

JRC

Justice Reform Consortium



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Voices to be Heard will be meeting this Tuesday, May 4, at Union Park Methodist Church on E 12th and Guthrie. Supper at 5:30 and group at 6. We will have Eleena Mitchell-Sadler with the Ombudsman's office as our guest speaker. ☼ **Voices to be Heard** meets on the first, second and third Tuesdays of the month at Union Park Methodist Church (East 12th & Guthrie in Des Moines) from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. The group brings in speakers, performs outreach, provide support groups and leadership classes.

And on June 3, **Voices** speaker will be Iowa Board of Corrections Chair Robyn Mills.

Department of Corrections Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, May 21, 2010

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

UIHC Main Entrance – East Room

Department of Corrections Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, June 4, 2010

First Judicial District

314 East 6th Street

Waterloo, Iowa 50704-4030

☺ The next **Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners** meeting is at noon on **Tues., May 18th** at Wesley United Methodist Church, 800 East 12th. Bring your lunch. ☺ Speaker is Marty Ryan, Legislative Advocate for Justice Reform Consortium.

The website of **Iowa CURE** (IowaCURE.org) has just been updated. You can download the latest newsletter by clicking [here](#).

Tin Soldiers

by Marty Ryan

Forty years ago, the Ohio National Guard fired 67 rounds of live ammunition into a crowd of unarmed protesters and bystanders at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. In the 13 seconds it took to expend those 67 rounds 4 innocent people died and nine were wounded.

The Kent State Massacre occurred on May 4. That was also the day I received my draft notice; I had won the lottery. I reported to the United States Army Induction Center in Omaha eight days later. It would be an understatement to say that I was confused. I didn't feel fear, but I didn't have confidence that I would ever see Iowa again.

The night before induction I celebrated what may have been my last night of freedom. A small group of us drank, we toked, and we partied hard. Little did we know that Army personnel cared little about what anyone's urine contained the following morning. We were all heading for basic training at Fort Lewis, Washington, whether we liked it not.

The induction went so fast it was impossible to go to the restroom after that initial faux test in the morning hours. Then the wait came. After we were probed, squeezed, questioned, analyzed and sworn to defend our country [in Vietnam, no less], we waited and waited for what seemed like hours in a closed room. The silence was scary.

There were about 40 of us. Eventually, an officer came in and yelled "ON YOUR FEET!" and before anyone was standing he was yelling for us to "MOVE IT!" We were scrambling out of the room through a small door and rushed down steps from the fourth floor to a loading dock in the back of the building. Simultaneous with our arrival on the dock, several cars sped toward us in the alley. Once the vehicles came to a screeching halt we were quickly ushered like livestock into the private cars driven by non-uniformed Army personnel. It felt like we were extras in a movie scene. It was a scheme to get us out of the view of protesters out front, and to keep any semblance of military out of the picture.

At Eppley Airfield in Omaha we were moved to the gate so fast I knew people recognized who and what we were. For attempting to avoid a scene, the U.S. Army created one – one of power and intimidation. The flight to Denver, and connecting flight to Ft. Lewis (SEATAC), was somber. We arrived close to midnight. We couldn't see anything, and it was just as well. Our future at this point was dark, indeed.

Memories of conscription come to me often. The timing of my entry into the Armed Forces forty years ago this week was historic. The pendulum of war's interest had struck its height. Kent State changed everything.

The friendships I developed at basic training were immeasurable. After nine weeks half of my company was assigned to Advanced Infantry Training. Members of my platoon, all thirty of us, signed each other's group photo. The odds of all of us surviving combat and making it back to the states was phenomenal.

I was one of the lucky ones. I was eventually stationed not far from Washington, DC. , and visited our nation's Capital numerous times – voluntarily. Once, I was called to defend the Capital from protesters. I had reservations about what I was ordered to do, but there was nothing I could do about it. For some reason, an amended order came down without my name on it. I was one of six people assigned to stay behind and take care of matters at the Fort (Lee). Two others and I drove up to Washington that night. In our civilian clothing we saw the massive show of militarized strength and felt comfortable to realize we were not chosen to be part of it.

I recently traveled back to Washington, DC and visited The Wall. I brought my photo with the signatures of my platoon buddies scribbled on the back. I could not locate any of those names on the back of my basic training photo that matched any of the 58,195 names etched into the Memorial. I have lost track of each and every one of those guys. I look back on forty years and think of my confused state. And Neil Young's ballad begins playing in my head: "Four dead in O-HI-O. Four Dead in O-HI-O. Four Dead in O-HI-O. . . "

Prison Ground-breaking

Marty Ryan, and Jean & Bill Basinger attended the ground-breaking ceremony and board meeting at Fort Madison last month. The new prison facility, in an architect's rendition below, will be located at the present site of Iowa State Penitentiary's Farm #1.



Speakers at the ceremony included Governor Chet Culver, Director John Baldwin, DOC Board Chair Robyn Mills, Senator Gene Fraise, Representative Jerry Kearns, Fort Madison Mayor Steve Ireland, and several others. McAninch Construction wasted no time as the heavy equipment was rolling across the farm at 1:00 pm later in the day.

One of the highlights of the Board meeting included Jerry Bartruff, reentry coordinator for the Iowa Department of Corrections, relating to the Board about how impressed he was by Misty Hansen's presentation to the Board during the previous month regarding "Voices to be Heard". He had visited a Voices' meeting and talked about the needs of families and how much he appreciated the opportunity that he and Katrina Carter-Larson had to meet with "Voices." He said that he realizes the need to work with families and include them in discussions about issues that affect them.

Fred Scaletta, Deputy Director, talked about the inmate phone system and mentioned that a committee has been appointed to discuss future rates, etc. This remains a frustrating issue for Iowa CURE.

Director Baldwin said they are going to move the mentally ill prisoners out of the Critical Care Unit into the new mental health facility at the new prison, or, if they are severely mentally ill, they will go to Oakdale. That space that will be vacated in the Critical Care Unit will be "repurposed" as a reintegration or reentry unit. This is NOT integration or reentry into society. It is reentry into the General Population. It will be for those who refuse to follow the rules, those who are difficult to manage, act out and are a high security risk. In plain speech it will be a "control unit" which is exactly what it was designed to be and what Jean Basinger had been predicting was going to happen for a number of years.

There are currently 287* lifers at ISP and 217 at Anamosa. Which means 110 are housed elsewhere. All the lifers who were at the John Bennett Center have been removed because the men from the farms will be moving into those beds.



Governor Culver; IA Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald; Curtiss Pultizer, IA DOC Corrections Specialist; Rep. Jerry Kearns (slightly hidden); Sen. Tom Courtney; Danny Homan, President – AFSCME Council 61; Unknown dignitary; Ft. Madison Mayor Steve Ireland; & DOC Director John Baldwin on the right. Caterpillar D-9 tractor in background.

Links

Cash-Strapped Colorado Comes Up With Funds for New Supermax

<http://solitarywatch.wordpress.com/2010/04/11/cash-strapped-colorado-comes-up-with-funds-for-new-supermax/>



Justice Reform Consortium consists of the following organizations: *Iowa CURE; Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners; Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Sioux City; American Friends Service Committee; Trinity United Methodist Church, Des Moines; Iowa Coalition 4 Juvenile Justice; Methodist Federation for Social Action, Des Moines; Micah Corp.; Plymouth Congregation Church Board of Christian Social Action; Social Action Committee, Des Moines Presbytery; Board of Church and Society, Iowa Annual Conference, UMC; National Association of Social Workers; Iowa NOW and Des Moines NOW; Des Moines Chapter, WILPF; Beacon of Life; Voices to be Heard*

***To subscribe to this newsletter, please email Marty Ryan
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