



The Newsletter of Missouri CURE

P.O. Box 1212
Fenton, MO 63026
missouricure@hotmail.com
www.missouricure.org

FROM THE CHAIR ~Paula Skillicorn

Grass roots work is like riding a roller coaster. The lows come when there is so much work to do, and so few hands to help. The highs come when people like Hedy Harden, Michelle Dodson and Amanda Medlock take the initiative to lead a project.

This newsletter marks the return of Hedy (Edna) Harden. For years, Missouri CURE members could count on an informative, interesting newsletter that kept them up-to-date and provided insight from inside the prison system. In recent years, that charge was handed to Becky Williams, along with nearly every other Missouri CURE duty. Cost of the mailing and limited finances contributed to a decline in the number of newsletters we could mail out per year.

Thanks to Hedy's offer to take back the responsibility of the newsletter, and some generous donations, we hope to get back on a more regular schedule of publications. I know you are as happy as we are to have Hedy back at the helm.

Michelle Dodson did some digging on her own, and found a new contract the Missouri Department of Corrections had signed for offender phone call service. Michelle agreed to spearhead Missouri CURE's opposition to the lack of provision for local calling rates and the choice of a company whose bid will cost prison families over \$3 million more than the lowest bid. That low bid scored only six points lower than the winning bid (see article on page 3).

Michelle's work is the type of effort that makes or breaks an organization like Missouri CURE. With support and suggestions from Missouri CURE officers, she took the initiative to organize a letter writing campaign. I hope each of you will participate in the campaign by contacting each of your legislators, Gov. Matt Blunt, DOC Director Larry Crawford, and as many affected families as you

can to help ensure the lowest rates possible for Missouri prison calls.

Amanda Medlock reminds me that help comes in all ages. A new high school graduate, Amanda graciously volunteered to redo our Web site. Speaking as someone who is Web site illiterate, I am thrilled that we have someone who not only is enthusiastic about helping Missouri CURE's efforts, but also has the expertise and creativity to make our site shine. We have given her some ideas, and handed her free reign to make it stand out. If you have ideas for the site, please share them with us and Amanda will try to accommodate.

These volunteers came forward at a crucial time, when it looked as though Missouri CURE would fold from lack of participation. I hope their efforts will be an inspiration to others to take an active role in our efforts. For some, that might be organizing a committee to address proposed or existing legislation, solicit more members, or compile information to share on the Web site or through the e-mail list. For others, it might be as simple as committing to donate two books of stamps or a few packages of copy paper to help offset newsletter costs. Regardless of your circumstances, there is always some way you can help.

Even if all you do is copy a letter and send it to two legislators, the governor and Director Crawford, your efforts are important, effective and appreciated. There are more than 30,000 immediate families of Missouri offenders, not to mention extended families and friends. Stop for a moment and think what would happen if all those people took a moment to mail a letter, make a call or send an email to the lawmakers of this state on any given issue. It would be impossible for anyone who wants to be re-elected to ignore our concerns and opinions.

Continued page 6



4-H LIFE Program

Dear Missouri CURE members,

Do you and your young family members visit the Algoa, Farmington, Potosi or Vandalia Correctional Centers? If you do, then here's an opportunity to help your family have fun and grow stronger each month.

An enhanced visitation project started in 2000 with a program called 4-H LIFE that gives families in the visiting room a breath of new life through songs, laughter and educational fun for everyone! We are now expanding that program

that started at Potosi Correctional Center to Algoa, Farmington (Transitional Housing Unit) and Vandalia's women's prison, as well as Potosi. This free program will only be successful if caregivers such as you are there and able to bring your loved one's children and/or grandchildren.

The most unique part of 4-H LIFE is that during visitation each month the children take part in a 4-H club for boys and girls. The children



visit with one another and their incarcerated parent with fun activities. They learn how to speak in front of a group, how to make positive decisions, and run a business meeting. As 4-H members, they also will be eligible to participate in county and state 4-H events like summer camps.

The 4-H LIFE program includes separate parenting classes for the incarcerated parent and that parent also helps plan and lead the activities that are done during a visiting session.

Doesn't this sound like a better way to spend visiting time? The 4-H LIFE program needs your help. In return, the program can give you

some extra help in your important role as caregiver! If you want to be part of the 4-H LIFE program, please contact me.

**Contact: Tammy Gillespie, 828 Clark Hall
Columbia, MO 65211**

Email: gillespiet@missouri.edu

4-H LIFE program website:

<http://extension.missouri.edu/fcrp/lifeevaluation/>

Legislative Update

*These are the **ONLY** bills from 2006 that passed regarding criminal justice issues. If you would like more information about these bills, write to us and we will send it to you!*

HB1698 (Lipke) Changes laws regarding sex offenders. This bill has 31 separate sections and was approved by the Governor on June 5, 2006. When Matt Blunt signed this bill, his statement to the press was, "*Today I am sending a message to sexual offenders - stay out of our state, stay away from our children. These crimes will not be tolerated, period.*" There are four pages worth of information and not enough space to report here. Let us know if you would like to receive a copy.



SB1023 (Gibbons) Modifies the laws relating to DNA Profiling Analysis and resulting restitution. These sections repeal the current provisions providing restitution for individuals exonerated after August 28, 2003 through the use of DNA profiling analysis and enact new provisions to allow any person found guilty of a felony in a Missouri circuit court, who is later exonerated of such felony by DNA profiling analysis, to receive restitution. The individual may receive up to \$50 for each day of post-conviction incarceration. ◀

DOC Fails to Choose Cheapest Rates for Prison Phone Calls

The Missouri Department of Corrections has signed a contract with Public Communications Service (PCS) to provide prison phone service instead of MCI. PCS was not the lowest bidder, does not provide the lowest rates for families, and increases local calling costs more than five times current rates. PCS cost to families is more than \$3 million higher than the lowest bidder.

The lowest bidder, Communications Public Services Consolidated (CCPS), scored less than 6 points lower than PCS in the bid evaluation rating. CCPS lost points because it serves only one state – Illinois. CCPS contends that the rating was incorrect, because it serves more offenders in one state than PCS serves in three.

PCS charges long-distance rates for local calls, while CCPS continues to honor local calling policies. Under the PCS contract, all calls, regardless of location, will cost \$1 for the connection/first minute, and 10 cents per minute after that. Pre-paid calls and offender debit cards will cost 10 cents per minute, with no connection fee.

Under the CCPS bid, all local calls would cost 95 cents per call flat rate, compared to the current MCI cost of \$1.30. All other calls, regardless of location, would cost 65 cents for the connection/first minute and less than 7 cents per minute after that. Prepaid calls and offender debit cards would cost less than 7 cents per minute, with no connection fee. Total cost for CCPS would be \$6,518,100 per year compared to \$9,943,034 for PCS.



Missouri CURE member Michelle Dodson brought this to our attention. She and several legislators, along with CCPS, are calling for the contract with PCS to be voided and for the DOC to reopen bids on the process. Failing that, the state is asked to require an amendment of the PCS contract to honor local call rates.

Fairer phone rates have long been the goal of National CURE and chapters across the country. Several years ago, the efforts of Missouri CURE helped convince the state to forego its customary \$1 million kickback from MCI in exchange for lower rates. Those of us with local calling rates have supported efforts to reduce long-distance rates for families throughout Missouri and those who live out-of-state. We hope you will support us in seeing that local calling rates are maintained. Please write your legislators and Missouri DOC Director Larry Crawford to urge them to void the PCS contract and go with the lowest bidder, or to at least require local calling rates.

For more information on the PCS contract, the bidding process, where to find addresses for your legislators or to see a sample letter, contact Missouri CURE at www.missouricure.org or by mail at P.O. Box 1212, Fenton, Mo. 63026.

Members who have e-mail access are urged to join our list server for daily updates that include information on new legislation, court cases, changes in policy, and concerns in Missouri prisons that CURE needs to address. To access that list, contact Becky at missouricure@hotmail.com.

Lethal Injection Put on Hold in Missouri

A federal judge has halted executions in Missouri until the state can come up with a new protocol that is more 'humane.'

The US Supreme Court ruled in May that condemned prisoners could challenge the constitutionality of lethal injections. A flurry of lawsuits resulted in the decision by US District Judge Fernando Gaitan Jr. that gives Missouri until July 15 to come up with a new protocol. Included is a requirement that a certified anesthesiologist be hired to prepare the lethal drugs.

Missouri injects three drugs into prisoners to achieve death, first a general anesthetic to render the person unconscious, followed by a drug to



cause paralysis, and finally one that brings about a fatal heart attack. Key in Gaitan's ruling was the disclosure that the physician ("John Doe I") who performs Missouri's executions is dyslexic and has a problem with numbers. If not given sufficient anesthesia, the dying man could suffer excruciating pain from the heart attack.

"Doe" admitted that he varies the amount of the anesthetic based on his observation of what is needed, yet a prisoner in such circumstances would be unable to communicate that he was suffering because of the effects of the other drugs.

Missouri DOC Director Larry Crawford admitted that medical staff used only half the normal anesthesia last October while executing Marlin Gray. ◀

Toney Gets Paid

Finally, after 14 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit, and ten years after his release in 1996, Steven Toney is getting compensated.

Toney will receive payments totaling \$200,000.00 under the provisions of Senate Bill 1023, which was signed into law on June 30. State Senator Michael Gibbons sponsored the bill and fought for three years to win compensation for Toney and two other men who were wrongfully imprisoned but received no compensation.

Convicted of rape and given two life sentences running wild in 1983, Toney said, "You can't imagine lying there, day in and day out for

14 years for something you didn't do, constantly wondering, will somebody hear me?"

After years of fighting for justice, Toney obtained the help of the Innocence Project and finally won his freedom when DNA testing exonerated him.

Then came the fight for compensation. After two other men were freed via DNA testing, Missouri agreed to compensate anyone exonerated after August of 2003, which excluded the three innocent men cleared earlier.

Now, said Toney, "I can have my own place, my own car, and maybe a job," said Toney. "I want to do something productive." ◀



Free Summer Camps for Prisoners' Kids

Camp David of the Ozarks (CDO) is a free one-week camping experience for children with a parent in prison. The website, <http://www.campdavidozarks.org> states:

"These at-risk children and youth are in desperate need of hope. CDO's week-long summer camps are especially designed to meet this need. Through Bible lessons, games and parties, camp grandmas and grandpas, and a counselor that is shared with only one other camper, these children discover they are special, they are significant, and there is hope for tomorrow!

"Parents, grandparents and guardians have shared with appreciation the difference one week of camp has made for their kids. CDO offers Junior Camps for children 8-12 and Senior Camps for teens 13-16."

For more information, call 573/364-2786 or email cpdavid@rollanet.org.



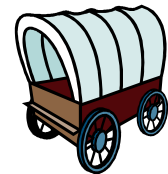
Sagrada Scholarship Bible Camp (SSBC) is dedicated to bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children of prisoners and other children who would benefit from attending. Camps are free to all children regardless of their situation. All staff are volunteers. SSBC is a non-profit, non-denominational camp, and a member of the Christian Camp and Conference Association. The camp is supported by donations from people who care. Sagrada serves boys and girls ages 8-11 and returning senior campers. Last summer in 2005, the camp served 226 children. Most of the children

come to the camp through referrals from Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Ministries, which means they have one or both parents in prison. They sleep in teepees or covered wagons. The camp has swimming, fishing, games, songs, campfires, and other camp activities, but the camp's emphasis is in presenting the Gospel, and in training the children to live their lives according to the Word of God.

Contact them: (660) 668-3808

E-Mail: sagrada@iland.net,

website: <http://www.sagradabiblecamp.org>



No one is free if
others are oppressed.

Note: This is not intended as an endorsement of any particular religion by Missouri CURE.

Author's Note: On November 11, 1989, I participated in an investigative tour of the old Missouri State Penitentiary. The oldest prison west of the Mississippi, MSP was built in 1836.

A Day Inside

Cars parked on a sloping rocky lot,
we 12 trudge up the steep hill to the stone fortress
It is November, but unseasonably hot
The tour begins as heavy steel gates open and
close with a metallic boom, locking us in...
I gaze up to Dante's words etched in stone
Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here

Our assigned guard leads us down a concrete
stairway -- covered with untold layers of grime
I touch the railing and recoil

A 200-man housing unit -- general
population
Four tiers of imprisoned humanity
Broken panes in windows four
stories high
A man stands at each cell like a
horse at the gate

An ear-splitting buzz like the start
of a race, amplified a hundred-fold
A thundering din echoes as 50 steel cages open
Men step out quickly as the doors crash shut, turn
to face the front and begin the march

Mainline they call it -- bodies lined up so close they
seem attached -- soldiers in grey uniforms each
awaiting his ten minutes in the dining room
The men watch us as we watch them
Close up that line! a gruff voice barks
A short bald guy half turns to one behind
Don't drink the milk -- someone pissed in it -- pass
it along

Another housing unit -- short-term lockdown they
call the hole -- men eat, sleep, and defecate in tiny
single cells
Black plastic trash bags sit in corners of a stairwell
AIDS-contaminated material, read the labels
The guard chuckles as we gape
Yeah they OD on drugs, try to kill themselves,
makes a big mess

We breathe hot fresh air as we step out into the
yard -- men walking, talking, quiet laughter,
almost as if they were free
Birds sing in trees as in the world we know
Forty prisoners trail us at a distance,
careful to stay in groups of two or three
I feel no fear of them

Guard wants to show us something special
We enter a small stone building that could be a
tomb
It's the old gas chamber -- double occupancy
My throat constricts, the walls close in, while
he tells of a man and woman gassed here to-
gether

In a conference room talking with prisoners
Amidst the grim stories of abuse,
medical non-treatment, excessive force,
a man complains that the 'state tip',

three dollars a month for paper
and stamps,
shampoo, deodorant, shavers
and soap,
is not enough to maintain good
hygiene

We proceed to long-term
lockdown -- men are kept here
for years

It's 85 degrees and we're sweating in November
clothes, the caged men in their underwear
A row of six-foot-long dog runs out in front
for exercise, an hour a day per man
What can they do in there? I ask
Whatever they want, says the guard

Back outdoors we're led to a corner of the yard
where human bones have been found
Here the terrain is such that we can see over the
wall at houses along the street
Nobody's ever escaped from this prison
except James Earl Ray in a bakery truck -- before
he killed Martin

We're released at five o'clock,
emerge to the 3-D world of color
The life-sucking starkness lingers as
we hurry back to St. Lou
to try and scrub the taint away
in a fruitless attempt to find the selves we were.

Hedy Harden



Hedy (Edna) Harden was Chair of Missouri CURE for 12 years from its inception in 1990 and produced its newsletter, Turning Point. Hedy is now back in the helm, producing the Missouri CURE newsletter.

Missouri CURE

P.O. Box 1212
Fenton, MO 63026



MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES

Note to Readers

*Although Missouri CURE is very interested in your concerns, our financial resources are limited. For that reason, we **CANNOT** accept collect calls, nor can we afford to hire attorneys, paralegals, or investigators to work on individual cases. CURE is **NOT** a service organization. CURE has **NO** legal services. CURE is an all-volunteer non-profit criminal justice advocacy organization.*

From the Chair -- from page 1

You might be reading this, thinking that you've never been one to stir the pot, or you don't know what you have to offer. I encourage all of you to attend our annual meeting Aug. 26 at the Boone County Government Center in Columbia, where you will learn something about yourself and find a way to use your skills to improve prison conditions. It promises to be a fun meeting.

The day will include a Kairos get-together for those of you who have enjoyed a Kairos weekend or would like more information about the program. Also in the afternoon, Mike Mitchell and Dr. Stephens of MOSOP will discuss the program and answer questions.

On a final note, National CURE plans to hold its annual board meeting in Missouri next spring. This will be a time for Missouri CURE to share with others from across the country. One of our goals in the next several months is to revitalize our efforts and expand our membership. Let's show the country during the national meeting what the Show Me State's CURE chapter is all about. I hope to see you or your family at the Aug. 26 Missouri CURE meeting. See enclosed flyer for times.

Join Missouri CURE Today!

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
- Sponsor \$ _____

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