.

"It is really disappointing that our legislators would vote for something that is clearly unconstitutional," Dooley said. "We need the courts to decide these matters now and correct this legislative mistake."

Source: Drug War Chronicle, 7/7/06 — www.stopthedrugwar.org/chronicle

"IF THIS PROVISION IS ALLOWED TO STAND, WE CAN KISS THE INITIATIVE PROCESS GOODBYE. ANY POLITICIAN WHO DOESN'T LIKE AN INITIATIVE COULD WRITE A BILL TO CHANGE IT."

How to communicate with The November Coalition

- **Letters:** We receive lots of mail. Rest assured that we read every one of them, but we simply don't have the time or staff to actually respond to more than a few.
- **Legal cases:** We cannot offer you legal representation or advice. Please do not send us your legal work unless specifically requested.
- **Prisoner profiles (The WALL):** Please continue to submit your stories, but if at all possible, send pictures with them, preferably of a prison visit with your loved ones. Stories should be concise, factual, and include personal background such as age, family status etc. *Although The November Coalition staff endeavors to verify the accuracy of WALL stories, written by the prisoners themselves, we assume no responsibility for their content.* Credentialed media can be provided with documentation and family contacts if they wish to research a story. To do so, please contact media@november.org.
- **Articles for Razor Wire & Internet:** Editorials should be no more than 800 words; articles no more than 1,200 words. Submitted items should be typed & double spaced, or neatly printed by hand if you don't have access to a typewriter. Please limit the use of bold, italics, underline, or other special formatting.
- **Artwork:** We need your cartoons and sketches, please! Let your creativity and imagination run wild.
- **Donations:** We will gladly accept postage stamps from prisoners and others, as well as monetary donations.

More Local Scenes



(Above) Greg Youmans & The PJammers, of Loon Lake, WA, played the "Darth Vader Theme" from Star Wars along with lively protest tunes



November Coalition Home Office Staff: Above, Nora Callahan & Chuck Armsbury; Left, Tom Murlowski



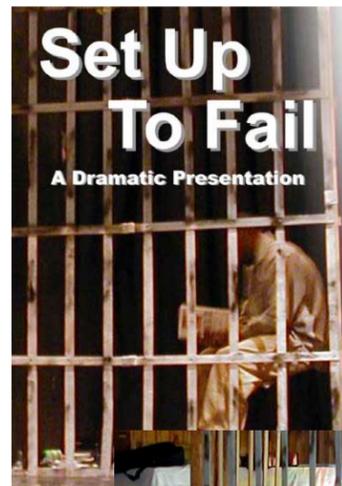
Protesting War Policies: April 17, 2006, Spokane, WA

Vice-President Dick Cheney arrived in Spokane for a political fund-raiser — members of the November Coalition and Spokane Peace and Justice Action League, along with hundreds of others, were on hand to properly greet him.

Eastern Washington Premiere

Set Up to Fail, a dramatic presentation produced by Justice Works! of Lake Stevens, WA, was brought to Spokane and Colville in eastern Washington with the help of The November Coalition. Justice Works is "a grassroots organization whose mission is undoing racism in the criminal justice system as experienced by African Americans".

The one-hour play depicts the gritty reality of day-to-day prison life, and is performed by Willie Robinson and Lea Zengage of Justice Works!. If you would like to host a performance of *Set Up to Fail*, contact them at Justice Works!, PO Box 1489, Lake Stevens, WA, 98258, Ph: 206-309-2087, Email: justice_works@yahoo.com, or visit the Justice Works! web site at www.justiceworks.info



Lea Zengage and Willie Robinson answer questions from the audience — *Set Up To Fail*, Colville, WA, 5/28/06



Willie Robinson performs *Set Up To Fail*, Spokane, WA, 5/27/06

The 7th Annual Isidro Aviles Memorial Picnic: July 16th, 2006, FDR Park, New York



Teresa Aviles & Tom Murlowski of The November Coalition



For more on Teresa Aviles, visit www.november.org/Volunteers/NY/TeresaAviles

Social Injustice Meeting: Durham, NC

BY TONI THOMAS, REPORTING FOR THE RAZOR WIRE

The Durham, North Carolina meeting I attended in early June 2006 shared important information (referred to as 'action steps') to energize and accelerate the process of bringing our imprisoned loved ones home early. Interestingly, the first step discussed was based on plan to stop giving money to profiteering corporations that contract with Unicor (also called Federal Prison Industries) and which exploit prisoner labor — including Marriott, Sears, Victoria's Secret, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the Association of the Blind in Carolina, and Sodexo. It was also suggested that we don't watch the 'Price is Right' TV game show because host Bob Barker reportedly has a large investment in federal prisons.



Toni Thomas, November Coalition, and LaFonda Jones, FAMM

Gary Jones, the Advocate 4 Justice, told an unbelievable story about drug war prisoner Vanessa Wade, and urged support for HR 3072 — the pending US House of Representatives legislation that would bring back parole for federal prisoners. For more online information about HR 3072 and related legislation, see www.november.org/parole.

Especially for those who hadn't heard it before, the story of Alva Mae Groves brought instant tears to many eyes. I could never imagine my grandmother being incarcerated — Ms. Groves was sentenced to 25 years in prison at the age of 72, and now at 85 she is petitioning for a compassionate release.

Alva Mae's family and supporters are also planning to lobby Congress in April of 2007. Expanding on this effort, the larger organizing goal is to see 20,000 people rallying in Washington DC at same time with stories and evidence that mandatory minimum sentencing isn't fair, and is an abuse of Constitutional safeguards. The meeting started and ended with these famous words from the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. To secure these rights, government is instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a



Alva Mae Groves' daughter, Everline, displays support for her mom's freedom

design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

Many thanks to LaFonda Jones of Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM — www.famm.org) for organizing this meeting, hopefully the first of many. Working together, we can make our vision a reality — and start bringing our loved ones home.

