

Turning Point: The Newsletter of



Citizens United for
Rehabilitation of Errants

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From the Chair:

by Hedy Harden

Growing Pains

In our last issue we painted an optimistic but accurate picture of Missouri CURE. Membership has soared, and progress continues in a number of areas.

We have begun meeting with the DOC. Regular communication and quarterly meetings are planned.

A research committee is being led by our vice-chair. We have a new columnist, "Jailbird Joe." We have started a petition regarding the need for A/C in all the prisons.

Donations from prisoner groups continue to provide much-needed support. We thank the Farmington NAACP for its generous donation of \$500.00. JCCC NAACP Branch 4072 at JCCC continues its steadfast support. We have sent Certificates of Appreciation to these branches, as well as to Gavel Club 79 at SCCC for obtaining the \$400.00 grant as filing fee for our nonprofit status. That has now been accomplished with the pro bono help of Bryan Cave law firm.



Just as with nature, our growth is uneven, with increased challenges. Alesha, our PR person, is now working full-time and has resigned from the board. Alesha has been managing our Facebook and Twitter sites and helping in other areas. Becky Williams, our long-time secretary, is cutting back, needing more time with her family. Becky performs many tasks for CURE. We will be seeking people to fill the gaps.

Ruthann Dunn has taken an active role in the organization. Another new member, Anthony Vazquez, is active in our research committee. Susan Kelly continues to host our

board meetings and assists in many other ways. Others have attended meetings and helped with mailing.

Missouri CURE has outlined the following goals for 2013:

1) Establish and sustain communications with Missouri DOC.

Action: weekly email, quarterly meetings with DOC.

2) Address basic living conditions and needs of those incarcerated.

Action: Address issues to include (but not limited to):

- a) Heating and cooling
- b) Medical and mental health
- c) Food and nutrition
- d) Visitation

3) Grow membership to increase awareness and support in order to address the issues of parole, long term sentences, and mandatory minimums.

Action: Quarterly membership meetings, website, Facebook, Twitter.

As much as we value and appreciate our prisoner members, we need more active outside members to accomplish these goals. Please ask your family members to join and get involved.

The struggle continues. Help us continue to grow and thrive! ♦

CURE Meeting

On Saturday, January 26, Missouri CURE will meet from 1-3 PM at the main St. Louis County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh Boulevard, St. Louis MO 63131; phone is (314) 994-3300.

All members and other interested persons are welcome to attend, especially those with loved ones in prison. Bring your concerns. Help us find solutions. Join us in the fight for true prison reform in Missouri.

Autumn 2012

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George Allen free after 30 years *by Hedy Harden*

When the story broke on November 2, the offices of the Innocence Project in Manhattan were closed, without electricity due to Hurricane Sandy. Regular phone and mail service was disrupted, but e-mail alerts related the good news.

“Oh, thank the Lord. I am so overjoyed. Oh, God,” cried

Allen’s 80-year-old mother, Lonzetta Taylor of University City, when a reporter told her the news. “I knew he was innocent — he was with us that day.”

George Allen read a brief statement to reporters in Jefferson City upon his release on November 14.

“I have spent 30 years in prison as an innocent man, and those have been difficult years for me and my family, but I never gave up hope,” Allen said. “I knew that someday the truth would come out.... Thank God this nightmare is finally ending.”

Lonzetta Taylor has waited years to be able to hug her son; prison visits were non-contact. “I had no doubt he was gonna get out,” she said.

Back in St. Louis, George stopped at his mother’s house in U. City for a hot bath and change of clothes. He was then welcomed at Blueberry Hill in the Delmar Loop. More than 20 family members, friends, attorneys and others gathered in the dart room at the popular landmark, greeting Allen with cheers, applause, hugs and laughter.

Since 1983 George has been serving a 95-year sentence for the rape and murder of Mary Bell, a 31-year-old court reporter who was attacked in her home on February 4, 1982, while St. Louis was digging out from an historic 24-inch snowfall.

At the time Allen was 10 miles away, at home in U. City with his mother and other family members.

More than a month later police arrested Allen, who suffers from schizophrenia, while looking for another man, a convicted sex offender.

In November Circuit Judge Daniel Green threw out Allen’s convictions for murder, rape, sodomy and first-degree burglary, stating that Allen’s rights to due process were violated. Lead detective Herb Riley failed to disclose evidence that favored the defense.

“The undisclosed evidence, considered together, points unavoidably to the conclusion that the police — and Detective Riley in particular — ignored and hid evidence pointing to someone else as the perpetrator in their zealous pursuit of Allen’s conviction.” The judge wrote that this evidence “would have provided the defense affirmative proof — foreign semen and fingerprints that could not have come from Allen — that someone else raped and killed Ms. Bell.”

The Innocence Project, which took up Allen’s case, is questioning other cases that centered on the work of Detective Herb Riley, who has since died, as well as police lab analyst Joseph Crow. Riley used threats and planted information to obtain Allen’s confession. Crow testified at trial that semen found at the scene could have been Allen’s, yet police documents contradicted that.

I remember well that historic snowstorm that began January 30 and continued through the night — “thunder-snow,” they called it. I was living with my family, including my brother David. The same age as George Allen, David was also schizophrenic. Like George, David had been in and out of psychiatric wards. It could have happened to him as well.

David died of a brain tumor in 1992 at the age of 45. At that time George had spent 10 years in prison and still had 20 years to go before being freed. ❖



George Allen with his mother, Lonzetta Taylor.



Ask Jailbird Joe

The Offender’s Source for Answers and Support

Beginning with the Winter newsletter, Missouri CURE will offer the entire offender population the opportunity to ask questions regarding all things DOC. I understand how the DOC and rumor mills work; I have been in your shoes. I will offer suggestions to better your “time” and answer questions regarding general issues.

It is my opinion that knowledge is power. Every offender should have a working knowledge of the Due Process related to Disciplinary Actions (IS/SOP 19-1.1 – IS/SOP 19-1.4); Segregation (IS 21-1.1 – IS/SOP 21-1.4); and IRR/ Grievance (D5-3.2).

Do you have general questions in need of answers? Don’t know where to find them?

Write me! I will look into your general issues, give you answers and put your mind at ease. Due to space constraints, not all letters will be printed. However, I will answer directly every unpublished question submitted.

J.J.

MCR Update

Some Missouri legislators have been involved in joint committee hearings throughout summer and fall. On October 16 the committee met to discuss the sex offender registry.

The hearing went well. Five of our supporters testified with personal stories. A St. Louis attorney drove all the way to Jeff City to give testimony. We had written testimonies from licensed counselors, treatment providers and the Ohio Public Defenders Office. We wrapped up with an overview of what we want to see changed. A spokesman from MASW also testified in support.

The committee will submit its recommendations at the end of this interim session. We continue the process of writing a new bill for the next legislative session starting in January. Since our supporters are spread out over the state, we will begin meeting by conference call to keep everyone informed and involved without a long drive or taking off work. We continue to send our MCR monthly newsletter to those who are incarcerated.

Missouri Citizens for Reform
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missouricitizensforreform.com



Greetings of Hope from Missouri CURE

Another year is almost gone. Obama is back in the White House. State elections are over, with Nixon re-elected, and Republicans have a veto-proof majority in the Missouri legislature, both in the House of Representatives and the Senate. At least we're getting some relief from all the political advertizing. Let's hope some positive change is coming.

For you in prison, the biggest hope is for freedom. The parole board is changing—apparently three of the six member are leaving due to expired terms, and Governor Nixon has yet to appoint replacements. We hope the result will be an improvement.

We at Missouri CURE have begun regular communication and quarterly meetings with the DCC. We hope that good things will result.

This year has seen many prisoners doing good things and helping others, whether through organizations or in daily life as individuals—tutoring, facilitating classes, helping someone write a letter or research a case. Restorative justice (RJ) gardens have donated tons of food to needy families in the community. More than 1,000 dogs trained by prisoners have now been adopted. Missouri prisoners have given hundreds of thousands of RJ hours this year, creating donations for shelters, daycare centers, nursing homes, Meals-on-Wheels, hospitals, victims, schools and not-for-profit organizations throughout the state. Prison groups and individuals have supported CURE and other groups with generous donations.



While you're isolated from all the good things about winter and family and friends and holidays and parties and good food, while you're suffering from bad air and too much togetherness with those not of your choice, when you are told when you can eat, sleep, exercise, walk, bathe, and use the telephone, yet TV tells you all the stuff you're missing while bombarding you with commercials, I know you could use a break.

Unfortunately, prison doesn't give you any breaks. But, mentally, take a little time to remind yourself of your humanity. Value yourself. You are what you do—now, not in the past. You can't change the past, but you can change yourself to be the person you want to be. You are important—to yourself, to each other, to your loved ones on the outside, and to the human race. You're very important to us at CURE—without you we wouldn't exist.

Some of you may never be free, yet you lead exemplary lives of service to others. What could be more admirable than that?

Many of you are locked down in dungeons, where the holidays may seem a bitter mockery. We are with you in our thoughts and hopes for a better tomorrow. To all of you: stay strong, and keep hope alive.

Hedy Harden and the Rest of your CURE Family





SPECIAL EDITION: PUZZLES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
					7									3											

11 9 24 24 5 11 3 21 2 22 9 5 10 7 25 3 16 23 11 3 10 20

3 7 17 10 11 20 25 20 9 23 16 2 10 10 3 17 25 2 6 17 25 20

Solve and find the secret message above!



Word Search

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

- COMMUNITY
- CURE
- EDUCATION
- FEAST
- FITNESS
- FREEDOM
- FRIENDSHIP
- FUTURE
- HEALING
- HELPING
- HUMANITY
- IMPROVEMENT
- LEARNING
- LOVE
- PAROLE
- RECONCILIATION
- RECREATION
- REPARATION
- TIME
- VISITS
- WHOLENESS

We Hear You!

Prisoner A voices his concerns:

Custody Levels:

What about the new custody levels that were to be in place how many years ago now? I talked with the warden here last week and he said the overrides, like in the past, were still being worked on. How long does it take to get this done; they had policy in place many years ago on how to implement this, so why don't they just do as they have done before?

Many offenders like myself have very good institutional records and should be able to go to lower levels like in the past. The MoDOC needs to put back into place the old override program so we can have something to look forward to; the program that they had in place worked.

Visiting:

Another issue that is causing so many problems is the **new visiting days and times**, which have been cut to almost no time to be with our families. The administration says they need these officers for other duties, yet most of the time you never see the officers out doing anything except standing by the Captain's office or up in the visiting room sitting around.

The DOC says it is very important to keep that family contact and have that support, but on the other hand they keep taking the time away from us, and it's making it hard on our families. If you're lucky you may get 3 to 3½ hours with your family members. If this was directed by Governor Nixon to do this with visiting, he should reconsider how it has been affecting the families of the offenders; it hasn't been saving them any money to do so. Since it benefits offenders to get visits, why don't they **extend visiting like in the past and pay for it from the inmate canteen fund**? I'm sure it would be money well spent to have extended visits and no cost to the Great State of Missouri.



Takeaways:

The MODOC just wants to keep taking and taking from the offenders' side, and they never want to give us anything that will benefit us in any way.

Here are a few things they have taken from us in the past years:

1. Visiting time with our families;
2. Ability to order any good clothing or shoes;
3. Access to a good health care system;
4. Our food portions have been cut so much the food isn't enough to get a ten-year-old child full;
5. The food that we are fed makes you sick;
6. Taking food items from us during holidays, even though what we are given extra comes from the inmate canteen fund;
7. The DOC is trying to take any appliance or clothing item that they say was grandfathered to the offenders and that can no longer be bought, like big radios, small crock pots, hoodies and other clothing items and appliances.

The DOC just wants to take and take from the offender population and not give anything in return. It's like they think they can solve all financial problems and society's problems if they just keep taking things from us, that this will solve all their problems. Why can't the DOC give the offender population something back, like HOPE! Stop trying to knock us down at every turn and try to pick us up, and try and help the offender turn his life around, instead of giving him no hope at all.

A Program that Works:

One of the most positive programs I have been a part of since my incarceration was the ITC program at MSP and JCCC; that program gives a person hope for the future and gives them life skills to deal with their incarceration. If the entire MODOC was more like the ITC program, the offender population would

Prisoners Write on Issues

have that hope I have been talking about.

I thank you for your time and all attention given this letter. It sure has helped me today putting some of these issues on paper and sending them to you.

I sure hope all your hard work brings changes in some way to help our families and the offender population in the State of Missouri. Without your hard work our issues would fall on deaf ears.



Prisoner B writes:

Temperature Control:

Thank you for advocating for Air Conditioning. JCCC does have A/C installed. However,

winter is fast approaching. I've been in this camp since June 2009, and it seems the heat is not turned on during winter; the A/C remains on. It gets icy cold in cells. Some days I can see cloud-like mist coming out of my nose and mouth. One day for about 1-2 hours the heat was on (and the guards behave like God's angels!). Later I found out that a tour of VIPs had been inside the prison checking up on offenders' welfare. Later that day the heat was turned off.

In Ad Seg (Housing Unit 7) in the four wings (A, B, C and D), at corner cells 110, 210, 111, 211, of each wing, the air in these cells during winters is arctic cold. I've been in one of these cells during two winters. ❖

Thank you!

Heartfelt thanks go out to members of the Farmington NAACP for their wonderful gift of \$500.00. We also appreciate the generous donations from Fari Abdullah, Thomas Cunningham, David Duree, Rickey Hopkins, Curtis Johnson, Bill Meador, Roosevelt Price Jr., Mary Simmons, Creig Wasserman, and Dorothy Yeager.

Youth and Community Stand in Solidarity



The Short Corridor Collective, a group of Pelican Bay hunger strike representatives who reside in the locked down Security Housing Unit, have called for an end to all hostilities within prisons and jails.

The Youth Justice Coalition has called for a parallel cease-fire in the streets. Not since 1992 has there been such a widespread and powerful effort to end the neighborhood and interracial violence.

"If unity happens inside the walls of prison, imagine the impact it will have on our neighborhoods and youth!" Assata

Abolition Narrowly Defeated in California

Washington, DC—California's Proposition 34, an initiative to end the death penalty and replace it with life without parole was narrowly defeated by a margin of 53% to 47%. Millions of Californians voted in favor of this measure. We expect that California will eventually move beyond the death penalty, following the momentum that is already evident in other states across the country.

The fact that such a large percent of the populace voted to end the death penalty in California is testament to the fact that people are increasingly concerned about the fairness and effectiveness of such a costly and broken system. The vote represents a dramatic shift away from support for the death penalty and is a clear signal that many voters have changed their minds about this issue.

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia do not have the death penalty, and California has not had an execution in over six years. Last year, 2011, was the first year since 1976 that the country produced fewer than 100 new death sentences, marking a steady decline in the number of new death sentences and executions.

Support for the death penalty continues to wane as more and more people question the merits and effective-

ness of capital punishment. The nationwide trend of ending the use of the death penalty will continue as state elected officials across the country must address the concerns of their constituents about the very real risks and exorbitant costs associated with sentencing people to death.

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty



Voting: A Canadian CURE member once said, "It is the voters who choose the government—the government doesn't choose who votes." Imagine the difference it would make if Missouri prisoners could vote.

Abolish slavery in the US!

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction—13th Amendment to the Constitution.

People in prison are still slaves. Repealing the above exception clause requires a two-

thirds vote by Congress and four-fifths of the states. National CURE is considering seeking a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery for all, and is asking for members' input. If such an amendment passed, what would be its impact?

You may respond to National CURE at P.O. Box 2310, Washington DC 20013. ❖



Self-Worth

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple up the \$20 dollar bill. He then asked, "Who still wants it...?" Still the hands were up in the air. "Well," he continued, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. "Now, who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air. "My friends, we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We may feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value.

Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to those who DO LOVE you. The worth of our lives comes not in what we do or who we know, but in WHO WE ARE. You are special. Don't EVER forget it."

Re-entry Info & Resources

Contributed by Rosalyn Jackson

1. First and foremost there is no money set aside for newly released citizens (NWCs). If there is a specific need, one would have to go through the regular processing/application like everyone else.



2. There are a few correctional centers/institutions that will assist a disabled prisoner who is 90 days or so away from release in completing the Social Security Disability (SSI) application. The operative word here is few. Each prisoner would have to request this assistance.

3. Each **employer** who hires a NWC is eligible for a federal tax credit of

\$5400.00. There is a state credit offered also.

4. An NWC can get **bonded**; the parole officer can assist. This protects the employer in case of theft.

5. If an NWC has a disability, s/he can call the SSA and an application can be taken over the telephone. The telephone number is 1-877-405-9803. I believe calling on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (non holiday week) in the afternoon between 2 and 3:30PM is a good time. Everyone must have documents describing the disability, which includes documents from the correctional centers/institutions. A paper application can be requested by writing to:

Social Security Administration
129 Scott Station Road
Jefferson City MO 65109

6. If certain drug offenses have been committed, you cannot get food stamps or live in HUD properties.

7. After your release if you have prescriptions that need filling, you may be entitled to a medical card. Division of Family Services (DFS) will help with that.

8. If you have a GED you are eligible to attend college and may be eligible to receive some money for this, but be careful! Some are loans, and some programs don't give you what you borrowed the money for (such as job placement after you complete the program).

This information was collected from numerous Reentry Organizations as well as the Small Business Administration and the Social Security Administration. I also received information from Families Against Mandatory Minimums. ❖

Rosalyn Jackson is a leader of Mothers of Incarcerated Sons & Daughters (MISD).

Prisoner-written Books Wanted for Publication

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, or would like to write a book, The Prisons Foundation wants to publish it. All books on any subject are welcome. We do not screen or censor in any way, so you are free to write anything you wish. There is no charge to you to publish your book and no charge to anyone who wishes to read it. Plus you retain full rights to your book if you later wish to place it with a literary agent or commercial publisher. Placing your book on our website is in fact a good way to bring it to the attention of agents and large publishers.



When we receive your book, it will be scanned in its entirety, just as you submitted it to us. Any language is acceptable. Whether handwritten or typed, your book will be digitally scanned and published exactly as we receive it. It can even contain drawings and photos if you wish to include them.

After we scan your book, it will be placed on the Internet for free worldwide reading at our website, which is www.PrisonsFoundation.org and will remain there indefinitely (unless we are

compensated for the cost of removal). If you want to have a family member, friend (or enemy), literary agent, commercial publisher or anyone else read or download your book after it is published by us, just give that person the website address and direct them to search for your name and the title of your book there. When a person clicks your name, your book will appear on their computer to read, download or print without charge to them. It's as simple and easy as that.

Finally, you have a worldwide unfettered voice! There are some guidelines

you must follow for us to publish your book. Your book will be rejected and will not be returned to you if it does not follow the guidelines.

The Prisons Foundation is a non-profit organization founded by ex-prisoners. It reaches out to imprisoned artists and playwrights as well as imprisoned authors, whose books we publish.

Editor's note: Due to space considerations, we were not able to publish the entire flyer. If you would like more information, including the guidelines, please send a SASE to Missouri CURE. ❖

State Prison Closings

from Marc Mauer

A new report from The Sentencing Project illustrates the growing trend of states to downsize or close their prisons--reducing prison capacity in 2012 by 14,100 beds, and 28,000 since 2011.

In the coming year, states planning to close prisons include California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, and Louisiana. Reforms in sentencing and parole policies have resulted in less demand for prison

space in addition to states working to balance budget priorities.

The full report, [On the Chopping Block: State Prison Closings](#), including a comprehensive chart on state closings, is available online at:

<http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/On%20the%20Chopping%20Block%202012.pdf>



The longer you have to wait for something, the more you will appreciate it when it finally arrives. The harder you have to fight for something, the more priceless it will become once you achieve it. And the more pain you have to endure on your journey, the sweeter the arrival at your destination. All good things are worth waiting for and worth fighting for.

Family United Transportation provides transportation from Kansas City to see your loved ones at the following Missouri prison locations:

**Boonville
Cameron
Chillicothe
Crossroads
Farmington**



**Jefferson City
Licking
Moberly
St. Joseph
Vandalia**

We provide services to families with loved ones incarcerated in Missouri and Kansas correctional facilities. Our vision is to increase family support and community participation. We believe in putting families first. Want to learn more about our services? Please call our office at (816) 533-5622 or leave a message (417) 894-5890. This is a full service transportation company. To request additional information, please email familyuts@gmail.com. ❖

Join Missouri CURE!

Date _____

Name/ID# _____

Facility _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please check the annual membership type:

- Prisoner \$2.00 *
- Individual \$10.00
- Lifetime \$100.00
- Donation \$ _____

Make checks payable to Missouri CURE.

* Stamps from prisoners are welcome if permitted by your institution.

CURE is NOT a service organization. We are an all-volunteer non-profit criminal justice advocacy organization. CURE has NO legal services. We advocate for criminal justice reform, but cannot take on individual cases.

Missouri CURE
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MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES



Together We Stand — Together We CURE!