Solitary Confinement Legislation Advances

Among the dozens of bills that will be taken up by the Maine Legislature in January 2010 is "An Act to Reduce the Use and Abuse of Solitary Confinement." It would set limits on how long prisoners can be isolated except under certain circumstances and allow them to defend themselves in a public hearing.

It’s a well-established corrections practice that some critics say is tantamount to torture. Psychiatrist who examined a large number of prisoners in segregated, solitary confinement units, concluded that long term isolation tends to induce psychosis, and that even those who do not become psychotic exhibit symptoms that include confusion, aggression, free-floating anxiety and hallucinations.

On November 14, 2010, a group calling themselves Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement, met in Winthrop to find out what was happening to the bill so carefully crafted by activists and ex-prisoner alike. The bill came back from OPLA/the revisor this week. All of the missing parts were returned to the bill and as soon as Rep. Schatz gets it in hand, he will inform the coalition. Additionally Hannah Pingree, Phil Bartlett, Dr. Lisa Marrache and Seth Berry have all agreed to co-sponsor. The group that met in November plan a follow up meeting December 12 in Winthrop to review the bill as it will be presented to the Maine Legislature in January 2010.

To help clarify, once again, what the issues are, please read the following written by Emily Posner:

"...When a prisoner is placed in solitary confinement, not only does he lose constitutional privileges, but he also loses the opportunity to rehabilitate himself. If he has a parole or pardon date, no Board member will read him relief while being housed in solitary confinement. Not only are you causing extreme damage to the prisoner, but you are also causing a breakdown in the prisoners' families when the family is forced to visit him or her behind a screen partition and the inmate is in full restraints... MPAC is looking to focus legislation on the administrative procedures used by the DOC as well as the current conditions within segregation units.

If you would like to get more information or get involved please send a letter to Emily Posner in care of The Call.

What is Solitary Confinement in Maine?

Solitary confinement of prisoners exists under a range of names: isolation, control units, supermax prisons, the hole, SHUs, administrative segregation, maximum security or permanent lockdown. Prisoners can be placed in these units for many reasons: as punishment, while they are under investigation, as a mechanism for behavior modification, when suspected of gang involvement, as retribution for political activism or to fill expensive, empty beds, to name a few.

Although conditions vary from state to state and in different institutions, systematic policies and conditions of control and oppression used in isolation and segregation include:

- Confinement behind a solid steel door for 23 hours a day
- Limited contact with other human beings
- Infrequent phone calls and rare non-contact family visits
- Extremely limited access to rehabilitative or education programming
- Grossly inadequate medical and mental health treatment
- Restricted reading material and personal property
EDITORIAL from page one.

Communication with the Long Timers group is enthusiastically welcomed and received. We thank you for your generous postage contribution. Also, thanks to Dennis Dechaime and supporters at The Church of Our Father Hulls Cove for stamps. We regret we cannot send the newsletter to friends and supporters outside for the costs are prohibitive. Our postage donations are primarily used to see that prisoners get The Call. Outsiders must seek it on the internet site for Maine Prisoners’ Advocacy Coalition at http://www.mainepec.org/. Newsletters will be available for printing at the website.

Good and prosperous New Year 2010!

MICHIGAN’S LOSS—MAINE’S GAIN: LET’S HOPE

With the hiring of a new warden, Patricia Barnhart, to the Supermax Warren, to begin in early December 2009, there is a hope that we can start with a clean slate.

The Baldacci administration has appointed the first woman ever to serve as warden of an all-male correctional facility in Maine. Patricia M. Barnhart, who is now warden of a facility in Michigan, will take the reigns of the Maine State Prison in Warren in December. Prisoner advocates are hoping the appointment will lead to a change of culture at the state’s largest prison.

According to the Maine Department of Corrections, Patricia Barnhart has 20 years of experience in corrections, and is now acting warden at the Tsitus Correctional Facility, a 1,200 bed prison for adult males and youthful offenders in Michigan.

“Her attributes are considerable,” says Deputy Commissioner Denise Lord. Lord says Barnhart was invited to tour the Maine State prison, which has a capacity of more than 900 prisoners, and a staff of more than 400.

Lord says Barnhart spoke with staff and also met with the management team. “Everyone came away from those exchanges impressed with her openness, her team-building, her leadership abilities, her desire to bring people together into joint problem-solving. Plus she has considerable experience running an institution.”

Barnhart succeeds Warden Jeff Merrill, who, after 14 years, has decided to take a new position directing the Corrections Department’s energy conservation efforts. Some prison advocates say it’s time for major changes at the Maine State Prison.

“I don’t know much about Patricia Barnhart, but I do have high hopes for her,” says Zachary Heiden of the Maine Civil Liberties Union. Heiden says there are any number of continuing problems at the Maine State Prison. He points to the overseer of solitary confinement, and inadequate medical care for inmates, including treatment for mental illness.

Heiden says he hopes that Warden Barnhart will be able to create a more productive culture within the prison. “Ninety-five percent of people in prison are someday going to be out of prison, and the kind of people they are when they get out of prison has a lot to do with how they are treated in prison,” Heiden says. “And I think the culture of a prison or a jail is critical in thinking about what are the kind of people that we want to come back into our communities?”

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT from page one.

- Physical torture such as hog-tying, restraint chairs, and forced cell extraction
- Mental torture such as sensory deprivation, permanent bright lighting, extreme temperatures and forced insomnia
- Sexual intimidation and violence

Obituary Addendum to the Solitary Confinement article:

The recent death of an inmate at Maine State Prison is causing consternation among some Maine prison reform activists.

Victor Valdez, 52, died of medical causes in the hospital, Department of Corrections Assistant Commissioner Denise Lord said Thursday. The death is not under investigation, she added.

Judy Garvey of Blue Hill thinks that there may be more to Valdez’s death than is being shared by prison officials. She is a member of the Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement, which has been gathering information about the prison through inmate letters. One of those letters arrived on Nov. 23 and included a description of prisoner treatment that Garvey and others have found disturbing in light of Valdez’s death, which she said happened on Nov. 27.

“On 11-19-09 an inmate who is very sick with kidney failure was abused and taken to solitary confinement,” wrote the inmate, whom she did not name. “He is elderly. His dialysis tubes were ripped out and he bled all over the place. The man’s name is Victor Valdez. He needs someone to come to the prison ASAP to check his injuries out before he heals or dies like an inmate a few months ago.”

She and other prison reform activists this week have written to Gov. John Baldacci to ask for details of what happened to Valdez. It was sent to Denise Lord by the Governor’s office. Lord said she could not share those details. “The concerns shared with me . . . have been looked into and found to be without merit,” Lord wrote in the e-mail. “We take all allegations of abuse seriously.”

No family information is known about Victor Valdez nor his funeral and burial internment.

NEW WARDEN continued.

“There’s big issues of staff overcrowding, people having to work long hours, there’s problems for everybody there,” says Judy Garvey, a member of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, which is hoping that the incoming warden will be more open to the concerns raised by advocates, workers, inmates, and their families. “They need to have more input from the outside so there’s so much more transparency. It’s been closed off for a long time. I know it’s hard for reporters to get in.”

“When my stories in the Phoenix started appearing about the abuse that was going on there, they basically shut me out,” says freelance journalist Lance Teply, who has covered the Maine State Prison extensively for the Portland Phoenix. Teply says he has since been allowed back into the prison and is now allowed to interview inmates without having a prison official present.

He says the problems that incoming warden Patricia Barnhart will face when she takes the keys are considerable. “She is walking into a colossal mess,” Teply says. “There has been a murder this year of an inmate under circumstances that were perhaps impinging staff, there have been a bunch of lawsuits involved with the way prisoners have been treated, there was a suicide a while back that also resulted in another big suit. Guards have been prosecuted for assault for the first time in, I believe, history. It is a complete mess.”

Deputy Commissioner Denise Lord says Barnhart will be a strong and dynamic leader at the prison. “She’s open to new ideas, she is progressive in her thinking about corrections, but she’s also very capable and able to make decisions and move things forward.”

Patricia Barnhart could not be reached for comment. She will take over as Warden at the Maine State Prison in early December. MPAC welcomes Patricia Barnhart.
PAROLE

Immoral leadership of the Maine State Prison in Thomaston, the inmates council, met with outside representatives in 1973 to present demands that were of crucial concern to them. One of their main grievances reads “We demand an immediate investigation into the decaying corpse known as the parole system. The parole board must incorporate procedural due process and establish an objective criteria of fairness in its hearings (it does none of these things). We object to the parole board being used as a political dumping ground and demand the immediate resignation of the three members...all of whom are incompetent and all of whom have contributed to the repressive functions of the board. We also demand an end to useless and arbitrary regulations imposed on the parolees and want nullification of records upon completion of sentence.”

These views reflected a deep lack of faith in the Corrections system and its parole operations. Approximately 30% of the prisoners were there for parole violations. These are similar to the current violations that occur with probation. Failure to report, violation by some other charge such as driving offenses, drunk and disorderly, even hitchhiking them could lead one back inside. The disgust with the parole board led to inmates rancor joining with outside forces to abolish the parole system in favor of “determinate sentencing.” Prisoners felt that this had to be fairer than the “indeterminate sentencing” model that kept pushing people back for issues that weren’t normally punished with incarceration.

The goal of prisoners and others was to have short, determinate sentences, that would serve as simple punishment for the crime committed. This was actually achieved for a few short years. California also changed to “determinate sentencing” taking the average time for a given offense and making that the determinate sentence. Maine adopted the “criminal code” with its scheduled offenses falling into categories with minimum and maximum sentences in a range that could be decided by the judge. However, this effort to empower and preserve judicial discretion, eventually led to the very real political pressures upon judges to impose the harsher, longer periods of incarceration allowed to them. The continual “war on crime” has even led to increasing the maximums of scheduled offenses and caused some crimes to be elevated to a longer sentencing criteria. Thus as it reads now, a class A crime can lead to a minimum of 10 years to full natural life. One judge may sentence a person to the minimum where another may give them life. This has made disparity in sentencing exacerbated. Too, many politicians have embarked upon their careers with the chant of “tougher sentences” to “stop crime” always on the back of those scapegoats, prisoners who are powerless and without a voice. What we are left with, in fact, is a system where we are the most incorrigable “democracy” with the most excessive sentencing practices in the so-called “free world.”

Society resources are now stretched to where “Security” dominates and true rehabilitation services are at best given nominal lip service and general reference as a goal.

Since the enactment of the criminal code and the burgeoning excessive sentencing, prisoners have come back every few years with the notion of bringing back parole. Inmates and reformists alike mistakenly believe that bringing back the parole system will provide immediate relief to those now under sentence and that there is yet to be a feasible system. The hurdle has always been that Maine constitutional law separates the Judicial branch of government from the legislative branch so legislators cannot affect retroactively the sentences imposed by judges. Once a judge has delivered sentence, that sentence can only be changed by the commutation powers of the presiding Governor. Were a governor to be elected who decided to commute all sentences by slicing them in half, that would be phenomenal! "Shock Parole" has a history of being used in some states and many very well be the method the state of California will have to perform in order to comply with the federal mandate that it must reduce its prison population by 40,000 inmates. Maine could conceivably have legislation to reduce imprisonment by requesting the Governor to commute many sentences to "Short Probation." Organizing such an effort would take massive amounts of people and energy to accomplish, as well as a cooperative Governor.

The system of Parole was flawed on many levels for being unable to provide a realistic appraisal of an inmate’s rehabilitation to be adjusted to society when coming from the unusual environment of an institution. How can one be judged to be "ready for society" when they have only known prison routines for a number of years, not "normalcy", and little opportunity or programs to prepare them with better survival skills? Further, parole is a means of inmate control where the behavior of the person in the prison determines their release, thus giving a much coveted control mechanism of prison authorities. If one acts out, or responds quite naturally to some crisis or unreal experience that could only have come through prison life, a fight or situation often beyond one’s control, or tries to organize against intolerable conditions, they will be assured to do their maximum sentence. Both Amnesty International and the United Nations have condemned the practice of determinate sentencing for its "cruel and unusual" results, particularly the old form used by the Department of Corrections in California where a person was sentenced to Department control for life, leaving the individual’s fate totally in the hands of the State. Determinate sentencing is seen as fairer because a person knows when they are getting out and they can’t be hauled back unless it is completely a new offense.

Continued on Page 6

EVELOATION OF A TEAR

By Peter Mills

As the Love
Begins to end
As predicted
By convict friend
Sadden like
Rainy day
I to them
Far away
I am not there
Fróm day to day
No time for work
No time for play
I do not blame them
I must understand
They have not the comfort
Of my warm hand
My touch
My whisper
Has gone away
They go on without me.
In their days
They can not know
How much I care
Punishment inflicted
Heart despair

Maine State Prison
1824-2001
THE TRIAL

There I stood
small
no arms
But good

A man
in black
listens
through
his Bourbon glass

Twelve eggs
in a box
squirm
as they hear
stories
from a well paid
suit
with one
finger

A day goes by
the three before
and tomorrow
the eggs
will
crack

The man in black
speaks
a bit
then rocks
in his high rise
chair

The shells
full of confusion
roll into a
corner room
to count
the fingers

An hour goes
followed by three
as my wife
kisses
the hand
she holds

White and yokes
run together
from the cornered cage
and harden
in the box

Here I sit
for life
no arms
But good, Richard Freeman

Love is gentle, love is sweet,
now that I know you my life is complete.
I feel you in my heart and soul,
I've read your words from the Holy Scroll.
I'm changing slowly for the better,
watching about you through my letters.
Seeing my sinful life slip away,
I'll be at Church twice every Sunday.
As long as I have you on my mind,
a better life is what I'll find.
I used to have nothing to look forward to,
now I can't wait until the day I meet you.
On the Cross you died for me,
and for that, with you I'll be.
So little boy you've grown tired of grass,
LSD, pills, cocaine; and hash. Someone
pretending to be a true friend says: I'll introduce you
to Heroin. Well honey, before you start fooling with me
let me inform you of how it will be. For I will seduce you and
make you my slave. I've sent stronger than you straight to
their graves. You think you could never become a disgrace and
end up addicted to a poppy seed waste. So you'll start inhaling
me one afternoon and enter me into your arms very soon.
Once I have entered deep down in your veins, the craving will
drive you meanly insane. You'll swindle your mother,
just for a buck, you'll turn to something violent and corrupt.
You'll mug and you'll steal for my narcotic charm. And feel quite
content when I'm in your arm. The day you realize the monster
you've grown, you'll solemnly promise to leave me alone.
You'll turn to your friends realizing they're gone, a few of them
dead, most have moved on. If you think you've got a mystical
knack, just try to get me off your back. The vomit, the cramps,
your gut in a knot. The longing nerves screaming--
JUST ONE MORE SHOT
The cold sweats, the chills, the withdrawal pains, can only be
saved by little white grains. There's no need to look, for deep down
inside, you know that you're hooked. You'll desperately run to your
pusher, then welcome me back to your arms once again. When you
return as I foretold, I know you'll give body and soul. You'll give up
your morals, your conscience, and heart.
Then you'll be mine..........
"TILL DEATH DO US PART"

—Anonymous

On the Seventh Day

And on the sixth day the Master Builder finished
his crafted hands had grown weary but he beheld
the Seventh Morning rising in the East
with clapping hands
and sleeping screams
and the fragrant weeping of the nightingale.
One more he touched the canvas
and set about two small song birds
that woke young and brave and impervious to famine
unaware of the deceit in dying for uncaptured pride
and they sang sweetly not seeing that the air would fill
with the excrement of ruin and the painted strokes of men.

My Life

My life has been a disgrace. All the lies and all the displaces.
I never felt that this world is a screwed up place until the lies
took over my space. No one knows what's true or not because
you're so used to being lied to a lot. People come, and people
go, but how many lies were told. My life is something I try to
forget, but as we all know right now is as worse as it can get.
I am so lonely, it hurts so bad. But my life is all I have.

—Jon-Jon
PAROLE from page 3.

Currently the “decaying corpse” of the parole board still exists for the purpose of reviving prisoners sentenced under the old laws. The board appears to be investing in its own survival on the backs of those under its control. It has markedly denied parole to those eligible from inside and now rarely allows good time for those outside on parole that allowed for early discharge from all Department constraints. These practices assure their positions in maintaining an active caseload. If it wasn’t for the previously stated constitutional and judicial foundations, seeking legislation for the complete abolishment of Parole, meaning the waste of monies it represents, would be the most appropriate course of action.

The Kairos project has taken up the banner of resurrecting parole. These well meaning folks and a most valued outside resource who bring in Christians to involve themselves with the lives of prisoners would do well to study the historical foundations of Parole and seek alternatives. Under current law, the split sentencing statute essentially erects a prisoner supervision system much like parole. In fact, the original concept of probation was to give a person a chance to prove they could not reoffend thus have their sentence suspended and not to be imposed unless the supervisory restrictions were violated. Now so that we don’t have Parole on the books, a judge may split the sentence with a portion of time served initially and the rest suspended while serving time under parole supervision. Judges seem to be doing this more often under pressure to reduce the numbers of those incarcerated.

M.P.A.C. wrote and supported legislation to require judges to use split sentencing more. The bill provided for judges to impose a sentence that was 1/3 or less, of the minimum sentence for incarceration that could be given of the scheduled offenses. This was to be the incarceration with the other portion of the sentence imposed to be under the restrictions of probation.

If the judge were to decide he/she wanted to vary from this, they would have to provide a written explanation of their reasoning. The reasons may by criminal record, previous and repeated offenses, likelihood of prospects for rehabilitation, etc. The basic criteria are they are supposed to consider when sentencing now. By having to issue a written opinion, it is seen that the practice of split-sentencing be more encouraged and become the standard practice in all sentencing. Such a sentence would encourage a more uniform and available method of early supervised release without return to the pitfalls and negative aspects associated with Parole. Further, this doesn’t confront the impractical challenge of trying to change the whole codification of Maine Statutes by again trying to revamp the Criminal Code that took such effort to put in place. It works with existing law.

The legislation did not get out of the Criminal Justice Committee and was opposed by the Department of Corrections. After all, their empire certainly requires a full and continual clientele to survive and grow. This bill can be resubmitted with renewed vigor and hopefully stronger community support from families and groups such as the Kairos project. We would rather see their energies enjoined with us for this more pragmatic pursuit than expend energies wastefully trying to topple the Criminal Code.

This does not provide anything retroactively for those now under sentence and could only affect future sentencing. As stated earlier, immediate relief for those now incarcerated depends on executive action of the Governor. We also do not address the need for a revamping of the harsh supervisory conditions that send people back for minor infractions under parole or probation. A parolee I know was sent within the last decade because his dog bit a neighbor. He ended up returned for nearly two years because of this incident, and a year of that was in the Special Management Unit. We want to hear from prisoners of other such abuses of the system and it’s flagrant injustices. Write to us. Other legal opinions are welcomed. These topics will be ongoing.

GUS

“My first disillusionment with both the correctional system and with Mankind, came as a direct result of my being committed to the STATE SCHOOL FOR BOYS in South Portland, Maine in 1946.” GUS HEALD

One of the most prolific jail house lawyers in the sordid history of American Prisons was Gus Heald. From the Waldo County area, Gus was a stand-up man who was deeply respected by his fellow prisoners. Gus was one of the founders of the original Inmates Council of Thomaston in the beginning of the 70’s. Augustus Heald was born on the 4th of July, which perhaps contributed to his independent streak and the quest for freedom and rights he so doggedly pursued. Mostly self-taught, Gus was an avid reader and scholar as well as a natural lawyer. His character and strength makes for a colorful story where he was respected by Governors as well as the pariahs of society. He unfortunately died, free, in 1992.

Never completed, a book Gus pursued will be presented in coming excerpts of future issues of The CALL. These writings are a frank and stark condemnation of the system that strangled his being and truly shows the inhumanity and waste by institutional violence that continues to occur under the guise of “Corrections.” The spirit and legacy of this brother truly deserves to be honored.

PRISONER COUNCILS: NORFOLK TO THE NETHERLANDS

Massachusetts Correctional Institution, Norfolk, was established in 1937 in accordance with “modern” principles of penology, attempting to rehabilitate social misfits and those who turned to crime because they lacked vocational training. The men are studied and classified before they are placed in groups of about 50. Each group is housed in a separate dwelling under a resident officer. This permits intimate acquaintance with inmates as individuals. Psychiatrists and other experts try to develop the inmate’s interests and skills in intramural and occupational centers. The facility has an Advisory Council of prisoners, which cooperates with the administration on all matters except those involving penal offenses — thus giving the men a measure of responsibility in the affairs of the institution and encouraging them to become responsible citizens.

The Norfolk Prisoner Council has various committees to deal with property, recreation, entertainment and cultural issues. Each housing unit has an elected representative to advocate their issues to a general council board and to act as a sounding board for their concerns to the proper prison staff. Elected members even earn a monthly stipend for their service.

In the State of South Carolina, the Inmate Advisory Council consists of elected inmate representatives from each correctional facility and Department of Corrections administrators/warden. The Council acts as a liaison between inmates and the prison administration to resolve inmate requests and grievances. Issues such as disciplinary policy, building repairs, work release, visitation, inmate personal property, clothing and supplies, donation of IAC funds, IAC elections, fund-raising projects, showing of movies and videos, library improvements and purchases, Black History Month programs, and games for visitors and children are discussed at meetings and memoranda is circulated among all staff and prisoners.

In England and Wales, 27 facilities have active prisoner councils. Councils allow staff to consult prisoner representatives and for prisoners to give feedback on the prison regime. It has been found that staff and prison “Governors” believe that a prisoner council is an important tool to manage conflicts effectively and create a safe environment. One prisoner said: It makes jail easier to run by lifting the morale of the prisoners. It shows that the jail actually cares about what happens to you whilst you are in prison.” This is particularly important due to the high levels of suicide and self-harm.

A report found that Prisoner Councils are a way of encouraging more responsibility and contribute to their rehabilitation. It concludes:

- The main advantage of prisoner councils cited by prison governors is that they provide management with an opportunity to share proposed changes with prisoners, and prisoners have the opportunity to bring concerns to the attention of management.
- By giving a voice to prisoners’ concerns, councils bring to light policies that fail to fulfill the expectations and needs of prisoners. The council was seen by many governors as vital to negotiate change and to avoid resentment.
- The existence of a council benefits staff-prisoner relationships by breaking down barriers and enabling dialogue. It leads to greater understanding between prisoners and staff which contributes to improving prisoners sense of well-being and safety.
- Involvement in councils is a way of promoting active citizenship and encouraging prisoners to be more responsible. Both play a critical role in the rehabilitation of prisoners, in preparing them to return to society.
COUNCILS continued

To quote the authors of the report:

"With our jails facing acute problems due to the stresses and strains of overcrowding there is an urgent need to improve prisoners' sense of safety and well-being. Prisoner councils contribute to this by demonstrating management care and providing an opportunity for prisoners to have their voices heard.

For too long prisons have been run on the understanding that prisoners should be seen and not heard. The Prison Service should take a fresh approach recognizing as informed participants in the prison community, and opening up the lines of communication so that they become more effective in meeting prisoners legitimate needs.

As the European Union continues to develop, more homogenous rules for human rights and anti-torture mandates continue to be established for prisoners. In January of 2006 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted recommendations for revision of European Prison Rules. A new Rule 50 requires that prisoners be allowed and encouraged to discuss matters relating to general conditions of imprisonment with prison administrations. "Subject to the needs of good order, safety and security, prisoners shall be allowed to discuss matters relating to general conditions of imprisonment and shall be encouraged to communicate with the prison authorities about these matters." Rule 50 provides further guidelines with "Good order is likely to be achieved when clear channels of communication exist between all parties. It is in the interest of prisoners as a whole that prisons should run smoothly and they may have suggestions to make."

Many European nations address prisoner representation in legislation. The German Federal Prison Act speaks of "co-responsibility" with prisoners and states "it should be made possible for prisoners and detainees to participate in sharing responsibility with prison management on matters of collective interest which are suitable for such cooperation having regard to their nature and the task of the prison concerned."

Swedish legislation provides simply that "prisoners have the right to discuss matters of common concern to themselves in some suitable way with the local prison authority. They also have the right to arrange in some suitable way for meetings between themselves to discuss such matters."

Danish law provides for the setting up of prisoner councils by the following procedures:

- The inmates must have an opportunity to exercise co-determination on their lives in the institution through elected spokesmen.
- A spokesman must be elected in each unit or for specific groups of inmates. All inmates are eligible for election as spokesman. All inmates or the spokesman are entitled to elect a common spokesman. Spokesmen and the common spokesman are elected by written, secret ballot jointly observed by the institution and representatives of inmates.

While the United States has gone into war repeatedly in the name of promoting "Democracy", other countries have come forward to actually develop representative participatory bodies and sought to reduce the repression of individual freedoms, free speech and freedom of thought. Rights are like muscles. They have to be exercised or they atrophy and disappear. To the Human right of expression, self-determination dignity and respect, MPAC is dedicated to supporting the rights of prisoners to build their own means of communication and advancement to become full individuals whether incarcerated or reentering society. RWB

Figure 12. Untitled drawing by "Derek Janson." Courtesy of artist.

I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there, and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad, he would be a United States Senator.

-Mother Jones
Labor Organizer
The Call Editorial Collective
R. W. Bohren
Pat Finn

Contributors:
Judy Garvey
Emily Posner

Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement
12/1/09 IBEW Hall Winthrop 9:30-12
FFI call 207-930-5232.

Please send any submissions for the January 2010 issue to:
Liberty News Service
125 Morning Street
Portland ME 04101

We are looking for articles about your jail or prison, poetry, artwork, letters to the editor or anything you would like to see published.

The Call is also available in electronic format. You can get one by checking out our website at mainepac.org.

Served in the Military?

Whether you served any branch, active or reserve, MPAC is interested in establishing contact with those former military personnel to keep you abreast of the news affecting your rights and benefits. State and Federal laws and policies are continually changing to protect you and your family. Please MPAC is you would like to find out more.

THE NOVEMBER CALL IS A NO-SHOW

We regret that our November issue of the newsletter didn't pass the scrutiny of the mail procedures to be delivered. We are responsible for a journalistic "Faux Pas". An article came to us from a prisoner regarding cell extractions. This article used the name of someone in P.C. and this violated the confidentiality rules that prison officials must observe to assure safety and security of individuals. We thus request that anything submitted from inside exclude the names of individuals unless a bonafide signature and waiver requesting that the person's name used accompanying it. It must be something we can easily FAX to authorities if these questions arise again. Denise Lord wrote, "The Department of Corrections appreciates the objectives of this newsletter as a forum for prisoners to "submit poetry, artwork and essays as a way of expressing their emotions and experiences." KEEP IT COMING! There was much great content in the intended issue, but we will reserve some of it for future issues. We could not afford to fix and resend this issue and needed to move on to current priorities. Thanks for the support shown over this fiasco and we particularly wish to thank Dennis DeChaine for the stamps and again The Long Timers Group for their contributions to postage. Please tell your families and friends to find The CALL on the web site of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. NOTE: our new address is Liberty News Service; 125 Morning St. Portland, Maine 04101

This was a submission for the official Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. MPAC is still seeking more submissions for its logo, so please send us your art! We would like to thank Ed for being the first person to send artwork. Keep up the cool drawings!