

# THE CALL

Volume II

THE MAINE PRISONER ADVOCACY COALITION NEWSLETTER

Edition 1

January 2010

## MPAC EDITORIAL

With the New Year comes a fervent need to organize around the issues of Solitary Confinement. Rarely has Maine's general public been faced with the issues of how human beings are to be punished inside the States' prisons. Litigation has failed to resolve the abuses of Solitary Confinement and its derivatives. The building of a newer prison, further removed from the public, into the woods like the Nazi Concentration Camps kept out of sight to the German citizens, seems to have also scrapped the existing legal safeguards of the old prison order. Out of sight, out of mind.

With the stigma of the prison removed off Route 1, Thomaston real estate has risen in value and the migrating monied classes have provided a boon while those erased receive less of everything except increased abuses. Now we are faced with the public forum of legislation addressing what has been too long ignored and hidden, Maine's institutional torture.

Thirty days was the maximum amount of time in solitary that could be imposed for institutional infractions or new crimes committed while imprisoned, under the consent decree achieved by prisoners in the 1970's. Corrections then moved first to extract the disciplinary unit from Thomaston prison and isolate them into the woods creating the Special Management Unit. The entire prison shortly followed but no one was observing the conditions required of the consent decree and institutional punishments of segregation became as prolific as weeds. Simple write ups and simple verbal protests of confusing, intolerable conditions such as complaining of the new prison's lights on through the night in cells so as not to impede the constant video surveillance of a camera in each personal space have led to segregation. Increased security means increased cost. Taxpayers should be appalled at a system that not only fails to "correct" or rehabilitate, but actually creates insanity rather than cure it. We have reports of an individual in solitary for up to fifteen years now, well beyond the original sentence he was sent to prison for. Many more people are in solitary for over a year and longer right now. Who was there to enforce the fundamentals of this consent decree? Obviously the Maine Attorney General's Office failed in its mandate to protect all citizens and see that the laws and decrees of the courts are to be enforced and leaving this incumbent upon the Department of Corrections to "police" themselves to assuredly believe they would abide by the decree was like leaving the wolves to watch the henhouse. (continued on page 2)

## CORRECTIONS DISOBEYS ANOTHER FEDERAL COURT ORDER Lance Tapley

For decades, as it has with other court orders, the Maine Department of Corrections has apparently been breaching a 1973 federal court's decree that forbids disciplinary solitary confinement at the Maine State Prison beyond 10 days for minor offenses, or 30 days for major ones.

Nowadays inmates being punished sometimes are kept for months or even years in the psychologically destructive solitary-confinement cells of the 100-man "Supermax" or Special Management Unit of the Warren prison (ironically, given the harshness of solitary, some prisoners are put there to protect them from other inmates). Reformers currently are asking the Legislature to set a 45-day limit on Supermax detention.

The 36-year-old "consent decree," recently discovered by the *Phoenix*, resulted from a lawsuit (*Inmates of the Maine State Prison v. Mullaney*) brought against Garrell Mullaney, at the time the warden of the prison, which was then located in Thomaston. A consent decree is a judge's approval of a settlement contract between parties — in this case, between the state and the inmates — and turns the agreement into an order of the court. (cont'd on page 2)

## Corrections: A Growth Industry in Maine Stan Moody

The third-highest budget item for Maine -- right behind human services and education -- is the cost of incarcerating the failures of human services and education.

More than \$300 million a year is spent on housing and maintaining services for some 4,000 inmates in a program that has been growing at the rate of 9 percent a year. What any Maine business these days wouldn't give for a 9 percent annual growth rate.

To put that in context, it works out to about \$1,000 annually for every family in Maine, or three times the annual cost of monitoring a residential burglar alarm system.

In the tradition of all growth industries, repeat business offers not only job security but also the power to write your own ticket. That bodes ill for the 4,000 men and women already incarcerated and for the 56 percent of released inmates who make it back within one year after release. (cont'd on page 3)

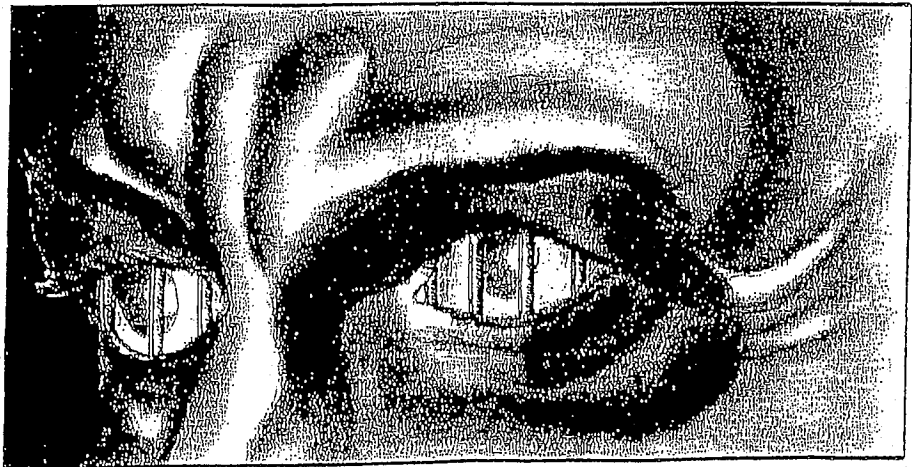


Figure 21. Untitled drawing by Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli. Courtesy of artist.

## MPAC

EDITORIAL

*Continued from page 1,*

The inept DOC Board of Visitors have little record of even being aware of the consent decree or observing the conditions of Disciplinary Segregation. With the obliteration of the Inmates Advisory Council prisoner grievances were to be addressed to the state Inmate Advocate, a position eliminated under budget cuts while guard overtime pay increased. Who guards us from the guards?

With the Federal law imposed of President Clinton's Prison Litigation Act of 1995, consent decrees that were in effect that cost the state's money were given ninety days to have plaintiffs file to justify their claims. This obviously was unprecedented house-cleaning leaving the unorganized, prisoners and others affected, hardly able to reaffirm their cases and suddenly provide for work that had already been achieved. This separation of the justice department from the legislature is dubious at best in this circumstance, yet it is still to be determined if the consent decree given by Justice Gignoux is still enforceable. Will the MCLU come to the rescue? Who outside can organize around this issue? Do groups from the inside need to focus on this and combine to reinstitute another class action lawsuit to seek enforcement? These are questions yet to be answered.

The fact that the thirty day limit was in effect is good for the prospects of the legislation presented by Mainers Against Solitary Confinement; MPAC will be there to propose that this should be the standard to be enacted, a better and already established maximum in solitary than the proposed 45 days limitation. MPAC needs prisoners to assist us in organizing for this month's hearing. Write to your local newspapers of the injustices suffered and the conditions under solitary. Everyday citizens need to know of what takes place in their names. Send to us testimonials of abuse and your time in solitary. Get your outside loved ones, friends, families and supporters to contact us. Encourage them to participate. Make this hearing vital if just to appear at or to offer testimony. MPAC needs help! We have to build a citizens prisoner support organization to not only advocate publicly for the relief of prisoners but to also develop programs for prisoners coming out and for the families of those incarcerated. Revitalizing a prisoner visitor bussing program from the Portland area is a goal we would like to accomplish as one example. There are many talented and motivated citizens and ex-prisoners, wives and families of prisoners in our communities that can offer great energy and service to those inside. We ask you to get your people to join in the work to develop our programs, assist in communications and advocacy and to help with the production of *The CALL*—NOW!—Contact can be made to Northern regional Coordinator, Robert W. Bothen @ 207-553-0801 or to Southern Regional Coordinator Pat Finn @ 207-807-3733. The last forty years has proven to us the old axiom is true that we must struggle for what we can get and then we must continue to struggle to hold on to it.

*cont'd from page 1, Corrections Disobeys Another Federal Court Order*

Thomas Benjamin, the lawyer who brought the suit for the inmates when he worked for the legal-services organization Pine Tree Legal Assistance, said in a telephone interview from his retirement home in Florida that he felt state officials could still be bound by the consent decree, though he assumed, if anyone sued to enforce it, the state would fight its enforcement based on changes in laws and new court decisions. Maine's attorney general, Janet Mills, had not responded by deadline with her view of the consent decree's validity.

The decree also requires the prison to observe elaborate procedures in dealing with inmate disciplinary violations and to decide within 48 hours if prisoners will be criminally prosecuted for a serious offense. Some inmates have claimed they have been thrown in the Supermax (also called "segregation") with little or no due process and languish for long periods there before they know if they will be charged with a crime. The consent decree additionally spells out inmate rights in the prison's handling of mail and the receipt of literature.

Paul Thibeault, a veteran Pine Tree attorney, recalled that as early as 1983 a federal judge found in a class-action lawsuit that Thibeault had brought on behalf of solitary confined inmates that the 1973 consent decree had been, in the judge's words, "flagrantly ignored" by officials.

Besides trying to force Corrections to limit solitary-confinement stays, Benjamin and other reform-minded lawyers and activists of the 1970s succeeded in getting laws passed by the Legislature that extended other rights to prisoners — such as, for those in solitary confinement, the right of the "the prison physician or the consulting psychiatrist" unilaterally to terminate isolation if a prisoner's mental or physical health required it. Legislators repealed that law in the 1980s.

Other inmate rights won in response to prisoner mistreatment of that earlier era have been reversed by laws or ignored by officials. In the 1970s two federal consent decrees conferred on prisoners the rights to be interviewed by reporters and write letters to them complaining about prison conditions. These decrees have frequently been disregarded when officials found it convenient to do so, though the state admits they haven't been superseded. A number of attorneys have told the *Phoenix* that 1970s' consent decrees are still valid (see "Maine Prison Bosses Violate Court Orders," by Lance Tapley, June 27, 2007).

In addition to taking the state to court, Benjamin during this period coauthored with Thomas Lux, a Rockland psychologist, several law-review articles that were among the earliest describing the psychological devastation caused by, and shaky legal status of, solitary confinement. In one article they concluded with a quote from author Garry Wills describing America's treatment of its prisoners as "psychic incineration of our fellow citizens, subtler and more gradual than Nazi extermination of prisoners, but inexorable."

And that was before the first high-tech supermax had been built. The old Thomaston prison's segregation unit had only 31 cells and, unlike the Warren Supermax, was not always full. Across the country supermaxes now house at least 25,000 prisoners.

**Bill limiting solitary confinement firmed up**

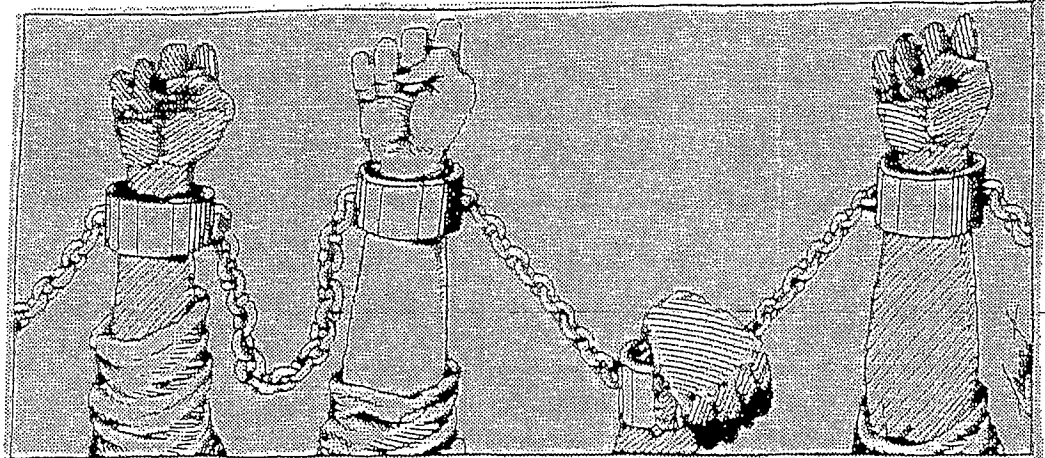
Representative James Schatz's bill to restrict the use of isolation has been all but finalized in negotiations among Schatz, members of the grass-roots Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement, and State House bill drafters. Schatz, of Blue Hill, a former corrections officer in Colorado, is a Democrat on the Criminal Justice Committee, which will hold the hearing on the bill during the legislative session beginning in January.

The *Bangor Daily News* recently editorialized in favor of "serious consideration" of the bill, suggesting solitary confinement may encourage an inmate's return to crime after he's released.

The bill outlaws solitary for seriously mentally ill prisoners, prohibits any prisoner being kept in the Supermax beyond 45 days unless he had tried to escape or committed an act of sexual assault or other violence, and sets up a hearing, appeal, and inmate-evaluation process.

In the Supermax, prisoners undergo 23-hour-a-day isolation, aren't allowed television or radios, and cell lights are always on. The many mentally ill Supermax inmates often throw feces at guards, cut themselves, and ram their heads against cell walls. Suicide attempts are common, and some succeed. The Supermax regularly drives sane inmates into mental illness.

... from Lance Tapley (as it appeared in the Portland Phoenix December 16, 2009 and with his permission)



*cont'd from page 1, Corrections: A Growth industry in Maine*

"He'll be back" being the common expectation in our penal institutions, it becomes over time a self-fulfilling prophecy. How inmates are treated remains somewhat important, but becomes secondary, to the need on the part of prison administration to keep everything in order, under control and, of course, secret.

With that in mind, Rep. James Schatz of Blue Hill has introduced for the upcoming legislative session a bill to establish "minimum standards governing the humane treatment of special management prisoners." In layman's language, this bill will address the conditions under which a person may be committed to solitary confinement and for how long.

Solitary confinement, known in more politically correct circles as "special management," involves safekeeping for mentally ill inmates, discipline cases and inmates who have been beaten by other inmates, a common occurrence. It is a place where inmates are confined to cells for 23 hours a day, have no diversions other than reading and limited writing, wear orange jumpsuits, and are restricted in four-point restraints wherever they go outside their cells.

Solitary confinement is now recognized nationally as a place that drives people crazy. A March 2009 New Yorker article cited studies going back as far as the 1960s that show a "diffuse slowing of brain waves in prisoners after a week or more of solitary confinement." EEG tests conducted in 1992 on prisoners of war in the former Yugoslavia showed brain abnormalities similar to those incurred in traumatic head injuries. John McCain reportedly said of his two years of isolation as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, "It crushes your spirit and weakens your resistance more effectively than any other form of mistreatment."

The article goes on to cite Craig Haney, a psychology professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz, who studied randomly selected inmates at California's Pelican Bay supermax: "After months or years of complete isolation, many prisoners 'begin to lose the ability to initiate behavior of any kind -- to organize their own lives around activity and purpose. Chronic apathy, lethargy, depression and despair often result.' Almost 90 percent had difficulties with 'irrational anger,' compared with 3 percent of prisoners in the general population."

Maine missed a golden opportunity to position itself as a leader in the humane treatment of prisoners and is now faced with the nearly impossible task of trying to put the toothpaste back into the tube after three decades of politically popular law-and-order soapbox rhetoric.

In 1973, a general consent decree was issued in the case of *Inmates of the Maine State Prison v. Mullaney*. In that consent decree, misdemeanor offenses by inmates were not to exceed 10 days of lockup, segregation or solitary confinement. Felony offenses were not to exceed 30 days.

By contrast, Schatz's bill calls for no more than 45 days' consecutive confinement except under extreme circumstances. There are current cases at the Maine State Prison where inmates have been held in solitary confinement for years.

On March 27, as a chaplain responsible for the solitary confinement unit, I wrote an internal memo, bringing attention to what I considered to be widespread violation of the law as set forth in Maine Revised Statutes 3032, Disciplinary Action. I cited the case of one inmate segregated for selecting a Buddhist magazine and writing an innocuous note to another inmate in solitary confinement at my request. The magazine and note were enclosed in an envelope with the return address of the Chaplain's Office and forwarded to the Special Management Unit. This inmate, who has garnered a sterling reputation for teaching other inmates how to read, was immediately taken to solitary confinement and spent nearly one month there under suspicion of stealing the envelope before all charges were dropped. Never once was I notified or informed or questioned.

Another inmate I cited was nearly blind without his glasses and had been in solitary confinement for 80 days on a 30-day disciplinary action, which eventually dragged out to 100 days. His glasses did not make it to his cell with him, rendering him incapable of reading for the entire time in segregation. It was very common at that time for victims of attack by other inmates to be held for months in solitary confinement for their own protection, while the perpetrators were in and out in five to 10 days. The favored rationales for long stays in solitary confinement are "high risk" and "waiting for a bed." In response to my memo, I received a copy of the special management policy manual, the implication being that policy trumps the law. The problem was not the policy or the law, but that both had given way to convenience.

Schatz's bill, while highlighting for the public an ongoing problem at the prisons, is not without its deficiencies. Its biggest deficiency is the failure to return to the dictates of the consent decree of 1973. In fact, whereas the consent decree cuts solitary confinement off at 30 days for felonies, the bill leaves open a possible indefinite extension beyond 45 days in the event of a felony. The bill is likely, as well, to carry a fiscal note for increased services, tough sledding for legislation these days.

While the bill prohibits the use of chemical agents such as Mace or forcible extraction without an audiovisual record, it outlaws completely the use of instruments of restraint such as chains, handcuffs, leg shackles, restraint chairs and four-point restraints for special management (solitary confinement) prisoners. My guess is that a case will be made for instances where a violent prisoner cannot be handled without restraints or where a security guard is placed in danger by transporting a potentially violent prisoner without restraints. Transportation to medical or mental health facilities comes immediately to mind, as does the simple process of making available the pay phone.

In the June 1975 issue of *Clearinghouse Review*, researchers Thomas Benjamin and Kenneth Lux published an evaluation of the use of solitary confinement at the Maine State Prison. They made the following observations:

"The courts have recognized that isolation may produce insanity, and that enforced isolation without human contact, recreation or exercise, and for extended periods, is cruel and unusual treatment. Yet prisoners are now in complete isolation and have been for months. In addition, the courts have recognized that a person sent to solitary suffers a grievous loss and is entitled to formal due process protection. However, the prison administration avoids this duty by calling the prisoner's confinement 'administrative' instead of 'punitive' and by instituting 'procedures' which provide no protections at all against arbitrary administrative action.

The Department of Mental Health and Corrections has as its own express policy that every person under its jurisdiction shall retain all the rights that citizens in general have, and that prisoners in solitary confinement be returned to the general population at the earliest possible time. Nevertheless, it

**From the Ruins  
By Peter Mills**

Here within prison wall

Lack of learning

Ancient pitfall

Now confined

Like monks

Redoubt discover within

What was lost without

Splendor in verse

Solitary mind

Heavenly gift

Within did find



watches prisoners in isolation slowly destroy themselves. It is time for prison administrators to stop hiding behind such words as 'security,' 'segregation' and 'administrative hold' to justify their actions."

Have things changed since 1975? I daresay, not much, if any. Under a cloud of secrecy protected by staff performing as "team players," the management style is more defensive than preventive, leaving the door open to such extreme violations of human rights as the April 2009 Weinstein assault, a common occurrence that spun out of control in his death. There remains plenty of room for the occasional abusive guard, the callous sergeant and the detached administrator at the prison, so long as the violations do not get out of hand and thereby move into the light of public scrutiny.

It is unfortunate that more laws are needed to correct the failure to comply with laws already on the books. It is more unfortunate that the turnover of prison management and within the Department of Corrections is so meager that law has given way to policy and policy has given way to practice.

Change cannot occur in an environment where those responsible for the third most expensive state program have lost sight of the law in their commitment to preserving their jobs and maintaining a status quo that degenerates through failure of public accountability. Stan Moody, former state representative and chaplain at the Maine State Prison, is the author of "Crisis in Evangelical Scholarship" and "McChurched: 300 Million Served and Still Hungry." He currently serves as pastor at the Meeting House Church in Manchester. His Web site is [www.stanmoody.com](http://www.stanmoody.com).

Solitary

/s

Torture

**ANTI-SOLITARY HEARING**

from Emily Posner,

An Update on the Standing of HR 2289 Minimum Standards Governing the Humane Treatment of Special Management Prisoners

The bill will have a public hearing before the criminal justice committee sometime during January or February 2010. The Coalition of Mainers Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement is organizing for this public hearing. We are hoping that those who have had experience in the administrative, high risk or disciplinary segregation units will support the bill by sharing their stories with legislators on this committee. As well, we hope that you will contact your family and friends to join our efforts in Augusta. You can send written testimony directly to legislators, or send correspondence to the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. M-PAC will then submit your letters at the public hearing. Major policy changes of HR 2289 include the following:

1. A prisoner determined to be suffering from a serious mental illness may not be confined in a special management unit. Prisoners confined in a special management unit must be evaluated by a licensed mental health professional in private within 48 hours of placement and at least every 7 days thereafter.
2. A prisoner may not remain confined in a special management unit for more than 45 consecutive calendar days unless it is determined by a hearing that within the previous 45 days the prisoner has, while incarcerated, committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault, an escape from confinement or an act of violence.
3. At hearings regarding the use of keeping a prisoner in longer than 45 days, the burden of proof is on the department. The prisoner must be informed by the panel which includes a mental health clinician how they can get out of the Special Management Unit.
4. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
5. To the extent of the interstate compact, prisoners may not be transferred to out-of-state facilities unless the administrator of that facility agrees to adhere to the provisions of this section with the respect to the treatment of that prisoner.
6. The board of visitors for each correctional facility shall annually conduct a comprehensive review of the policies standards and treatment of SMU prisoners to determine the effectiveness of those policies.

HR 2289 continues to move through the legislative process in Augusta. By the end of bill signing day a great list of legislators had co-signed HR 2269. If you can, please take the effort to write any of the listed legislators who co-sponsored HR 2289 and thank them for their support. In particular, it is important that co-sponsors Rep Lajoie and Sen Gerzofsky of the Criminal Justice Committee hear from you.

Sen Stan Gerzofsky  
3 Federal Street,  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
Rep Michel Lajoie  
279 Old Greene Road  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
Sen Lisa Marrassé  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, Me 04333

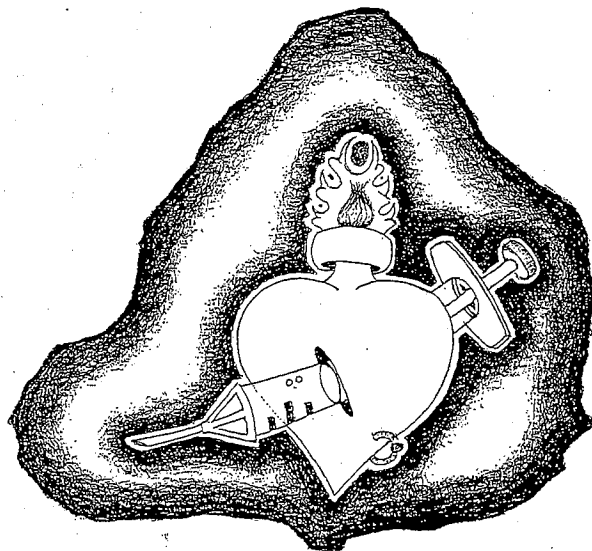
- Rep Richard Wagner  
26 Mountain Avenue  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
Rep Seth Berry  
1245 River Road  
Bowdoinham, ME 04008  
Penobscot Nation Rep Wayne Mitchell  
14 Oak Hill Street  
Indian Island, ME 04468  
Rep John Piotti (Unity)  
1075 Albion Road  
Unity, ME 04988  
Rep Jon Hink  
142 Pine Street  
Portland, ME 04102  
Members of the Criminal Justice Committee:  
Sen Stan Gerzofsky Committee Co-Chair (D)  
3 Federal Street,  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
Sen John Nütting (D)  
79 Campbell Rd  
Leeds, ME 04263  
Sen Gerald Davis (R)  
15 Hamlin Rd  
Falmouth, ME 04105  
Rep Ann Haskell, Committee Co-Chair, (D)  
31 Higgins Street  
Portland, ME 04103  
Rep Stephen Hanley (D)  
67 Lincoln Avenue  
Gardiner, ME 04345  
Rep Walter Wheeler (D)  
46 Rogers Road  
Kittery, ME 03904  
Rep Jim Schatz (D)  
P. O. Box 437  
Blue Hill, ME 04614  
Rep Michel Lajoie (D)  
279 Old Greene Road  
Lewiston, ME 04240.  
Rep Veronica Magnun (D)  
P. O. Box 37  
Sandy Point, ME 04972  
Rep Richard Sykes (R)  
P. O. Box 86  
Harrison, ME 04040  
Rep Christian Greeley (R)  
P. O. Box 353  
Levant, ME 04456  
Rep Gary Plummer (R)  
248 Gray Road  
Windham, ME 04062  
Rep David Burns (R)  
159 Dodge Road  
Whiting, ME 04691

If you are interested in receiving an actual copy of the bill, please contact MPAC or the Coalition of Mainers Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement at 207-930-5232. We thank all who are working to bring about this needed change within special management units in Maine Prisons.

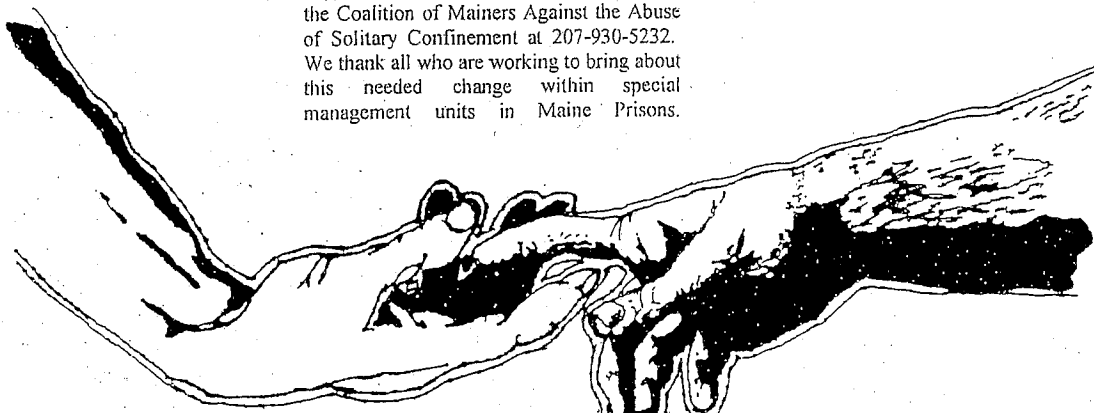


**Please Submit Your Art for a  
A VISIONARY DRAW-A-THON**

On February 13th, artists and poets from around Maine will participate in a draw-a-thon/gathering of visionaries, artists, and non-artists in support of the 90-day Maine Campaign to Bring Our War \$\$ Home. The event will have artists show how they would spend the \$2.5 billion of Maine taxpayers' money that has gone to pay for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars up to now. Use your art to "speak" in a visionary way and stretch our imaginations to re-think our priorities, and challenge Mainers to envision how THEY would want their tax dollars spent. If are interested in participating, send to us at the call..



Above drawing by Arden Shaw, an inmate and artist at MSP.



## GUS HEALD: FROM THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

This activist prisoner had worked in 1971 to establish The Inmate Advisory Council from a grievance committee while Maine State Prison was under the authority of warden Allen Robbins. Gus and inmate Joe McDonald were later transferred that year for attempting to organize an inmate sympathy strike in support of the Attica prisoners during their infamous uprising. Eighteen months later after the extreme Federal Supermax of the time, Marion, Illinois, Gus and Joe were returned to finish their MSP sentences. Their return had been a consistent demand of the remaining Inmate Advisory Council and prisoners of MSP.

This demand was one of a list of 14 and clearly stated "We demand an immediate return of our brothers Gus Heald and Joe McDonald. We demand an immediate end to the illegal transfer of politically and legally active prisoners." Gus referred to Marion as "The Slaughterhouse." It was there he started the book that was never to be finished or even titled, yet the power of his writings can't be denied.

### CHAPTER ONE

For as long as I can remember I have had the nagging, but till now, unfulfilled desire to write about the soul shattering rage that I feel for the cannibalistic system that has greedily ate at my spirit, battered my personality and shriveled my soul for the past twenty-six years. I guess this urge to write was first formed at an early age, and came as a consequence of my acquaintance with the famous author Ben Ames Williams. Mr. Williams had a summer home in Searsmont, Maine. It was named Scrabble Farm. It was located on Route 73 about two miles from where I lived as a boy. During the summer months, my boyhood friend and I use to work for him. We would mow lawns, cut grass and a hundred other things that must be done on a farm.

Part of the huge barn attached to the buildings had been made into a study and Mr. Williams wrote many of his famous novels in that barn. I was absolutely fascinated by his study, the many volumes of books, the typewriter and most of all by watching this author work. I guess he sensed my fascination because he used to invite me into his study and we'd talk about hunting, fishing and what I wanted to be when I grew up. Of course I told him I wanted to write books. He would laugh and say, weeeelll boy, someday you may. I will never forget those experiences.

But now that I am confronted face to face with the fearful and psychological ordeal of putting my rage into printed words and laying bare my scarred soul, exposing it to view for all to see, and



surrendering all that I have kept me company through these terrible lonely years, and at times has been my only ally, my only weapon in my struggle to sustain my sanity through the nightmare existence of these crushing years, has, in my moment of greatest need, abandoned me.

I am alone in the midst of a desolate wasteland with a cornucopia of conflicting emotions. Doubts, fears and uncertainties, they are all conspiring to torment me. They leave wavering between the consuming desire to complete the ordeal posed by writing this book and the fear that I lack the intellectual capacities to see it through. My fingers tremble as they approach the typewriter, as my brain transmits its coded messages to my trembling finger of other failures in the past, or other dreams that faded. But, in some mysterious way, my subconscious mind takes over, transmitting its own helping messages, and my fingers become steady as determination drive me on.

In some subtle and subterranean manner that my conscious self is not fully aware of, this book has assumed major psychological importance for me.

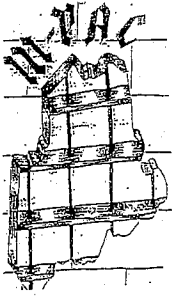
It is as if it was assumed an existence of its own, outside of myself. As if it is using me merely as its voice. It is my final struggle with the evil system that for years have brutalized my body and cannibalized my soul. The system that in some subtle and insidious manner has implanted in my own mind the idea that I am in some way inferior human being, just a little above the beast that must be kept caged up for the rest of his life. For doing this to me I have a bitter contempt for the system which permitted it. I must prove, at least to myself, that the inhuman system is a liar, and that it is the system that is both inferior and violent, that, in fact, it is an anachronism out its proper historical time. This is why I must finish the book. If I fail, the system will have won its final battle against me and accomplished by my failure what it never has done on its own. It will have imprisoned my spirit and shackled my soul. It will have rendered me a living vegetable as it has done to so many others.

Frankly, the idea for this book was fertilized last fall as a result of my involvement with Gene Mason's course in jails, prisons and concentration camps. It was this course and Gene's encouragement that pregnant my mind with the idea to write this book. Since then I have nurtured the yet unborn fetus with tender care and love analogous to a mother's for her first born child.

Looking back, I consider my involvement with Franconia College in general and with Gene Mason in particular as the most fateful event in my life. It brought me to a crossroad in my life and forced me to make a crucial decision. Whether to continue on the same course, paved with frustrations, heartaches, loneliness, despair and heading nowhere, or to alter my direction. I paused for a moment, uncertain, plagued by all the old debilitating doubts, but in that second, I made my choice. I had rendezvoused with my ghost, my inner self, and I was certain that my life never again would be the same. I surrendered myself as if in a hypnotic trance. I have left all the old ghosts behind me. They will never haunt me again.

Briefly I glanced backward at the past, but it had vanished like yesterday did today, and like all the yesterdays that had preceded it. I was Lazarus returning from the chill of the tomb into the warm sunshine. I tingled with a new spiritual aliveness that I had not experienced before. The sensations of being fully alive were exhilarating. It immediately opened new dimensions of awareness. The psychic death that afflicts all prisoners to some degree in that mysterious inner core of the human personality had rendered me oblivious to what was really happening to me to what was being perpetrated against my humanness and against the humanness of countless thousands of others like me. But, more importantly, for the first time I fully realized what I had permitted the inhuman system to do to me, to anesthetize my mind. *Continued next month.*





Liberty News Service  
125 Morning Street  
Portland ME 04101



*Verbatim from the inside, prisoner Vaughn Clark #5647, Maine State, 807 Cushing Road. Warren, Maine 04864 12-30-9.*

To The Call,

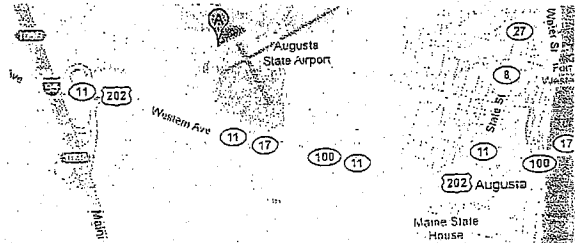
Where is the hope of change? How much time is it going to take? With over a full month underneath Warden Patricia Barnheart's belt and not a single thing has transpired since her arrival. Also, whoever said Warden Barnheart is very hands-on is misinformed. Yes, she has made a couple appearances within SMU. Once with NAACP and other times with unit managers and captains. Upon every single visit myself and a fellow prisoner (John Thibeault) have request if "the warden would speak with us." Even on-duty POD officers have asked Mrs. Barnheart if we could talk briefly? Ignored! Blatantly!

Also numerous letters have gone unanswered, and if answered, it's always parties involved in alleged grievances. So, it's easily agreed that nothing has changed for prisoners of the SuperMax.

I also, want to bring to the attention of the people, that I've been in SMU at MSP since April of 2009 and it's to my understanding that it's law, that any and all "high-risked" prisoners are to be seen by the mental health department a minimum of once every 90 days. I haven't been seen at all. Until today 12-30-09 when the worker reviewed my records, she couldn't believe her eyes. My review of "high risk" status was 2 days ago. All of which, agreed to remove me from placement. So, I finished my whole high-risk program without a single visit, check-in or evaluation to determine if I was okay. I'm very fortunate, to be mentally sound, but it has opened my eyes to the men around me, who hurt and cut themselves and fight with officers just to get mental health attention. Through the struggle these men teeter on the edges of true, suicidal and homicidal behaviors. Yet there's absolutely no program, and hasn't been in my 6-7 month stay in SMU. Many of these men wonder in darkness, blind as they are lost in new territory, stumbling around, hurting themselves or others, just to release some tension and release their built emotions.

Substance abuse: About 1/2 of us out here now are high-risk due to drugs. If it be smuggling or hoarding them from medical. It's by any means necessary, to obtain those drugs to get high and administration declares us a threat to s security. High-risk is needed. . . For me, I was high risked for drugs (allegedly) so I've been warehoused in solitary confinement with this burning urge to use (more than ever now) The sad part is, I have less than 5 months left of my sentence, so with the lack of programs in SMU and lack of case workers to help for release planning, it isn't very solid ground to stand on. I've wrote and requested some help. To no resolution I'm ignore because of the lack of services and workers. And they don't care, even if I get out and do use. I'm job security for them, why rehabilitate? But little do they know, this is my last sentence and hopefully somebody who's maybe reading this, know about programs and groups. I'm open to any ideas. I've had enough! This is my sincere cry for help. Thank you.

**The Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement 1/8/2010 at the IBEW Hall Winthrop 5-8 pm FMI call 207-30-5232 or 207-807-3733. Snow date not determined yet.**



Please send any submissions for the February 2010 issue to: Liberty News Service, 125 Morning Street, Portland Me 04101

*The Call* is also available in electronic format. Either get on by checking out our website at [mainepac.org](http://mainepac.org) or email [pat6finn@gmail.com](mailto:pat6finn@gmail.com).

We are looking for articles about your jail or prison poetry, artwork, letters to the editors or anything you like to see published. We are getting many request from prisoners requesting monthly copies. Please give us your MSP #; many copies were returned because that number was not on the address.

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Thanks for the contribution from Lance Ellison.